

Hungary's relationship to the other satellites. While, during the Horthy regime hatred was instigated, now we were told to love our fellow-proleterians, whether they were Rumania, Yugoslavs, etc. - one attitude was just as insincere as the other. In other words, we feel that the Hungarian peasant never hated the Rumanian one - not even during Horthy times and he did not especially love him now for the reasons he was told to do so. The fact is that people were so deeply concerned about their own misery, that they did not pay much attention to what was going on in other satellites - after a while one did get numb. It came as a surprise though, to find out in-1956- when one could travel freely within the boundaries of the Iron Curtain countries, that the economic conditions in Rumania, for instance, were incomparably worse than in Hungary. As a matter of fact, not many people believed this, although everybody who came home brought the same news.

Since 1949, there had been so-called border strips - ~~and~~ special permission was needed to visit those localities which would fall within these strips. These restrictions were lifted in 1956.

In '56, people were not only given permission to visit some of the other satellite countries, but some would get visas to France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium. Their visitors' visa

was invariably stamped for three months.

Every employee was entitled to two weeks' vacation. But, as practically nobody was able to afford a vacation, only those actually left their homes whose vacation was partly paid by the ~~xxxxxx~~ respective employer. (Factory, agency, theater, etc.) Usually, one part of the vacation was paid in indirect proportion with the employees salary - but to figure on the list of those whose expenses were ~~xxxxxx~~ partly covered, quite a bit of pull was necessary. Every Party member was entitled to a partly paid vacation, but there also were non-Party members who profited by it. It was a question of operating smartly, of maneuvering.

As far as the reliability of the newspapers was concerned, one did not believe the weather forecast either because, if much rain was announced for a week or so, one knew that the comminqué would be issued (whether it actually did rain or not, was completely immaterial) that intensive rains have ruined such and such crop, which meant that it was on its way to the Soviet Union.), and ~~xxx~~ vice versa - sometimes drought would ruin the crop - somehow the climate was never right since the Communists came to power. The spiritual climate ^{where} neither. In front of movie houses, ~~xxxx~~ Italian ~~xxxx~~ films would be shown, people would stand in impressive queues; a woman by-passed the long queue and bought twenty tickets -

apparently she took care of the cultural needs of ~~a~~ ^{the division of a} factory - the indignation was loud, but the ~~cashier~~ shouted: "This comrade had bought tickets for "Lenin's October" ^{"An Unforgettable} ~~an unforgettable~~ 1919" (two Russian films absolutely nobody, but nobody was willing to see - courtesy tickets were distributed and promptly used for ~~h~~ noble purposes), and if she went through that ordeal, she certainly is entitled to preferential treatment." Everybody agreed laughingly.

Categories of people who left Hungary.

1) Those, who like myself, waited for years and years to leave. In Hungary only elderly people applied for passports (women over fifty, and men over sixty - the situation is worse in Rumania where only men over seventy and women over sixty may apply and there is absolutely no ^a guarantee that permission would be granted), which, of course, meant that once out, they would never go back to their native land (permission to leave the country was given mainly due to the extreme shortage of housing.) If I had applied for a passport, I would have lost my job immediately.

2) Jewish people who since ^{chwitz} ~~Austria~~ felt very uncomfortable on Hungarian soil. The fact is that the most hated men in Hungary happened to be Jews like Rákosi, Gerö, Révai and so forth down the line. But, at the same time, it cannot be denied that the Jews who were not members of the Communist Party, and very few were actually, suffered just as much as

anybody else who chose to be in the same volutary predicament. Hungarian Jews often deplored the fact that the small number of their race was in leading ~~x~~ positions - the Communist~~x~~ doctrines and especially subterguges, in other words, the biased look~~at~~^f manifested in economic and cultural fields, was formulated by Jewish brains - the bulk of the Jewish population was afraid of reprecussions, ~~but~~^{that} again they will have to pay en masse for the crimes of a few.

3) The younger generation left because it is thirsty for adventures-it would welcome any change practically "l'art pour l'art." I am referring to the Hungarian nomad ~~xxx~~ blood, to the wanderer type. During their thousand years history, Hungarians were known to have explored different other countries, but finally the majority wound up by saying: Extra Hungariam non est vita - that was true in the past, now they will find out that life starts beyond the boundaries of Hungary and will never want to go back, unless radical changes will take place in the near future.

4) I am sure that many Communists have left Hungary, and for different reasons of course. First, distinction should be made between honest Communists and opportunists. Very few from the first category persisted in being Communists after the Russian intervention, I'm sure. Many of them left Hungary and I feel that these people, should be accepted by any country. They will always stand up for their opinion but I feel sure, that they'll never again embrace the teachings of Communism, they

were badly burned. But, many Communists left the country during those few victorious days of the Revolution. These elements are extremely dangerous, - they were ~~Raxi~~ Fascists, Communists, and now undoubtedly will pose as Freedom Fighters - they are always ready to betray and if they did not hesitate to betray their own country, why should they have qualms of conscience about betraying any other? They were and are smart operators.

Let's get one thing^s straight: nobody, but nobody had to join the Party - of course life was immeasurably more difficult if one didn't, but millions of people chose the difficult road. Why give equal advantages to those who had always lived well? Of course, virtue's reward lies in itself, but it helps if one knows that eventually society will catch up with the bad elements. And then there were people who may not have been in the Party, but who certainly were the strongest exponents of the Party Line.

I'm mainly thinking of actors, like ^{Erz} Szö^rényi, ^{Sándor} Szabo (both have been on television in America). It may be true that, during the week of October 23, they became Freedom Fighters, because at that time that was the smart attitude to take, but nobody played leading parts in the Hungarian theater during the last ten years, unless he or she was ready to declare, and ~~stik~~ declared it periodically, that the Hungarian theater started only when social realism was introduced - that Stalin was also the father of the theater, just as he was responsible for the birth of linguistics and all sciences, that whatever comes from the West is

decadent, etc.

Actors who said this in articles, which appeared at least monthly, in newspapers, periodicals, and were quoted on the radio, and were willing to perform on festivals which commemorated great Communist heroes (I'm not mentioning the type ~~if~~ of plays they were performing - the choice was not up to them) were rewarded^{ed} by leading parts, and by Kossuth and Stalin Prizes, and occasional study trips to Moscow. I don't think it's necessary to add that invariably the same actors, writers, and scientists received these prizes, year after year, which represented enormous sums (maybe their year's salary in one lump sum), and I am pretty sure that Szörényi and Szabó did receive these honors, otherwise they simply could not have played leading parts. Why should they pose now as victims of the regime, is beyond my comprehension. I feel that the American authorities should be especially careful in their selecting of actors, writers (public figures) for the simple reason that everybody in Hungary knew where they stood and nobody will believe their appeals to be sincere. Everybody will say that humans are humans everywhere - that the same methods of getting ahead work here as there. that opportunists will have equal chance of success in America as they did in Hungary. Why not use a writer like Márai who has been a refugee from the system for the last ten years? His voice would have credit. Why believe Szörényi and Szabó when they affirm that the Western world is a paradise. They said that about Hungary and everybody, including them of course, knew that it was a lie.

People in window shops.

The regime had vacation spots, confiscated castles usually, like the one of Sárospatak and Visegrad, called Creators' Homes; artists, musicians, writers, would retire for a period of two to three months usually in these Cultural Kol^hshoses. In other ~~words~~ words, the intellectual~~s~~ and artistic élite of the country was assembled there and the creations were evidently following the Party Line. This was especially true of the "literary products" and, in, a lesser degree, also in the graphic arts, where social realism had to be the guiding ~~principle~~ principle, too. For instance, painters couldn't have come out with an abstract landscape, but they didn't have to paint public figures (Hungarian or Russian) either. As a graduation piece from the Academy of Arts, the artist had to chose a Communist theme. For example they had to paint young girls sewing at a machine and a red flag was in the background - through an open window one could see the celebration of the Workers' Day, May 1. If the artist received a commission from the government, like from a boat factory, for example, theⁿ the factory had to form the "frame" of the painting.

Hardships.

It was especially hard to get used to the ^{current} concepts of the time~~s~~. For instance, a standard question in judging a person was: how is his or her relationship toward the work performed? Relation^ship was considered satisfactory if he or she showed

"^{ity} vital_x to build up the new socialist society. The salary was not supposed to matter at all. True enough, it did not much matter whether one had it or not, because one had to starve anyhow, but a good worker had to overlook this "detail" if he or she could actively take part in building the future socialist society.

Wardrobe;

She had a couple of nylon blouses - whenever she would put them on, unknown people would walk up to her in the streetcar or in the streets and ask her to let them touch this fine, American "material", although she never admitted that it was American - one of her much admired blouses would cost in America ^b about three dollars - there no money could have bought it, unless somebody would sell the contents of an American package. Actresses, whose salary was far above the average, were the best clients for American clothes. They would buy anything - even men's winter coats and then have them resewn - labor was ~~not~~ cheap - but fine material was inaccessible, unless one could get hold of some export wools, which was far from being as strong and beautiful as English or American wools, but would at least retain its shape for a year or so. The domestic yard goods had to be ironed after each ~~x~~ wear. And even so, people looked unkempt, untidy, drab, infinitely sad.

Athletes.

As they represented Hungary in ^{the} eyes of the world, they lived

wonderfully. Athletes were treated royally indeed - film reels would be made during their training period and shown in movie houses - mothers would gasp in silence and, during the last months, expressed their indignation loudly, when these athletes were shown at "work" during their meals - six lemons in front of one of them - one year's ration for a child!

Middle Class.

The situation in Hungary seemed so hopeless to the Middle Class because it figured that no radical change could start from the inside and it was aware of the fact that it will not come from the outside. (The Middle Class knew that it was the West which really wanted peace.) That's why it was not taken in by the catch phrases of the Voice of America or Radio Free Europe; the flag waving of these stations had a strong influence on the workers, who had less political discrimination and who not^{only} believed what they heard but thought that they heard more than they actually did.

Her future plans?

She has been offered engagements by the Follies Bergères and by different nightclubs (she is an excellent dancer and she looks extremely charming). She will not accept them. They are going to go to Switzerland and become photographers. (His brother is one of the most famous "English photographers". Stage did lose

its appeal as far as she is concerned. She suffered too much in connection with it. She doesn't mind being locked in a darkroom and develop pictures of glamorous girls as long as she and her husband are going to be assured of a peaceful existence.