

"B-1"

No. 566

"B" INTERVIEW

ML p.2

I was born in 1913 in the town of Stari Bečej in Yugoslavia. After I finished Law School, I became a notary in my town. I was also editor of a democratic newspaper ~~Bečej~~ Beč. When the Germans attacked Yugoslavia in 1941, I was an officer in the old Royal Yugoslav Army. I participated in the battle against the German tanks; the Germans succeeded in crushing our regiment and imprisoned those who remained alive. This battle took place in the district which had once belonged to Hungary. I was also imprisoned and taken to a school-house. I escaped with a few of my comrades and went home. My home was then under Hungarian occupation, since the Hungarians occupied Bačka and Baranya. Since the Hungarians were afraid of an uprising on the part of Serbian population, they arrested all those whom they considered dangerous especially members of the intelligentsia. I was arrested in May 1941 and then freed again. I participated in organizing the united liberation movement which was being established throughout Yugoslavia. The Communists did not yet participate in this movement; they ~~came~~ <sup>entered</sup> it on the 12th of June when the Germans attacked Russia. I was forced to go underground because the Hungarian authorities threatened to arrest me. In 1941 they condemned us to death in absentia for organizing an uprising against them, but they never succeeded in arresting me. There was a price of 10,000 pengős on my head, ~~then~~ <sup>and</sup> there were posters with my picture, asking people to turn me in. The Četniks and the Tito group were united until October or November 1941 and then they broke into two parts. Our group didn't have a Mihailovich movement; the entire Bačka Baranya was under Tito.

The reason for Mihailovich's failure was the fact that <sup>his</sup> pro-Serb nationality policy was refused by the majority of the Yugoslav people. The Communists did not call themselves Communists, but "Patriots". Tito became lonely towards the end of 1942 and accepted the programme of liberation movement without even knowing Tito's name. I don't feel that the success of the partisans was due to Tito; it was the Yugoslav people and especially the intelligentsia which organized the liberation movement and the Communists merely made use of it and pushed themselves to the head of the movement as they usually do. Although I must give them their due; they are excellent organizers. Furthermore, I approve of Tito's nationality policy and disapprove of Mihailovich's great Serb-policy which wanted to isolate the Serbs and put them above all the other nationalities and thus prevented the consolidation of the country. The fact that the British officially refused aid to Mihailovich and gave all their aid to Tito, helped to push the Yugoslavs on Tito's side. In 1944, before the Russians came in, my part of Yugoslavia was liberated. This part of liberated Yugoslavia was the only one which had a military instead of civilian authority, with headquarters in Novi Sad. The reason for this was that in 1941 and '42 the Hungarian authorities committed atrocities in this part of the country and there was a danger of revenge on the part of the Serbian population. I was sent as military commander to this territory in order to prevent atrocities against the Hungarians here. In 1947, when I was in Hungary, Tildy, the President of the Republic presented me with

a decoration for my role in this. Before the end of the war I was sent to Hungary to represent Yugoslavia in Debrecen, where the temporary Hungarian Government was being formed. I received this post because I was familiar with Hungarian problems, preparations etc.. I arrived in Debrecen on the 10th of March 1945. In Debrecen there were Russian, British, American and Yugoslav Missions; later in Budapest there was also a Czech Mission. When Budapest was liberated, we all were transferred there as members of the Allied Control Commission, whose President was Voroshilov. I knew him personally. At first I dealt with economic questions, and then worked on cultural problems. The Head of the Mission at this time was Colonel Teitsmilg, ~~Colonel Teitsmilg, Colonel Teitsmilg, Colonel Teitsmilg~~. Then the Allied Control Commission was dissolved, I returned to Belgrade, resigned from the Army and received a post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which was the only non-Communist Ministry at this time. In the Army I would have had to enter the Communist Party in order to make any sort of a career. I was named First Counsellor of the Budapest Legation. In July 1948 the Minister was named Ambassador to Moscow and I became Chargé d'Affaires of the Budapest Embassy. I remained there until October 1948 when I was arrested by the Hungarian and Russian authorities.

In June 1948, the Yugoslav Press Attaché was arrested and charged with murdering a man at my orders. He was imprisoned in Budapest for 5 years without trial. At the end of 5 years he was ~~sentenced~~ <sup>tried</sup> sentenced and eventually received an amnesty. He then returned

to Yugoslavia. I think it must have been the Hungarian regime's plan at this time, to use Zhivko Boarov, the Press Attaché, as the alleged liaison between Rajk and Tito in the Rajk trial. But then it must have appeared to them that he did not have a high enough position; they must have <sup>decided</sup> that they had to arrest the head of the Yugoslav Mission because and it was my bad luck at this time to be the acting head in the absence of the Minister. When the Yugoslavs enquired after me, after my arrest, the Hungarians told them that I had defected with the rest of the Yugoslavs to the Cominform side. This was after the Yugoslav-Cominform break. There must have been two weeks of *vacillation* and uncertainty after my arrest because it was only two weeks later that the Moscow papers announced our defection. I suppose the Yugoslavs must have believed that I had defected and resigned themselves to it. I never found out. When I became a defendant in the Rajk trial, ~~they~~ <sup>the Hungarians</sup> didn't say that I had defected, but that Tito sent me to work with Rajk in establishing a bourgeois democratic regime in Hungary and to kill Rákosi, Gerö and Parkas. There were three chief charges against me:

- No.1 I was the liaison between Tito and Rajk, and participated in Rajk's plot against the regime.
- No.2 As head of the Embassy I instructed Boarov to murder a Yugoslav student in Hungary. Boarov supposedly committed the murder in front of several witnesses.
- No.3 During my *entire* stay in Hungary, I was a spy and head of the Yugoslav Intelligence Service in Hungary.

As a member of the Allied Control Commission and later of the

Yugoslav Legation, I of course knew everyone who had anything to do with Yugoslav/Hungarian relations. I knew the Yugoslav leaders during and after the war, I knew the Hungarian politicians and the heads of the Hungarian Communist Party; I also knew the Soviet personnel in Hungary, Voroshilov, Smiridov, Pushkin etc., as well as the Czech, British and American diplomats and military personnel.

I knew Rajk quite well; he was president of the Hungarian/Yugoslav Society, while I was the official Yugoslav representative, and a member of its presidium. The first president of the Hungarian/Yugoslav Society was Mrs. Zoltán Tildy. Later she became honorary president and Rajk became president in 1947 or '48. Michael Károlyi was the second honorary president. I knew Ferenc Nagy, with whom I discussed the question of Trieste. In a speech held at Pécs, Nagy said that he would be happy if Yugoslavia received Trieste. One Part of the agreement between Yugoslavia and Hungary was that the Hungarian Government would back Yugoslavia's claim to Trieste and Hungary would receive a free zone in the city.

I discussed the question of a possible Central European Confederation with Rajk and others. This was all my own idea; I received no instructions from my Government to discuss this problem. Tito didn't want this type of federation; he wanted a Balkan federation. I remember telling Rajk that I thought of a Central European solution in terms of a confederation from the Baltics to the Balkans, which would include Austria, Poland

Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Czechoslovakia. Both Rajk and I thought that such a confederation would have a practical basis and would especially be an excellent solution for the economic problems of this area. Politically it would have the advantage of not belonging closely either to Western Europe or to the Soviet Union. This was my own idea. At first Rajk liked this idea - I told him about Keesuth's Federation plans - and said that this could be established on a wider basis. I told him that to the countries involved, the Russians are a completely <sup>Asiatic</sup> ~~Asiatic~~ culture, and although these countries are close to Western Europe, both their economic life and their culture were different from the West. I added that this confederation would, of course, have a free democratic regime, with <sup>free</sup> ~~free~~ elections, etc.. later Rajk pulled back and was less <sup>eager</sup> ~~willing~~ to agree with my ideas. He must have told the authorities about these conversations, because, when I was arrested I was confronted with evidence regarding these conversations.

Rajk said that "there is a big difference between us and the Russians". He said that the French Communists were a culturally, morally etc. different from the Russian and Hungarian Communists. One could talk quite freely about such matters with Rajk. It was very courageous of him to make such an admission. Being a Communist, he said that such a Central European Confederation could only be run by the Communists, but I replied that this was a question of the future and that the people would decide in free elections what sort of Government they wanted. He agreed with this. There

was no discussion, or question, of placing Tito at the head of this Confederation.

Rajk and I met quite often; I visited his apartment, we hunted together, and he sometimes came to the Yugoslav Legation. We only discussed these things privately, without any witnesses.

The Yugoslavs liked Rajk because he was not a Jew, because he had <sup>been in</sup> ~~was~~ not ~~an~~ emigration in the Soviet Union, and because he was a man of character and a true Magyar. Rajk had an above average intelligence as against Kadar who is a mediocrity. He was courageous and capable of evolution. He was not a blind and fanatic Communist; he could tell the difference between the truth and a fairy-tale. I had the feeling that he didn't like the Russians and that his wife didn't either. At a reception held by the Russians, the latter were trying to force people to drink too much. The Russian Colonel tried to force Mrs. Rajk to drink and she refused. Rajk intervened, telling his wife to drink the glass which was forced on her, but he said it in a tone from which one could tell that he had great contempt for Russians. I could see from his behaviour, that he hated them. Later, when I talked to him, I had the feeling that he accepted the necessity of Russian-Hungarian friendship only out of Communist discipline. He never learned the Russian language. Rajk was a convinced Communist but I think he was capable of evolution and development; he was a little like Djilas in this respect.

I also talked to other Hungarians about the possibility of confederation in terms of Yugoslav-Hungarian friendship, and getting

rid the <sup>of the</sup> Chauvinism which made our country's mission in the East. Some of the people with whom I discussed this were Pál Auer, Dezső Kerecsényi, a member of the peasant Party and Minister of Culture, Ferenc Erdei, etc.. The question of a Federation was ~~the~~ <sup>a frequent</sup> topic of conversation in those days; we discussed Kossuth's Federation ideas, etc..

As far as Tito's official line with regard to a Federation was concerned, he attempted to bring about a Balkan Confederation with Bulgaria and Yugoslavia; later he also talked to the Hungarians and Rumanians about this. There were no official attempts on the part of Yugoslavia to establish a Yugoslav-Hungarian Federation, at least not that I know of. Tito may have discussed it with Rakosi, without my knowledge. My conversations about the idea of Federation were entirely undertaken on my own initiative and were not official.

That was the break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The decisive battle between the Russians and the Yugoslavs took place in December 1947 or January 1948, when Yugoslavia finally rejected the role of satellite in the Soviet orbit. The talks undertaken in Moscow by Karadjic and others of the Yugoslav Delegation ended unsuccessfully and when they returned from Moscow, the struggle began. Our first official news of this at the Legation was when we received an official telegram in February 1948, forbidding all contact with Soviet personnel and if any such contact proved necessary, the special permission of Belgrade was required. Then came the Yugoslav-Soviet correspondence and then at the end of



July 1948 the Cominform Resolution.

The Hungarians, even the Communists, only heard of the conflict in May, when the Soviet Party informed the other Communist Parties of what had taken place. We felt no coolness on the part of the Hungarians in our official or non-official contacts until the first letter which started the public conflict between Rákosi and Tito. In answer to Rákosi's letter of condemnation, the Yugoslavs sent a letter to the Hungarian C.P. in which they stated that Rákosi and the Hungarian C.P. had no moral or political right to interfere in Yugoslav and Russian affairs. The person who delivered this letter to Rákosi, told me that Rákosi flew into a rage when he read the letter, then sat with his head between his two hands, trying to control himself.

In May 1948, or around that time, a Hungarian C.P. Congress or some similar meeting took place. The official line toward Yugoslavia was still the same although the letters to the Parties, informing them of what had taken place, were in the process of preparation. Stalin, Tito and Rákosi were applauded at this Congress, in this order. Rákosi must have been furious, but for some reason he didn't dare to stop this officially; before the Cominform Resolution he was unable to tell what the future would bring, but he tried to tone down the applause. Another thing which I noticed was that Parkas, who had just come back from a Yugoslav visit, held some sort of a Communist Party Conference in April or May, at which Tito and <sup>the</sup> popular front in Yugoslavia were attacked and the latter was denounced as a betrayal of the

Leninist ideals. At official receptions now, we could feel that the Hungarians behaved very coolly towards us.

Rákosi's first letter to the Yugoslavs after the break, gave 100% support to the Russians. Rákosi was not popular in Russia at this time and he tried to gain Soviet favours with his vociferous attack on Tito. In 1947, Dimitrov had said to ~~the~~ a Hungarian, "what is this old ass doing in Hungary?" I think this indicates that Rákosi was not in favour in the Soviet Union (at this time Dimitrov was still a member of the inner circle and therefore his opinions probably reflect the views of the Soviet Party). One could tell in other words ways also that Rákosi was not popular in the Soviet Union. It was only later that Dimitrov lost Soviet favour. He once offered to act as go-between between the Yugoslavs and the Russians in their conflict and Djilas angrily exclaimed "who are they to want to be go-betweens between us --<sup>2</sup>). Of all the Satellite Parties, Rákosi was the sharpest critic of Tito in this period - only the Albanians were as vociferous in their opposition. Rákosi did this for personal reasons; to strengthen his position he had with the Soviet Union. Also the personal relations between Tito and Rákosi were never of the best, even in the days of friendship. In the last few years, Tito was the most important of the satellite leaders and had a higher position than Rákosi in this respect. One could feel that Rákosi was jealous. After all, he had been secretary of the Comintern in 1922 and had a great deal of authority and yet, after the war, Tito surpassed everyone in

importance. Rákosi often talked about Tito's past in the following terms: "in those days I had such and such a high position in the Comintern, this is what we did in <sup>the</sup> International --- I remember ~~the~~<sup>a</sup> young man who arrived one day; nobody knew him ---" etc. In other words he always emphasized the fact that Tito was still a nobody, when he, Rákosi, was already a Communist Star. It is not an accident that, when Tito visited Budapest in November or December '47, Rákosi got sick and went to Moscow to avoid having to play a less important role than Tito.

The relations between Gomulka and the Yugoslavs were never very good; when Gomulka practiced self-criticism, the Yugoslav Communist around Tito laughed at him and said: "it is not enough that he throws ashes on his head with one hand, he had to do it with two hands", ~~and they laughed~~. The Russians wanted to force Tito into the same position as Gomulka, they wanted him to practice self-criticism and then arrest him. In the last few years now there have been better relations between the Poles and the Yugoslavs, but there are still difficulties for personal reasons, for reasons of personal conflict between Gomulka and Tito.

On May 1st 1948, after the exchange of letters, but before the Cominform Resolution, it was obvious that there was something wrong about Rajk. I was in Yugoslavia on leave at the time and when the Minister ~~Mrazovich~~ came from Budapest, he said something strange about Rajk. He said that at the May 1st celebration Rajk was not on the platform with the Communists and Government leaders, but he was down below the platform somewhere. He was

still Minister of Interior at the time. Mrazovich said that Rajk looked sad. Then Prime Minister Dinnyés, who was a non-Communist, went down to him and asked him to join the Government group on the platform; Rajk resisted, but Dinnyés pulled him up by the hand. None of the Communists asked him to join them on the platform, however. In August Rajk became Foreign Minister and was also elected Secretary General of the People's <sup>Front,</sup> ~~Front~~. The same thing occurred to the victims of the Russian purges; they were also named to important posts before they were arrested, to demonstrate that their arrests had not been previously plotted.

The Boarov affair occurred after the Cominform Resolution. It was a crude business. A Yugoslav University student, studying in Budapest, was murdered or committed suicide. The Hungarian Government claims that Boarov, the Yugoslav Press Attaché, was his murderer, but they were unable to arrest him because he had diplomatic immunity and stayed at the Yugoslav Legation. I gave Gerő, the Deputy Foreign Minister, an official note, protesting against the provocation. The answer was that they had <sup>proof</sup> ~~proof~~ of Boarov's guilt and asked that they be allowed to question him. They asked Belgrade for instructions and Tito agreed that Boarov be questioned and that the Hungarians be allowed to give us evidences of Boarov's guilt. The Hungarians refused to hold the interrogation at the Yugoslav Legation because it had diplomatic immunity and insisted that the interrogation be held at the AVH. Meanwhile they threatened to break diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia if we did not comply. Tito was frightened; at this time

he still wanted to do everything in his power to remain friends with Hungary. He carried this so far that he ordered Simich, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, to write a letter to the Hungarians, personally apologising for the "provocation" in the Yugoslav note. Tito agreed to have Boarov taken to the AVH for interrogation. The Foreign Ministry sent a high-ranking official from Belgrade to participate in the interrogation. Vejvoda and Gavrilovich took Boarov to AVH Headquarters in July 1948; meanwhile the AVH surrounded the Yugoslav Legation with 50 or 60 men, so that we were in a state of siege. As retaliation, the same thing was done to the Hungarian Legation in Belgrade. Anyway, Boarov was taken to the AVH, was arrested by Gábor Péter, and Vejvoda and Gavrilovich were told to go home. They protested, and Vejvoda refused to leave AVH Headquarters, but sent Gavrilovich back to the Legation. I communicated with Belgrade by telephone and telegraph, and our Foreign Ministry instructed Vejvoda to return to Belgrade immediately. The Yugoslavs made efforts to do something for Boarov. When the Hungarians forced Boarov to sign a confession and published the facsimile in the Hungarian Newspapers, the Yugoslavs insisted that Boarov see a lawyer or else that the Yugoslav Government representative be allowed to talk to him. The Hungarian authorities refused this and merely allowed me to visit the Hungarian Foreign Minister in order to see what proofs they had of Boarov's guilt. Vejvoda and I visited the Foreign Ministry and there they gave us some fairy-tales, telling us that they found a collar stiffener belonging to Boarov on the scene of the crime, etc.. They also

showed us a copy of the medical examination of the dead man which had some suspicious things in it. For instance the physical description of the corpse did not tally with the description of the dead man, there <sup>were</sup> bullets found in the room from two different pistols etc.. In spite of this, however, the Foreign Minister, Molnár, claimed that this was sufficient proof of Boarov's guilt. We failed to receive permission to visit the unfortunate man in prison. Boarov returned to Yugoslavia when he was arrested and now is lying low. Before Tito left for Moscow, he talked for three hours with Boarov, undoubtedly about his experiences in Hungary. The Hungarians originally didn't want to allow him to return to Yugoslavia, but the Yugoslavs intervened on his behalf.

It is a little known fact that Tito's brother lives in Sopron in a new village settlement. He is a very old man, who was a railway worker in the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and hardly speaks Serbo-Croat any more. He has a young Hungarian wife. The Hungarians tried to use him against Tito, but apparently in vain; he was a very old man. He had a son and a daughter; the son was a member of the Arrow-Cross Party, ~~was~~ <sup>or</sup> else of the Imrédy Party. His Hungarian name is Brassói. Brassói returned from the West, illegally, to Hungary after the war, and then went to Yugoslavia to join Tito. Tito's niece used to be a Kindergarten teacher in Villány, Bannanya County. Tito took her under his wings and made a great lady out of her, giving her English tutors, elegant clothes etc. . The old man, Tito's brother, refused to go to Yugoslavia; his wife may have been afraid, that, if she allowed

him to go to Yugoslavia, she would have lost her husband. I visited them several times with Tito's son. Tito's brother was a primitive old man. Once, when he returned from a visit to Tito in Yugoslavia, he came to me and said that he would like to talk to the Hungarian Prime Minister who was Ferenc Nagy at the time. I refused to act as official go-between because I had no instructions to this effect. The old man then went to the Social-Democratic Party and talked to someone there. Pretty soon Marosán came to the Legation with him to see if he was really Tito's brother. Marosán and some others then took him to Ferenc Nagy. Belgrade later informed me officially that the old man had no official instructions to see Nagy. When I was arrested, they tried to blow this up into some sort of plot.

To show how absurd was the charge that I was the head of the Yugoslav Intelligence Service in Hungary, I would like to emphasize that Tito cooperated closely with the Hungarian Communist Party, and, although the Yugoslav Intelligence Service did operate in Hungary, the leader of this was not the Minister of the Legation, but other employees. Tito was extremely loyal to his agreements with the Hungarians. This Intelligence Service functioned until 1947, when the Treaty of friendship was signed between Yugoslavia and Hungary. In this there was a secret clause stating that the AVO and the Yugoslav Intelligence Service would cooperate closely and exchange their information. In accordance with this Treaty Rankovich dissolved the Yugoslav Intelligence Service in Hungary and supported the agreement regarding ~~the~~ mutual cooperation. Those

who were later arrested as Yugoslav spies, were innocent. The secret <sup>1</sup> cause of the Treaty also established cooperation in the military and political fields, and between the two foreign Ministries. With regard to military cooperation, the Hungarians gave the Yugoslavs their secret plan of re-organization of the Hungarian Army, describing the types of armaments, cadres, Military Academies, etc.. Hungarian officers were to be sent for training to Yugoslavia and to the Soviet Union. Pálffy gave me his plan with the knowledge of the Hungarian Government and in accordance with this Treaty. Later, in the trial, this was blown up into part of the alleged plot between Rajk and the Yugoslavs. According to the Treaty, there was <sup>to be</sup> a complete exchange of information; that is, if the AVO received some information relating to the Yugoslavs, it informed the Yugoslav authorities about it and vice versa. This cooperation lasted a few months and continued until the break between the two countries. Once for instance, a Hungarian agent stole a report from the American Legation, and a copy of this was given to the Yugoslavs. With regard to the ~~charges~~ charges against Rajk, I know that when Tito was in Hungary in December 1947, there were important meetings between Hungarian Statesmen and him. There was a meeting between Rankovich, the Yugoslav Minister of Interior and Rajk, which took place on a train on the Yugoslav border during a hunting trip. Djilas and some others were present, and I acted as interpreter. At this meeting between Rankovich and Rajk, they agreed to mutual cooperation of the sort that I discussed before, and there were also some meetings between Yugoslavs and Hungarian generals discussing



a military cooperation. It was as a result of these talks that I received a plan from Pálffy, later on, about the Hungarian Army. It was Tito himself who discussed the question of political cooperation <sup>with the Hungarians</sup> in the presence of Velebit, who, according to later Russian claims, was a British spy.

In October 1948, I was arrested in my apartment in Budapest in defiance of my diplomatic community. Then they took me to AVO Headquarters at Andrássy Avenue 60, where for days nobody talked to me. I was in a cell of approximately 2 x 2 m, which contained a table and a chair and in which one could only sit and could not lie down. I don't know how long I was there. I had to sleep with my head on the table. Then they interrogated me. Some un-known young man talked to me and said that I had better admit everything since they had proofs and witnesses, naming me as the one who gave instructions to Boarov to have the Yugoslav student murdered. I was outraged and protested against ~~against~~ this accusation. Finally I demanded that they confront me with Boarov, which they didn't want to do. I stood up and kicked over the chair and the table with my foot. Now I was taken to a cell which was even worse; there was no table or chair and I could only stand in it. I don't know how long I was there, it may have been days or weeks. When I was again taken to the interrogators, they said they would confront me with Boarov, who would tell me that it was I who incited him to this murder. Boarov came in and to their surprise he seemed extremely ashamed and disturbed. I was very forceful with Boarov and he withdrew the accusation. Then

both of us were taken back to our cells. In my case it was ~~was~~ again the cell with the chair and table. At the next interrogation, an elderly civilian and two others with him, told me that they believed what I said and agreed that I didn't incite Boarov to this murder, but as an intelligent man I had to realize that they couldn't simply free me after this experience. They said that they <sup>had</sup> found a solution for me and offered that if I decided to defect, they would give me the same status as to the other Yugoslav defectors. I refused this offer and was again returned to the same cell. At the next interrogation I was told that they were surprised at my stubbornness, but that in spite of this they would be human enough to do something for me. They offered to take me to live with the other defectors, which, they pointed out, was much better than staying in prison. This time I didn't protest because <sup>I decided to escape</sup> ~~they were human enough~~ at the first opportunity. An additional threat was that they told me that they could handle this affair without me; they had a double who looked exactly like me, and he <sup>do</sup> would <sup>do</sup> what they wanted him to, while I could lie in a cell and nobody would know. They brought this man in, and there was an amazing resemblance between us. I don't know who this man was, I never heard of him since. I was taken to a villa <sup>in</sup> Buda which was under AVO guard. All the other Yugoslav defectors lived in this villa. I was under constant supervision and therefore couldn't escape but I could walk freely within the house. Under supervision, and together with the other defectors, as a group, I was taken to the movies, on walks and to some lectures where I

could be seen as a member of the defector group. The other Yugoslav defectors tried to convince me that I had best accept the Hungarian regime's offer and sign a statement according to which I transferred my ~~allegiance~~<sup>allegiance</sup> from the Yugoslav Government to the Cominform side. This statement was published, with my name included among the defectors, although I agreed to do no such thing and did not sign the statement. Since I consistently refused to defect, I was arrested again in April or May 1949. Meanwhile I had had no contact with anyone on the outside. Rajk was arrested in May 1949. The Belgrade papers published news of my defection or alleged defection even before the Hungarian papers.

After my arrest I was again taken to AVO Headquarters on Andrásy út, where I was kept for many days without being interrogated. Finally, <sup>when the</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>did take place,</sup> interrogation, <sup>had</sup> they told me that they <sup>now</sup> discovered new proofs of my guilt; they said that now they were able to see more clearly than before, what I had done. They claimed that Tito had sent me to Hungary to participate with Rajk in a plot to overthrow the Hungarian regime and establish a bourgeois democratic State. I started to laugh and they were highly indignant. At this point they put me in chains. At the next interrogation they said that Rajk and Palffy had admitted everything and that it was in vain that I denied my guilt. I kept up my denials, however, and was chained again. The next day they gave me a confession with Rajk's signature, admitting the meetings between us and stating that I was Palffy's and Rajk's liaison with the Yugoslavs. The interrogations went on; I don't know how long it all lasted, it

must have been months. Meanwhile they tried to mix in Révai too as well as his brother-in-law Zoltán Szántó who was Hungarian Minister to Yugoslavia. They asked me what part Révai had in the plot and claimed that Rajk and Révai were planning to organize a Party Congress which would approve of the liquidation of Rákosi, Gerő and Farkas and which would then name Rajk Prime Minister of Hungary. I naturally kept denying it all.

I knew Révai well; I met him at receptions and parties and occasionally visited him. I used to discuss literature or various theoretical questions with him. I remember a reception at the apartment of Foreign Minister Gyöngyössi, at which Révai and Bán of the Peasant Party argued about Democracy.

There were other variations in which they included Szönyi, Szalai and Korondy in the alleged plot. I had never met Szönyi or Korondy at all. Then they brought in the name of Justus whom I knew, but only very casually. They constantly repeated the story to me and showed me forged confessions of the people involved. They also attempted to involve Lajos Dányés and Zoltán Tildy, but then they dropped this line.

Then I was transferred from Andrásy Avenue 60 to Buda. Here the AVO had three villas to which I was taken in an ordinary car with my eyes covered and my hands chained. Two people were sitting next to me and one next to the chauffeur. The car was curtained but not in the front. The cover slipped off my eyes a little and so I could see where we were going. These villas must have been around Varázs Street. I was taken to an underground cell. It was

really terrible here; Andrassy Avenue 60 only gave me a taste of what real torture was. At first I was in a cell without windows, (there were no windows at Andrassy Avenue either) but when the interrogation began, I was taken to a cement-walled cell with a small quantity of water on the floor and a small bench where one could only crouch. It was impossible to sleep because if I fell asleep I fell off the bench and into the water. This went on for days until I was almost dead from exhaustion. When the interrogations started again, they tried to reason with me telling me that there was no point in ruining myself in this way. Thus there was constant physical torture and periods when they tried <sup>to</sup> sweet-talk me. They said that everyone had confessed and that my denials were in vain since I would not be believed at the trial, if Rajk and all the others confessed that I was guilty. They told me that as an intelligent chap it was to my best interest to confess. This went on for a long time and finally I was in such a state that I cared about nothing any longer; I merely wanted to get a little sleep. I told myself that it would be best if I did what they wanted me to do, but for some reason which I can't explain, when it came to the interrogation, I kept saying no, no, no.

One day they said that they would confront me with Rajk, Falfy and the others. They confronted me with each of them separately on different days and they all confessed. Rajk coolly and calmly admitted the most fantastic things; I just stared at him in consternation. He said that there had been a plot of which he was

~~confessed to me~~ the head, that he <sup>had</sup> wanted to murder Rákosi, and that <sup>at</sup> his meetings with the Yugoslav officials on the train they plotted the details of Rákosi's murder. I said that as far as he was concerned this may be true if he said so but that I knew nothing about it, and that these conversations didn't take place in my presence. I <sup>had</sup> received no injections yet as this time and I don't believe that Rajk was under the influence of a drug injected into him either, when he made this first confession. I don't know how they got him to confess, but later he withdrew his first statement. Perhaps they used his wife and child to pressure him into a confession, promising to spare them if he confessed.

The most terrible was when they confronted me with Pálffy and he confessed. I was completely outraged and shouted at him <sup>that</sup> he ~~was~~ <sup>should</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ashamed to say such disgraceful things. He turned red, looked ashamed and said no more. Pálffy's confession consisted of the claim that old Hungarian gendarmen units were turned into a military organization with the aid of Yugoslavia, and wore Yugoslav uniforms. These units would be used against Hungary by the plotters. He claimed that I was the Yugoslav liaison involved in establishing this military organization. He was the weakest of the whole crowd and his early breakdown probably contributed to Rajk's decision to confess. Pálffy admitted anything they asked him to, and cried all the time. When I first heard Rajk's confession, I was speechless with shock and couldn't answer him, but by the time I was confronted with Pálffy, I was able to answer and counter-attack. After the argument with Pálffy, I was chained an

thrown down the stairs to the cellar where I passed out. The next time they confronted me with Szönyi, and I truthfully said that I didn't know him.

The interrogations at the AVH villa were not directed by Hungarians but by Russians. General Belkin, a Soviet Lt. General appeared to be the head of the interrogating staff. I knew General Belkin from the time when he ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> a member of the Soviet Mission in the Allied Control Commission. I often danced with his wife at parties. I was very much shocked when I first saw him and realized that he was in charge of the case. He was about 56 years old then, of medium height, balding, red hair, with a big belly, weak arms and crooked legs and a rather soft, unhealthy look about him. He often talked to me, telling me that there was no sense in my being stubborn, etc.. In prison I had hallucinations about him; in these hallucinations his face changed, he had lion's teeth and a tail, and he beat up a cloud of dust with his tail, and I was in the middle of this cloud of dust. Gábor Péter, who was also present at the interrogations, ~~was also present at the interrogations~~ <sup>or in his absence</sup> ~~represented~~ a Colonel Szűcs. Each of us had a separate interrogating officer and when the prisoners were confronted with each other, ~~the interrogating officers, plus the above~~ ~~inter-officials were always present.~~ <sup>their interrogating officers, plus the above</sup> ~~inter-officials were always present.~~

It was at this time that I planned my escape. I knew that Saturday afternoon and Sunday there were no interrogations. I therefore stated that I had decided to confess and would like to write my confession. I asked for paper and pencil, <sup>that</sup> so I could write my

confession on Sunday. I knew how the villa was organized, I knew where I was, having looked around very carefully, when I was taken from one villa to the other to be interrogated. They were very happy that I had decided to confess and told me that they would find some extenuating circumstances which would give me a lighter sentence. I was taken to the second floor of the villa where it was light enough to write. There were steel bars on the windows. They even gave me peaches, so happy were they at my promised confession. One AVO man sat on my right and the other on my left side. This lasted until noon. The officer on duty came in occasionally to see how I was doing. I wrote poems etc. in Serbo-Croat, thinking that if I wrote in my own language, they would not know that it is not my confession I am preparing. I got lunch in this room. This bluff went on until the evening. That afternoon there was a big storm with lots of rain and therefore it became dark quite early. When it was dark, I asked to go to the toilet, where they left the doors open in order to be able to watch me. The villa was arranged so that there were guards on the first floor, and the interrogating rooms were on the second floor. There was a terrace on each side of the second floor, the terrace doors opened from the corridor and the keys were on the corridor side of the door. On one of the terraces there was a thick rubber-covered telephone cable, which led to the wooden fence of the villa. It was my plan to get to the terrace, and with the <sup>half of the</sup> cable, ~~and reach the fence~~ <sup>I could climb down to the yard and</sup> reach the fence. In the yard, I knew, the guards stood only on each corner of the



house, and therefore I could avoid their notice. I knew that if I got to the wooden fence, I would be free. The fence was not wired for electricity.

When I got back from the toilet, I asked one of the guards to close the windows because I felt cold. I knew that there was a psychological quirk; if one person went to the window to close it, the other one would watch it. I was right; when <sup>one of</sup> all the guards went to the window to close it, the other turned away from me to watch him do it, and while they were distracted, I jumped to the door, turned out the light and locked the door from the outside. The fact that there was a key on the outside, was against the rules. I ran to the terrace which had the telephone cable, but the door was locked and there was no key in the door. The door to the other terrace was open however, it was only when I opened it that I realized that at night there were guards with machine guns on the terrace. They rushed to the door and we pulled at the terrace door from each side. Meanwhile the guards downstairs heard the noise, rushed upstairs and caught me. I fainted; they beat me up and stepped on me, and then threw me into my cell. Within an hour, everyone was there: Pétér, a Russian general etc. in spite of the fact that it was a Sunday and I must have disturbed their weekend. After this, they kept me in chains on my hands and feet. After this, I refused to talk, kept completely quiet, realizing that this was the end. For two weeks after my escape attempt, I was beaten up daily. Meanwhile, for a long time, there were no interrogations. I thought up a new

and final plan to outwit them. I decided that my only opportunity was to deny everything at the actual trial and meanwhile pretend that we were confessing. When the interrogations started again, they told me that my denials were in vain and that there were almost twenty witnesses against me. They said that they could hang me in spite of my denials. I knew that they wouldn't murder me in prison because I was needed at the trial, and I thought that it was unlikely that they would use my double to substitute for me at the trial. He looked very much like me, although he was perhaps a little taller. Finally I said that I would confess although I could not agree to confess to all the charges against me. When I was taken to the toilet, I carved into the wall with my nails a sign in French, saying "at the Court trial <sup>tell only</sup> ~~you~~ ~~own~~ ~~me~~ the truth". I knew that Rajk, Pálffy and Justus knew French and I thought that the Hungarian guards would be less likely to notice it, if it were in French. For a whole day my sign was not noticed. Then I became aware of confusion and noise and all the guards were changed. Our cells were searched. Meanwhile I chewed up my nails, and they thought <sup>the sign</sup> ~~it~~ was done with some sort of instrument. They never found out who did it.

Before the trial, General Belkin talked to me for hours, telling me that this was just a political trial and that I would receive a heavy sentence but probably not a death sentence, and would soon be amnest<sup>i</sup><sub>^</sub>ed. He said, he couldn't understand how an intelligent man like me could stay on the side of Tito, when in a few months Tito would be in Soviet hands, and ~~that~~ the Soviets would wage war

on Tito. He said that when the Soviet Union conquered Yugo-  
slavia, I would be tried again in my own country and my <sup>present</sup> be-  
haviour ~~was~~ would determine how I would be treated at this Yugo-  
slav trial. He said that my confession now would be considered  
an extenuating circumstance. I was sure that they wouldn't keep  
me ~~me~~ alive in spite of what he said, however. Some people say  
that Rajk was promised his life if he confessed. I didn't think  
for a moment that ~~they meant this,~~ <sup>they meant this,</sup> and I am convinced that Rajk  
didn't believe it either. Once one confesses to something like  
this, one becomes a witness to the criminality of the regime, and  
I was certain that they wouldn't leave such a witness alive. I  
knew about the Moscow Purge Trials; their victims were killed  
too. Therefore I don't believe that this argument worked with  
Rajk. Actually, it was easy to resist until Rajk con-  
fessed. After his confession, I found it much more difficult.  
Perhaps the most powerful weapon they had was my desire for sleep.  
After a while, the only thing I wanted was to sleep, and nothing  
else seemed to matter. At this last stage, we had to learn a  
piece of the trial, the answers to the judge's questions, every  
day, and only if we were letter-perfect were we allowed to sleep.  
Then they started rehearsals of the trial, although they didn't  
tell us they were rehearsals, but pretended that it was the real  
trial. At that time we all received injections of some drug. These  
alleged trials took place several times and so some of them were  
obviously rehearsals. I only knew that the real trial was over  
when I was transferred to prison. I realised that my French sign  
was seen by my fellow prisoners because in their clear moments

they resisted at the rehearsals. They didn't tell us that these were rehearsals, because they wanted to discover how the defendants intended to behave at the trial. At first the injections were not strong enough and thus they were able to tell who was planning to resist. When this first happened, <sup>none of us</sup> ~~we~~ knew that it was <sup>only a rehearsal. one of the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>rehearsals</sup> there was quite a lot of confusion in the exchange between Rajk and me, because they gave us too powerful a dose of the drug and we talked all sorts of nonsense at cross purposes to each other. At other times, when they gave us too small a dose of the drug, we both resisted. <sup>P</sup> Ralfy never resisted, he merely cried. Ognjenovich resisted when he could and Justus told his story in such a fashion that everyone could see this was a farce; he gesticulated like an actor and his tone of voice was such that one could see he was merely parroting a memorized text. He made gestures like a ham actor and <sup>proclaimed:</sup> ~~and~~ "yes, I am the Hungarian Trotsky". He was not mixed up in the plot, he was merely charged with being a French spy and the Hungarian Trotsky. In my clear moments, such as at the first rehearsal, which I ~~thought~~ thought was the actual trial, I resisted. These rehearsals took place in the actual Court Room; there were present the President of the Court, the lawyers etc. and the Court Room was full of people; only the size of the crowd changed from time to time. If I remember correctly, we went through five or six so-called trials, some of which, of course, were only rehearsals. It was very difficult to see who was there because it was hard for me to make out faces and people. As I later found

out, the trial took place from September 16th to September 29th 1949.

I don't know what drugs were injected; it made me drowsy and I felt that nothing in the world mattered any longer. My entire will-power was gone. Occasionally it was as if I <sup>were</sup> shaken by something, something like thunder, and then I realized what was going on, but soon fell into a drowsy apathy again. When they mentioned the charge that I had ordered Boarov to murder somebody I suddenly realized what this meant, that they were accusing me of murder, and I couldn't accept it in spite of my drugged condition, and my drowsiness. When I was accused of this crime, I woke up and resisted; saying no, it's not true, but I was unable to explain it. As far as Rajk was concerned, he had to tell a very long story which I was unable to follow mentally. While he talked I slept and thus his confession didn't shock me into consciousness. Towards the end, in the last few weeks, I was unable to realize the significance of what was going on; I ~~was~~ lost all direction.

I saw my lawyer, a man named Ne'vay, only once. He came to see me before the rehearsals, but I said I didn't need a lawyer, that I would defend myself. I never talked with him again. At the rehearsals he made accusations against me and once when I had a clear moment, I stood up to attack him, to answer his accusations, but the guards pulled me back, and anyway by the time I <sup>had</sup> said the first word, I forgot the whole thing and sank back into apathy.

In my opinion there is not a single person in this regime who can

resist, if they want to break him. I was determined that I would deny everything at the trial. However, by staging these rehearsals, and giving too small a dose of the drug, these rascals discovered my intention to resist. My plan was to say just a few short sentences, just this: "Mr. President, this whole thing was a provocation and we were forced to confess to lies." I was afraid that if I planned to say more, they would stop me, and break off the trial. At the first rehearsal we both, Rajk and I, received very strong doses and even when we received less, we only had a few clear moments. The entire trial, was written by them. At the trial we denied that we received any injections. When I read the trial later, I didn't remember everything. At one rehearsal, or else at the trial, Rajk shouted: "we need no mercy", when he was called upon to ask for the mercy of the Court. At this point I woke up too. The whole thing fades out in my mind and I only remember a few details. The whole trial was recorded for the radio, not at the rehearsals or the trial, but before, when we were allowed to read it all from a manuscript. I protested against the fact that the police didn't hand us over to the prosecutor's office as the law demanded, but that we were kept at the AVH towards the end. When the rehearsals began, we were taken to Andrassy Avenue 60 from the AVH villas where we had been before. At the trial I didn't see all the defendants all the time. Sometimes I was ~~sent~~<sup>led</sup> out when I finished my own say, but at other times I was made to sit beside Pálffy.

During the Revolution Justus made a statement that he was able to

\* Respondent didn't seem clear about this; did he receive a strong or weak dose at the first rehearsal? Did he "resist" (Confusion? Confusion a Köbön!)

talk to Rajk for a moment after the trial when the guard left them alone and that Rajk told him: "my confession was not true". I am quite certain that Rajk was never left alone to talk to anyone. When we were confronted with each other, they watched us carefully so we should be unable to give each other signs. I am certain that Rajk didn't die <sup>as</sup> a fanatic Communist; <sup>he didn't confess to serious things</sup> He resisted for months. Perhaps his first confession, when we were first confronted, was more or less voluntary, but not the later ones. Perhaps he planned to trick them in some fashion. In spite of the fact that Rajk was under Communist discipline, the discussions he had with me and with other non-Communists, were against Communist principles because the Communist is not supposed to engage in reasonable <sup>debate and</sup> conversation with other people, nor is he supposed to accept other people's opinions. Rajk was not a fanatic Communist, but a man capable of seeing both sides of the question, a man capable of development. He was a man who was able to learn from his mistakes, from the mistakes of the Party; in this he was a little like Djilas. I can, however, give you an example of the sort of fanatic Communist who would die for the Party. This was Vanderlieve, one of the defendants of the Reichstag Trial in Leipzig. I believe that it was actually the Communists, and not the Nazis, who burned the Reichstag. I also think that during the trial Dimitrov by one phrase, gave instructions to Vanderlieve who confessed, and saved Dimitrov. Rajk was not this sort of blind fanatic. I think they may have broken down Rajk's resistance, they may have demoralized him, by pointing out all his mistakes to him,

mistakes which were not malicious, not crimes, but yet they made him feel that he had sinned against the Party, and in this demoralized state he may have been more willing to confess. After the Cominform resolution, all the Hungarian Communists held speeches in the Provinces and elsewhere, attacking Tito. Rajk also held such a speech in a factory, but he didn't mention the Yugoslavs although it was his task to attack Tito. At the end of his speech somebody asked him about the Yugoslavs and he said "let's leave the Yugoslavs alone, we have enough problems of our own, we should first deal with them". A young Yugoslav correspondent told me about this when I was still at the Legation. Perhaps they brought this up against him too, in order to demoralize him, holding him responsible for it and telling him "you, as a Communist, did this wrong and that wrong and the other wrong --- ". If Rajk had been a pure and convinced Communist, he would have confessed immediately as a service to the Party and died as a fanatic Communist. If he had been a fanatic Communist, he would not have hesitated and tried to trick them. I was sentenced to life imprisonment, and not to death because as a Yugoslav citizen they were unable to prove a treason charge against me. It was only after I was taken to prison in a prison wagon that I realized that this last one had been the real trial and that the tragic comedy was over. I did not know which prison I was in. I was still in solitary confinement. The most interesting thing about this prison was, that in my corridor there were signs on each cell, giving the names of the inhabitants. I never saw this in any other prison. When they took me across the corridor, I could



see that Rajk, Sallnyi and the others in the trial were all there. Rajk was at one end and I at the other. After a week the signs were taken off and they carefully watched, to make sure that nobody knew who was where. In addition they also changed people's cells for the same reason.

<sup>One</sup>~~Two~~ night I woke up to a great deal of noise and confusion. It was impossible to look out the window because it was covered with three rows of iron bars and thick, opaque glass. My cell was always dim, even during the day. However, I could hear voices through the air-vent. I could hear terrible shouting as though someone was being hit; it sounded as though there were <sup>or</sup> ~~hundreds~~ hundred people outside. I sat up in bed and realized that they were carrying out an execution. In order to drown out the noise, they turned on some motors, car motors, etc. and they also had some drummers to stifle the shouting. In prison we always knew when there was a hanging because we heard many motors running for an hour as well as running, shouting etc. I heard cell doors opening one after the other and people were <sup>let</sup> ~~sent~~ out at ten minute intervals.

Then they came to my cell. I was sentenced to life imprisonment, because there is a Hungarian law forbidding the death sentence to foreigners. The People's Prosecutor, however, refused to accept this and asked that I receive the death sentence. This request went to <sup>Not</sup> ~~the~~ ~~court~~, and they never told me what his decision was. I was certain, when they came to my cell, that I had been sentenced to death. They came into my cell, and led me to the yard which

was full of people, reflectors lighting up the scene because it was still night. Motors were running. They led me to the scaffold with my hands held back though not bound; nor were my eyes covered. I decided that I would<sup>n't</sup>/shout or make any sort of a demonstration. At the last moment an officer ran after us and said that it was all a mistake, that I was merely to be transferred to a different cell. So they took me in a different cell. I lived through the whole hanging in my mind; it was almost as if ~~the~~ sentence had been carried out. After this they still didn't tell me whether I had been sentenced to death or not. About two weeks later, the whole thing was repeated one night, though in a different form. I heard a noise at night, the guards came to my cell, pulled me from bed, didn't allow me to dress, saying I wouldn't need any clothes. I thought again that I was to be executed. They brought me through the corridor, to the other end of the corridor and placed me in a cell there. It was freezing cold; then without any explanation they took me back to my old cell.

In prison <sup>the</sup> struggle began. I didn't know who was in prison and who not; I didn't know who had been hanged. The cells were draughty, cold and unheated; there were no facilities for heating. I was wearing the same suit in which I had been arrested and had no coat. My cell was quite big, 6 m x 2 m. It was furnished with an iron cot built into the cement wall, a small table and bench also fastened to the cement. I complained about the cold and asked for warm clothes and demanded that the cell be heated.

I think other people complained about the cold too. The prison commander, a Hungarian, came to me one day and told me that I only imagined it was cold, that there was a stove in the corridor at which the guards warmed their hands and that, as a result the cells had to <sup>be</sup> warm too, because the heat from the stove came out through the cells. The cold last all winter; I heard people marching up and down to keep warm - one could hear the echo in the corridor. We were placed so that every second cell was empty. On my left there was a toilet; I believe the fact that I was placed next to the toilet was a calculated provocation: the constant flushing of the toilet day and night made me extremely nervous. On the other side of the toilet there was <sup>the</sup> a cell of a woman. I think Marosán was in the second cell opposite from me, because once when they beat him I recognized his voice. Altogether there were 11 of us in this corridor, 9 men and 2 women. My hearing became extremely sharp in prison, but I got an inflammation of the ear which eventually made me somewhat hard of hearing. In the spring they finally ordered stoves for our corridor. We were taken to cells on the upper floor and about two or three weeks later there were stoves in our cells. There was one stove for every two cells and it was stoked from the corridor. When September came, they started to heat the cells although it was not yet cold. Sometimes it became unbearably hot, but they didn't allow us to take off our coats. I suppose people must have complained because I heard doors opening and voices. When I complained they said that the organism was weakened in prison and they heated the place in

order to prevent us from getting sick. Their answers were always full of sham humanism which was actually cruel cynicism. Around the middle of November, they discontinued heating; by then it was really cold. When I complained, they said that due to transportation troubles there was a fuel shortage. The prison commander said that his office was cold too. They didn't heat our cells all winter. Occasionally they managed to get some coal and kept hitting the walls of the stove all night so that I couldn't sleep from the echo but the stove remained cold.

I was constantly demanding books to read. I also protested against solitary confinement but said that as long as I was kept alone in my cell I should at least receive books. Months later they brought me a big crate of books and allowed me to choose. There was everything there, including a number of good books in French, English, German, Italian and Spanish. I chose the best I could find: Shakespeare, Zweig's Memoirs, Molière, Shaw and Thackeray. I chose a whole stack of books. I started to read and enjoyed myself tremendously for two or three days. The days passed so quickly that I didn't even notice they were over. Suddenly they demanded the return of the books. I was told that I would get them back later, but that they were needed for the taking of inventory in the library. A few months passed. Meanwhile the big struggle over the lighting of our cells went on. My cell had a 100 Watt bulb right above my cot. At night I had to sleep on my back with my hands above the blanket. If I turned to another position, I was woken up. The light constantly <sup>shone</sup> ~~shone~~ into my eyes and caused me unspeakable torture. During the day I was not

allowed to sleep and if I happened to fall asleep, the guard kicked at the door with his boot to wake me up. I got enormously tired. The poor food contributed to this fatigue. Finally I heard that our demands were granted and the lighting was to be improved. Now we got two kinds of light, the big light remained and the little one which gave hardly any <sup>light</sup> ~~light~~ at all, was placed next to it. Now I prepared for a good night's sleep. They also brought the books back again. This was terrific, I thought. When the evening came, the big bulb remained lit overnight in addition to the small one, so that I couldn't sleep again. The books were brought late in the afternoon, good books, though not the same ones. I chose another stack of books from the ones they brought. I trembled with joy and looked forward to reading. This is what happened: they turned off the big bulb in the morning and left on only the small one. There were complaints all along the corridor and the prisoners demanded to see the commander. The guards said that they received orders about the lights, that their orders are obviously a mistake or misunderstanding, but that they couldn't fix the lights because the <sup>prison</sup> ~~com-~~ commander was on vacation. This lasted for about two months and then the commander came. Meanwhile they took our books away, saying that since we weren't reading them, we obviously didn't need them. The commander said that there had been a mixup about the lights, and that we would now have the big light on during the day and the little light on at night. But now we had no books. I was subjected to such tricks throughout my entire seven years in

prison; They were always inventing something new to annoy the prisoners. We were never given any decent books after this; sometimes they brought us books, detective stories and such, from which every third or fourth page was torn out. At other times we received Marxist literature - they didn't tear any pages from that - but nobody wanted it. Psychologically, I could not bear to read Marxist books.

I was in Conti Street's prison for four years without knowing where I was. I only found out when the commander said the name of the prison accidentally. The first year was the most critical of my seven years in prison; I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I realized that it would end badly for me if I did not pull myself together so I decided not to ask for anything or to complain, thinking that if I had to die I wanted to die as a human being, as a man. I also forced myself to occupy my mind: in the morning I would study mathematics mentally, in the afternoon I would review philosophy, the next day literature or languages. Sometimes I tried to think only in one language for a whole afternoon, or else I thought of physics and chemistry. This was very difficult because one's thoughts wander, and because the guards were constantly provoking one with their mean little tricks. But, I knew that in order to stay sane, I had to follow this rigid discipline; the fact that I had hallucinations, proved that I was near a nervous breakdown during this first year. It was a few months after the trial, ~~when~~<sup>that</sup> I had a dream about my mother - I loved my mother more than anyone else in the world -

she was lying in a coffin and her face was yellow as wax. I kissed her forehead. I can still see this picture in my mind. Within a week, this dream was repeated, but this time she got out of her coffin and kissed my forehead. When I awoke, I heard the guards shouting drunkenly; I believe it was New Year's Eve, and they were celebrating. After I was awake, I could still feel the kiss on my forehead as though it had really happened. This shows in what a state my nerves were. I still had some hallucinations later when I had pulled myself together and was more disciplined. I had always liked to swim in the Tisza and sometimes, when I had a great desire to leave my cell, I could hear the splashing of the river and actually feel the water on my body. Then I came to.

In later years I had a mouse as a companion. He came to me every night, stood in a corner next to the stove and looked at me. I looked back. Every day I put crumbs from the awful black prison bread in the corner for him and he sat like a rabbit on his hind feet and threw the crumbs in his mouth with his two little hands. (sic!) At first he only came at night, but later he became braver and started to come in the daytime too. He became quite bold and once, when he must have smelled the grease on my boots, he ran over to me and jumped into my pants. I started patting ~~me~~ myself to get rid of him and the guards who saw this strange commotion in my cell through the spy-hole, ran in. The mouse finally freed himself and ran away but he must have been very frightened because he never came back again.

One of the biggest tortures was that we couldn't wash. Every

morning after reveille, we had to go out to the water taps with our own wash-basin and pitcher. The wash-basin had to be put out again after a few minutes. They always put some sort of mud and dirt into the wash-basins and didn't allow us to wash them out under the tap; the water had to be turned off when the guard said. We had to wash in this muddy water. In the winter the water was ice-cold, and very often we did not get any soap, and even when there was soap there was never enough of it. There were no facilities for washing our teeth. Every Saturday was bath-day. There were two baths in the little hall leading to the toilet. Before our bath we had to undress in advance and walk through the corridor in <sup>our</sup> drawers. The windows were opened on purpose, to make it even colder. Outside the bath we had to take off our drawers and stand there naked in the draught and cold, while the guard stood by with a big overcoat on. Then, when one was finally allowed in the shower, the water was turned on; after one had soaped oneself, the water was either too hot, so that one couldn't even wash off the soap, or else ice-cold. End of bath. I never used a towel because they provided <sup>a</sup> single bed sheets as towel for all of us and this was always wet by the time I got to it. Anyway I didn't like to wipe myself after the others, so naked, and wet, I returned to my cell. Here I wiped myself with my drawers and shirt. There were many complaints about this and then, in the winter, they discontinued bathing altogether, saying that we would catch cold, etc. For a month or so we were not allowed to shower at all and then the whole thing



started all over. I tried to keep clean by washing a different part of my body every morning with my allotted water. The entire prison system was directed at ruining peoples' nerves. A friend of mine had a nervous breakdown <sup>in prison.</sup>

They had a special torture for those who smoked. Fortunately, I didn't. They gave them cigarettes without matches, and then after several hours, the guard would pretend to light the cigarette with a ~~the~~ match, making sure that the cigarette wasn't really lighted. There were terrible fights about this. Marosán was once beaten up because of this. When the guard wouldn't come near him to light his cigarette, he shouted "I don't have leprosy, you dirty ----". So they thrashed him and half an hour later, when he recovered, he jumped up and shouted "if I ever get out of here, even if the guards are dead, I will dig out their bones and revenge myself on them to the glory of Rakosi. You bandits, butchers, etc." While he was being beaten, the prisoners were banging on their doors all along the corridor.

The food varied according to individual circumstances, as I discovered later, when they put pressure on me, when they wanted something from me. At this point the food was only bad, so that I weighed 44 kilos, although I had been 74 when I entered prison. I discovered this in about a year because we were always weighed before our shower; I think they did this only to make people freeze more, since the weighing lasted about 10 minutes and that was 10 more minutes in the cold. Usually we had to turn our backs to the scale when we were weighed, so that we couldn't see, what we weighed.

However, once the weigher was called aside, and then I ~~was~~ peaked around and saw that I only weighed 44 kilos. In the morning I got tepid black coffee; the food was never hot, only cold or tepid. This was especially awful in the winter, since, when it was so cold, one desired at least a little hot water, to warm one up in the morning. Sometimes I heard prisoners throwing food at the doors; I never did this. They enjoyed it, when the prisoners behaved like this; ~~the~~ <sup>as</sup> punishment ~~that~~ they took the prisoner to a dark cell without a bed and only a blanket, and gave him only black bread and water. This contributed to weakening the organism, and therefore I avoided provoking them. God help anyone from getting sick in prison. The hospital was far worse than the cell; I think it was a veritable torture chamber. The food had either sand or pieces of coal in it, so that we had to pick it out before we wanted to eat the ~~bread~~ <sup>food.</sup> The bad black bread was usually placed in dust or dirt before ~~we~~ <sup>one</sup> got it; this couldn't be scratched off the bread, and one could always <sup>feel</sup> this dirt gritting against one's teeth. The system was, that I got so little food that I was constantly hungry, and then once a week I received a double portion from which I got sick. Then the whole thing began all over. I decided that they weighed us to find out when we <sup>were near</sup> ~~were~~ to collapse and then the food improved for a week or two. Once I got some <sup>lettuce</sup> ~~lettuce~~ with my meal. I was tremendously happy but then I found a big paper clip in it. Fortunately I didn't swallow it. I complained, I beat the door - I was still very nervous in those days. Later on I ignored these provocations in order not

to give them the satisfaction of placing me in a dark cell. Once they suddenly brought an apple, a very beautiful apple, which was completely rotten on the inside, to remind people that apples exist and would be good to eat. They also tortured people with salt. The organism desires salt terribly; there were times when I felt I could eat half a kilogram of salt at one sitting. When people complained about the saltlessness of the food, they kept promising salt for months. Then suddenly we got food with too much salt. It was so salty that I couldn't eat at all although I was very hungry. Then, when there were complaints about this, the food became saltless again.

I was in Conti prison for four years. <sup>In</sup> 1953 Conti had a new prison commander, who was a Russian; he spoke Hungarian with a Russian accent. The I was taken to Vác prison. The first night the light was turned off; it was a wonderful feeling. I quickly discovered why they turned the lights off. In ten minutes I was attacked by a million bed bugs. Everyone complained, of course; then they solved the question by allowing a bed bug hunt. During the day we were allowed to squeeze the bed bugs to death with a broom-stick, and at night they woke us up for ten minutes for the same purpose. By then I was so tired out that I didn't care about bed bugs. Once I heard the hoarse bass voice of Szakasits hunting bed bugs: "here is one, there is another one". I heard him jump high to catch a bed bug high on the wall. He played the clown and the guards enjoyed seeing old Szakasits, the former President of the Republic, jump for bed bugs. I had a soprano voice when I left prison but Szakasits kept his deep bass.

Once during the bed bug hunt, I discovered a tiny hole in my window through which I could see people walking in the yard. We were taken for walks one at the time. I managed to arrange it so that while I was squeezing bed bugs to death, I watched for the click of the spy-hole every three minutes through which the guards checked on us. When I heard the spy-hole click about I looked out my little hole to see if there was anyone walking outside. I could only see one spot of the yard from my little hole so I had to wait until people reached that spot in their walk to see them. There were nine men and two women. People had changed a great deal, and I found it difficult to recognize Harasan and Saksaito. There was one old white-haired woman with a broken hand whom I didn't know, but I recognized Justus. There was one woman who went insane. She was in the cell next to me and I heard arguments, the guards talking to her. Apparently she had had a child and took her blanket in her arms as if it were a child and sang to it. We were not allowed to take our blankets from our cots and so she was repeatedly punished for doing this. Then she disappeared. The prison situation was far more difficult for women than for men. This business of having the spy-hole bang-shut every three minutes also made people very nervous. Once I heard somebody throw himself at the door with his bow when the spy-hole banged once too often. It was just one of the millions of things designed to break us.

We were shaved weekly after bathing out in the corridor. I shouldn't say shaved, I should say skinned alive. We put on our

clothes over our almost wet bodies and trembled with cold, while the barber wore a fur-coat. We had to keep our hands behind our backs. We were shaved with old used razor blades, slowly, slowly, there is plenty of time. I was always bleeding when I was shaved and looked as though I had just returned from Mohacs. They were really butchers and bandits, they didn't have the slightest bit of human feeling.

For months I was not allowed to go for a walk. Usually the ventilating hole was opened for a quarter of an hour every day, but once when they didn't do this for a while, I complained and was punished by not being allowed to walk in the yard for three months, and by keeping my windows completely shut for a period. When I was led for a walk in the yard, I wasn't allowed to look upwards, and was supposed to keep my hands in the back. In Centi, there was a long yard with a cement floor, in one corner of which they chalk-marked a circle with a diameter of 10 metres for the walks of the prisoners. When I went for a walk, the guard would walk after me, his boots hitting the floor only a few millimetres from my own boots. This made me very nervous, but I didn't say anything. Others were also made nervous by this and made a fuss for which they were punished. When the officer on duty was not present, the guard didn't bother to watch me but went over to talk to the guard high up in the guard-tower. The armed guard, pulled the ladder after him, when he climbed into the guard-tower. The guard who took me for a walk was unarmed. The walks usually lasted ten to fifteen minutes except when they allowed us an

occasional twenty minutes. Then we were very happy.

I didn't know about the political changes in the outside world,

I didn't know about the Korean War, the death of Stalin, etc..

I never received any packages, letters or visits. I was still in solitary confinement in spite of all my protests against it; they never refused to take me out of solitary confinement, but merely promised to look into it for years. I realized that something new was happening. It must have been after Stalin's death, when they started interrogating me again. Across the wall I could see the tall trees were green again and so I assumed that it was either spring or summer. Since I was taken on daily walks at the time, I ~~remembered~~ remember this. Now new AVH officers came with innocent faces and said "at the time of your trial you made certain statements to the effect that - - - . Are these things true?" So I said "you know better how much of it is true, etc., what kind of joke is this anyway, why don't you let me die in peace?" They answered "we are not responsible for the things which happened to you at that time, those who were in office then are responsible for this crime. There have been changes and now we want to find out the ~~whole~~ truth. We will treat you differently now, etc." They were very polite and said that they understood my indignation at the injustice I suffered, etc. Later when I was still suspicious about their motives, they placed before me some sort of official paper with a ministerial signature, stating that the entire Rajk trial <sup>would</sup> be re-examined. They showed me the <sup>decree</sup> ~~document~~ referring to this re-examination. When I saw this,

I decided to tell my story. Right at the beginning, they kept hinting at certain people <sup>being</sup> responsible, such as the "Comrade Lt. General", and they made sarcastic comments about Gábor Péter, saying that they, in opposition to Péter, were interested in the truth and nothing but the truth. Then, in half a year or so, they stopped the ~~whole~~ <sup>whole thing</sup> again. While I was being interrogated, my food improved and I was taken for 20-minute walks every day. Then when the interrogations stopped again, the walks stopped also and things got much worse than before. In about half a year, they brought me copies of my new testimony to be signed. When I read it, I realized that this is not what I had told them, but a new set of falsifications. I thought that this was too much and didn't sign. The statement <sup>they</sup> wanted me to sign <sup>claimed</sup> that Gábor Péter was responsible for the whole thing together with Colonel Szilcs. There was not a word about the Russians. Although now they didn't say that Rajk <sup>had</sup> plotted against Rakosi, they did state that he negotiated with Tito. In other words, they <sup>wanted</sup> ~~saw~~ some sort of half solution. I denied the truth of this new statement and refused to sign it. I think it must have been written in Moscow. When I refused to sign, they said they would hang me, to which I answered that it really didn't matter since this life I led in prison was no life anyway. Then the interrogations ended. Life became more terrible than before. My food was always full of sand, the window was constantly closed and I wasn't allowed to go for walks. I was provoked day and night and needed all my will-power not to break out in a fit of rage. I knew that if I did this

they would beat me or kill me and therefore I was quiet and ignored it all. Another thing they did to annoy me was that in the morning the guard coughed through the spy-hole of my cell and the acoustics of my cell were such, that I always heard a ~~roaring~~ <sup>roaring</sup> echo. Another thing they did for days, all day, was to kick at my door with their boots which also echoed tremendously. After a few months I was taken to be interrogated again. There were new people again, talking very nicely and not threatening me with hanging any longer. They said they wanted the pure truth and so I told my story again. Now they tried on a new variation. They cleared Rajk completely, but I still remained an agent of Tito. As the interrogations went on, Rajk was cleared more and more but they still insisted that Tito had a malicious role in Hungarian politics. Through me they could only prove this by insisting that I really did incite Boarov to murder. I refused to admit this and they answered that it is best if I sign <sup>ed</sup> this, it ~~was~~ <sup>wouldn't</sup> be published anyway; they were only preparing this for their files. They also insisted that I sign a declaration to the effect that I was an organizer of Tito's Intelligence Organization in Hungary. This was manifestly absurd, because according to the Peace Treaty, the Yugoslav Intelligence Organization was allowed to investigate on Hungarian soil if necessary and vice versa, so there was no need for a separate Intelligence Organization. They wanted me to declare that Tito wanted to run everything in Hungary, and that it was my task to spread his personal <sup>ty</sup> cult to Hungary. I said that Tito did have "big plans" - I didn't exactly



say delusions of grandeur - but that I never received any instructions to implement Tito's plans in Hungary. For months they tried to make me sign this statement using various methods. First they starved me, then the food got better. Then the interrogating personnel changed again. I demanded a new trial because I felt that they wouldn't use the same methods again. This must have been at the end of 1955 or the beginning of 1956; i.e. the last months before the amnesty. Justus and the others were ~~released~~ freed before me, but they kept me in order to get this declaration. They were preparing a new trial but they couldn't get anything from me. For a while they paused and then started again. I left Vac in summer 1955 and was transferred to the AVO prison in Gyovakocsi Street, where I stayed till the end. Here I was tortured. The yard was filled with coal gas so that we choked and coughed when we were taken for a walk. When I was taken for a walk, I was held by three guards who occasionally twisted my arm and kicked me from the back. When I protested, I was beaten up and punished by being placed in a dark cell. Finally they had to free me because of the agreement between Khrushchev and Tito regarding imprisoned Yugoslav citizens. They promised that I would receive an amnesty if I agreed to become a Hungarian citizen and if I didn't return to Yugoslavia. I agreed and signed a statement to this effect. Two weeks later, on April 3rd 1956, I was freed. It was like a dream, to walk in the streets again. For <sup>a</sup> months I walked the streets of Budapest. I have had changed quite a bit, I had lost a lot of weight, of course, and my hair which had been dark, turned completely white, even before

the trial in 1949. I met people I knew, but didn't talk to anybody. <sup>After</sup> a month I was taken to Győr where I received a job of sorts in the County Library. The library staff was forbidden to talk about me to anybody, but in a few months all of Győr knew about me and people I didn't know greeted me on the street. I didn't talk to anyone at first, not knowing who the provocateurs were. Meanwhile I was planning to escape from Hungary in a rubber boat. I knew that they would never leave me alive. I knew that I was a living witness to the crimes of the regime and the Soviet Union, and I realized that I had to get to the West because the Soviets would sooner or later kill me. I was freed ~~without~~ a rehabilitation trial which the others receive. Later they tried to rehabilitate me and offered me 1,000 forints. I never got any of my property back after I left prison, not even a photograph. By the time of the Revolution I had many acquaintances in Győr, I was invited to the Petöfi Circle, and had contacts with writers in Győr, etc. Once I got sick and received a tremendous number of packages and baskets of food from hundreds of people whom I didn't even know. A lecture by Gyula Hay was one of the factors which prepared Győr psychologically for the Revolution; it literally revolutionized the city. He behaved very decently and courageously. One could see that he was in total opposition to the regime but that he still remained a Communist while demanding <sup>u</sup> free press, permission to travel in the West, the opening of Hungary's gates towards the West. He said that he was a Socialist - I believe he avoided the

word Communist intentionally - and that, as a Socialist, he was ready to accept free competition with the Catholic and other parties. A young writer demanded that the Russian troops leave Hungary and Hay answered that this question was timely, but since there was an International Treaty regarding this, there were formal obstacles to this. He added, however, that the Treaty should be re-examined. Hay ended by saying that he was willing to be arrested and suffer martyrdom for his beliefs. The audience also asked that Cardinal Mindszenty be freed, the first time that this demand was made publicly. I believe Hay's speech and the debate afterwards revolutionized the intelligentsia of Győr, giving people courage and having a profound effect on later events.

Then the Revolution came and I was in the midst of it from the very first. In the first days of the Revolution, there was an armed revolt in Győr; people rose like grass in the spring, except for a few functionaries. The majority of the functionaries escaped although some were courageous enough to stay, and others ~~threw~~ threw away their Party books and joined the insurgents. I was there when the Red Star was pulled down in Győr by a little boy; after he pulled it down he climbed up again and introduced himself to tremendous applause. The prisoners were freed from the prisons and the archives were scattered, although later they were saved.

Then the Győr revolutionary Council was formed. Szigetfi was popular from the beginning and mentioned as the man of the future. He behaved decently under the Communist regime, lived in retirement

and did not compromise himself. When the Revolution began, a little circle <sup>was</sup> formed around him, consisting chiefly of members of the Peasant Party but also of some members of the Smallholder Party and even some Catholics like Galambos, who joined him, but with some reservation. There were some people who criticized Szigeti, saying that he was too moderate and vacillating; these were the people who wanted to speed up the course of the Revolution. Some people disapproved of the fact that Szigeti opposed an attack on the Soviet Army Units which were passive at the time because he felt that we should not take the initiative in order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed. Szigeti's people had talked with the Soviet Commander who promised that he would not attack. There was total anarchy in the first phase of the Revolution. <sup>A</sup> hundred Parties sprang up and there was no centralized power. It was often impossible to hold meetings because ~~there~~ was ~~some~~ some group ~~which~~ prevented orderly procedures. There were many anarchist and adventurer elements in the Revolution in Győr. Szigeti should have been more forceful, he shouldn't have put such tight reins on the revolutionary processes, although he was right in not allowing undisciplined elements to act rashly at a time when the situation was not yet ripe. The big question was whether to give the youth arms or not. I said the young people should receive arms but they should have discipline and leadership. One unit, which was armed, went to Budapest to help the insurgents there and the Russians destroyed them because they had no leadership. Szigeti was afraid that the people would rob and loot if

they were armed, and also argued that the one armed unit we had was destroyed by the Russians. Around the second day of the Revolution, <sup>the</sup> Petöfi Circle held a meeting and I was asked to state my views, since I was an experienced partisan officer. I said that the chief weakness of the Revolution was the lack of central leadership and discipline. I stated that the people should be armed, that the National Defence Forces should be united. (There was a very weak and suspicious Army Major at the head of the Army units, who acted very passively although he claimed that he was on the side of the Revolution). I said that my comments applied not only to Györ but to all of Hungary. I thought that we should contact Budapest and the other cities and organize a central executive organization for all of Hungary. Meanwhile, until this was possible, we should establish such an organization for the entire Transdanubian region. I said that we should create a new People's Army, arm ~~the~~ and discipline ~~the~~ it. I added that this should be carried out within the next 24 hours, because time was passing. We had two <sup>air</sup> ~~air~~ planes and a radio station, and using these we would have been able to bring delegates from Miskolc and other cities. I said that Imre Nagy's Government did not express the will of the people and after the National Revolutionary Parliament was established, it should form a new Government if it was unable to work with Imre Nagy. This resolution was accepted unanimously in the Petöfi Circle. Within 24 hours, delegates from <sup>all</sup> the ~~surrounding~~ surrounding districts arrived in Györ. They asked me to be chairman of this meeting of delegates, but I said that I

thought the meeting should be chaired by a Hungarian. During this meeting, which established the Transdanubian revolutionary Council, Szigeti narrowed the programme outlined by me, by proposing the establishment <sup>down</sup> ~~of a Transdanubian~~ <sup>only</sup> Council, since not all parts of the country were represented by delegates. My demand for National Unity was based on my wartime experience in Yugoslavia. I felt that ~~this~~ <sup>dis</sup> unity was extremely dangerous during a Revolution. I blamed Szigeti for the fact that he did not organize an Army to fight the Russians on the Danube line. He should have mobilized all of Transdanubia against the Russians. Towards the end, Szigeti was constantly sleepy and tired and kept escaping from people in order to avoid making decisions. He was not a big enough man to become a leader in this historic moment. He didn't have a strong personality and lacked organizing ability. He was unable to delegate authority and talked with everyone who came to see him. However, it was impossible to ask him to resign because he was too popular. We tried to put pressure on Szigeti through the Petöfi Circle, which was the most radical, and consisted of members of the intelligentsia. One of the problems was, that there was no organization to execute what had been decided. Then, on the 4th, the Russians entered with tanks and met with no armed resistance. The C.P. organization began to function again and the Russians took the Radio Station.

I left Hungary on the 10th of November with a small armed group organized for the purpose of escape. We took the train since it was the only route not supervised by the Russians, to Kaposvár;

in Kaposvar the police tried to prevent our escape and caught some of us, but the rest of us got away.

Now that I am in the free world, I want to stay here. I didn't get in touch with the Yugoslav authorities because I am certain that they would want me to return to Yugoslavia and possibly use me against the Russians if the opportunity ever arose again. I am not quite certain whether the Yugoslavs really believed that I had defected, or not. While I was in prison my family was also in prison in Yugoslavia. Now they are rehabilitated but I don't know what they are doing. Only recently did I find out that my wife was forced to divorce me. I do not dare to correspond with my family because I might bring harm to them.

Interview should be read in conjunction with Rajk trial transcript.  
Interviewer's Comments on Respondent:

I am somewhat undecided whether to question the mental capacities, or the veracity, of the respondent - or both. I have no doubt that the large outlines of his story are true, but I have doubts about some of the details. Viz.:

1. Respondent has not contacted the Yugoslav Embassy in Paris, nor did he try to get in touch with his family in Yugoslavia. Is this a result of his paranoid tendencies, - not at all surprising in view of the circumstances - or is it due to the fact that, in spite of his denial, he really did defect to the Cominform side after the Soviet break with Tito, and therefore is afraid of the Yugoslavs?
2. Did the Hungarian regime really have a double of Brankov, or did he invent this to defend himself against charges that he really defected to the Cominform side, and was seen freely visiting various Hungarian CP dignitaries during this period? (Latter is claimed by an ex-CP journalist in Paris.)
3. Considering the lucidity and precision of his account of his post-trial prison experiences, one wonders at the fuzziness, vagueness, confusion of the account of his post-war contacts in Hungary. There is a feeling of unreality about

THE ALLEGED DISCUSSIONS WITH RAJK. IS HE HIDING SOMETHING? THE CONFUSION (OVER)

of the interrogation and trial period is understandable.

4. Is he merely naive, or is he disingenuous, when he claims that Tito didn't have an intelligence service in Hungary, because the treaty between the two countries provided for exchange of information? Really!!! Then again, maybe he really believes this; since he was not a CP member, there may be many things he was not told by his own government.
5. The escape attempt doesn't ring true. How did he know the fence wasn't wired for electricity? Could he really guess the location of the AVH villa? But, then, perhaps the story is true, because he really is as naive as he appears.

I don't quite know why I should have all these doubts about respondent's veracity. Why does he have to lie? His true, unembellished story must be colorful enough. Respondent didn't strike me as an intelligent man, but it is difficult to determine to what extent this is a result of the corrosive effects of prison. His personality struck me with its childlike ingenuity, and an eerie, smiling, unhealthy serenity, even when describing the most harrowing details of his story. Of all the former prisoners of Communist prisons I have met (Ignotus, Faludy, Paloczky-Horvath, etc.) Bramkov alone gave me an uncanny feeling; as though here they had really succeeded in destroying a man's personality. It is said by those who knew him in Budapest before his arrest, that he has radically changed from the vigorous, active man he used to be. However, a psychiatrist could undoubtedly give a far better diagnosis than I.

I found the respondent's story less interesting than expected; he was a very minor character, only a stage prop, really, in the tragicomedy.