

Interviewer's Note:

The following is not strictly speaking a formal interview, merely a set of comments extracted from a number of conversations with Respondent. The Respondent was unwilling to submit to a lengthier interview, partly because he was working full time on a book about Imre Nagy which left him no time for the interview, but chiefly because he felt reluctant to give away what he considered was valuable information in an interview, preferring to preserve any special information he might have for future articles and books.

In the Marxist terminology the writers did what Marx did; that is, they broke out of their own class in support of the proletariat. Thus, Marx broke out of the bourgeoisie in support of the proletariat while the <sup>Hungarian</sup> writers abandoned the aristocracy of the regime, breaking out of their class in support of the people.

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Aczél. Aczél didn't behave in this liberated easy going way at home; this is his real personality, this is the real Aczél and not the personality he had at home. When Aczél sat as the <sup>Chairman</sup> ~~president~~ of <sup>or</sup> DISZ Committee, he was <sup>pompous and</sup> self-important, but this was not his own self-importance but the accepted and required tone. The Communist manner underwent ~~some~~ considerable change between 1945 and '56. In 1945, '46, all the members of the Party were on per tu terms with each other. We would say "Szervusz, Comrade Rákosi, How are you etc." ("Szervusz, Rákosi, elvtárs hogy vagy...?") Also, until 1951,

a great many Party members wore <sup>peaked</sup> ~~stuffed~~ caps because Rákosi wore it to declare his solidarity with the proletariat. The Communist manner was originated by Stalin, who'd talked this way to Rákosi, who in turn talked in this fashion with István Nagy, etc., all the way down to the lowest functionary. In 1947, and '48, when the Party was consolidated, they told us: "We are now the ruling Party, Comrades, you should not address each other by 'thou' any longer, you should shave everyday, wear neckties, etc." In 1950 or '51, we were not supposed to wear caps ~~any~~ longer in imitation of the proletariat, but were told to wear hats. And so it went.

In 1953, came the liberation from the stiff, self-important Communist manner when the bohemian life of Budapest asserted itself again; the bohemian way of life came back parallel with the political liberation. It is ~~is~~ true that the insistence of the intellectuals on this way of life was a very significant demand, but their political and social demands on behalf of the people were more important. <sup>int. note:</sup> (The last sentence was added as an after-thought by Respondent.)  
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#### The captive mind.

The captive mind was many years in the making. Look at Há'y, for instance, an old deviationist, which fact explains his later development. Há'y wrote an anti-Western, anti-imperialist play which was opposed even by Révai who considered it too crude. You are mistaken if you think that the schematic literature of the

Stalinist years was a result of Révai's crude insistence on Socialist realism. He was far too subtle for that. What happened was that the writers convinced themselves that this was the way to do it. The captive mind is true; it existed. Nobody forced Zelk to write his poem to Stalin. I remember when he was writing it he was all excited about it and used to call up when he finished a particularly good line or stanza to recite it to us. He was full of happy exhilaration at the thought of having written such a wonderful ode to Stalin.

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There were two groups of Communist writers among the participants of the writers' revolt; those who were converted, or rather, disillusioned, in 1953, and those who didn't see the error of their ways until 1954. In 1953, the Party told the writers to go to the villages and to dissuade the peasants from <sup>leaving</sup> the collectives. Instead, it was the peasants who convinced the writers of the rightness of the peasant stand. See <sup>Kuczka</sup> ~~Kuczka~~'s: Nyirsegi Napló (diary). We fought for six months over this poem, over this trend. We said: ~~asked~~ "it may be true, but is it typical?" We believed that it was true, but we felt that it was not typical. In 1954, the second group of writers was converted, disillusioned. They were Zelk, Benjámín, Aczél, Méray, Karinthy, etc. We were chiefly influenced by the revelations about the Rákosi trial, the freeing of Losonczy, the rehabilitations. The two groups, however, were friendly with

each other even while arguing and debating.

The big conflict between the Communist writers took place in 1951, at the time of the clique debate between the so-called "úrifiúk" or "Young Gentlemen" and the "talented or so-called real writers" "tehetségesek vagy igazi írók". In the Déry debate Révai condemned this conflict officially as <sup>an</sup>unprincipled indulging in personalities, claiming that such clique formations could not be reconciled with correct Communist practice. Although all these writers belonged to the same Party cell, there were personal as well as conflicts of principle involved. The "young gentlemen" -(úrifiúk)- were those who were truly imbued with <sup>partinost,</sup> (partosak), they were left of the other clique, although the members of the other clique also wrote adulatory poems about Stalin. Zelk, for instance. But they considered their art, their writing, more sacred and not so much an agitational tool. They liked Babits secretly, etc. The "young gentlemen" -(úrifiúk) liked <sup>him</sup> too, but they said that this was not a central problem now. There was Cini Karinthy, for instance, who grew up in the Nyugat Circle and sucked the poetry of Babits with his father's milk; but he did not publically fight for Babits, although in company he, too, admitted his enthusiasm for him. The clique of "young gentlemen", including Somlyó, Kuczka, Devecseri, Karinthy and Aczel, was supposedly untalented and consisted only of careerists - (Strébérek). The young gentlemen praised Stalin out of careerism, while the other clique praised him out of conviction.

Lajos Tamási was in-between, and agreed with the person to whom he was talking at the moment.

The Communist writers came to the Party through a variety of channels. Some came from the old intelligentsia, others from the labor movement -(munkás mozgalom)- a third group <sup>consisted of</sup> ~~was~~ new university products, and a fourth consisted of folk or Populist elements. Kónya was a good example of the latter; he was proud of coming from the people, was nationalistic, feeling that the Magyar was the best in the world.

The Déry camp consisted of the "clique of sincere writers", whereas the "young gentlemen" -(úrfiúk)- belonged to the Révai camp. But this did not prevent Cini and Déry from being friends, etc. The way people spoke up for or against Déry in the Déry debate revealed which camp they belonged to. This debate thrust Hungarian literature into stagnation; what followed was pestilence and decay.\* People didn't like it, but they didn't quite know why. Then Uncle Imre formulated <sup>it</sup> politically in the program of the new course, which was translated into literature, too.

Some of the writers who now visited the provinces, the villages where Kucgka, Kónya, who was also a member of Parliament, Saškadi, Urbán, Szeberényi, and Tardos. Thus, they discovered what was wrong sooner than we did. We didn't see the light until the summer of 1954, when there were terrific orgies of self-criticism, embracing of each other, joy at finding each other, and in general

\* (dögvesz és rothadás)

a big uniting of the two groups.

It is not quite correct to say that Aczél belonged to this 1953<sub>a</sub> group. \* Aczél saw<sup>in 1949</sup> that there were troubles, ~~but~~, but at that time the slogan was that these were merely the "difficulties of growth". He didn't realize that these troubles were fundamental and were symptoms of <sup>a</sup>diseased <sup>g</sup>organism. In 1953<sub>a</sub>, people began to see that there was something basically wrong, and that it was not simply a matter of "there are still some mistakes, Comrades". It was not until 1954<sub>a</sub>, however, that Aczél realized that everything was bad. Sure, he may have gone to the country in 1953, lots of people did, to take their vacations. But this was not very influential on his development. He was very much affected by the minutes of the October, 1954<sub>a</sub> Szabad Nép membership meeting, which he read after he returned from China. My final disillusionment came in the summer of 1954<sub>a</sub>.

In 1953<sub>a</sub>, the conflict between the two groups of writers was never basic, although they raged at each other. We never said that ~~Kuc~~ Kuczka was an unprincipled scoundrel; what we said was that: "How can he be so stupid as not see the invincible strength of the peace camp." And Kuczka wouldn't call Aczél a scoundrel, but would tell him to stop arguing and go to the village instead, to convince himself ~~of~~ of the truth. There was no hatred between the two groups, though there was distance and the intrusion of personal issues. The reconciliation was an agreement on basic principles.

(Int. note: A. had claimed this in his interview.)

ples: we agreed that Uncle Imre was right, and that Rákosi was a bloody scoundrel. The first rapprochement was not to each other as persons, but to the common platform, in the summer of 1954. The personal reconciliation took place in October, 1954. The rapprochement consisted of the acceptance <sup>by</sup> the sectarians of the platform proposed by Kónya, Kuczka, Pál Szabó and Sarkadi. It is strange that this group which found itself in 1953, was more moderate later, whereas the sectarians who took longer to discover the truth, were more violent in their opposition to the regime. It was this former sectarian group which became the leader of the intellectual revolt. The reasons for this are understandable psychologically; after all, it is the man who loves his wife who murders her when she becomes unfaithful. The nature of the reconciliation differed from person to person, and was a thing of delicate shadings. For instance, now when Kónya made a statement at a Party membership meeting, Aczél would agree. And that was all. There were also cases where the former enemies would pour out their souls to each other. This was a beautiful united front in the noblest sense of the world. Rákosi tried to disrupt this unity in various ways. He tried to bribe some of the people - such as Aczél. And others received Kossuth prizes or praise in Szabad Nép to gain their adherence to the Rákosi cause. This attempt at bribery and coercion continued until the end. For instance, after Lukácsy called Rákosi a Judas at a Party membership meeting, Sarkadi and Kuczka were called

into Szabad Nép and made to write articles condemning Lukácsy. It was Kuszka's which was published. They wrote this because Horváth persuaded them (*megdumálták őket*) that behavior like Lukácsy's would undermine the gains of the 20th Party Congress. Horváth told them that Rákosi must be undermined slowly and carefully, and that a tone like Lukácsy's would only help Rákosi's cause. Horváth said that even criticism should be expressed in the correct Party ~~matter~~ manner. (*pártosan*). He was probably right.

The reason for Rákosi's weakness was that ever since the death of Stalin he ~~didn't~~<sup>had not</sup> know what was going on in Moscow. It was difficult to figure out the exact stand of the individual Moscow leaders regarding Imre Nagy, there was the tense international situation and Geneva, the tension with Tito, the rehabilitations, etc. The Rákosi gang lost that feeling of total certainty with which it<sup>had</sup> killed, cheated, and murdered. They were afraid that Suslov or Mikoyan would come to Hungary and give them hell, telling them: "We told you to stop your illegal actions . . . ." Now Krushchev<sup>has</sup> said that if the Hungarian Communist leaders had been courageous enough to arrest two writers, there would have been no Hungarian Revolution. This is true, although they would have had to arrest more than two, and is a brilliant statement, chiefly because it was on account of Krushchev that the writers were not arrested. Rákosi would have stopped the Revolution. In fact he was planning to arrest 400 people after the Petöfi Circle ban but



Krushchev didn't allow him to do so.

Why did we launch the writers' revolt? When we began, we believed that justice would triumph, and also that regardless of the consequences we would write only if we could write the truth. We also trusted in the victory of Imre Nagy. After all, look at the history of the C.P.S.U., which proves that the masses revolted when they could no more live the old way. Once we <sup>had</sup> discovered the truth we couldn't continue doing what we <sup>had been</sup> doing; then we could either sell ourselves, or fight <sup>for</sup> what we believed right. We didn't know what the 20th Party Congress would bring; even Rakosi didn't know. In fact, Erdős was arrested the night before the opening of the Congress. We didn't count ~~on~~ on the Congress as a factor in our revolt. We knew of the changes in Russia, of course, but we <sup>had</sup> lost faith in them after we saw the way Imre Nagy was treated. We realized that the new Russian leaders were a worthless crowd. After this realization, the Russian ~~changes~~ changes had merely tactical importance to us such as the <sup>h</sup> Krushchev-Tito ~~visits~~ ~~visits~~ and the 20th Party Congress. Of course, we hoped from the beginning, but we had nothing substantial on which to base our hope, that Rakosi would fail, that the Soviet would get bored with ~~him~~ him, that he would be unmasked, that they would get tired of him. Although the Russian changes were an important consideration to us, we couldn't count on them; there were hesitations, weaknesses, tactical maneuverings. The Geneva Conference and some of the subsequent developments made us breathe more easily, es-

pecially since we felt Rakosi's hesitations and insecurity regarding the Russians. We felt this, just as the horse feels the un-  
sureness of the horseman. Basically our tactics consisted of using everything we had against the regime. For instance, I suppose there was a Pravda article attacking the writers, a 15 page article in which one paragraph began: "At the same time we must <sup>t</sup> admit that ...". We would use this article to further our own aims, quoting only this one paragraph or sentence.

The most active members of the writers' revolt were the five condemned in the 1955 ~~XXXX~~ resolution and Benjamin. Dery had the most important role because of his great prestige as a writer and artist, because of his personality and unyielding character, because of the respect which all the other writers felt for him. Dery is an aristocrat, a writer who insists on his commas, a man who looked down on lesser mortals. He participated in our political debates but his role was not the political leadership of the writers' revolt. Nor did he claim political correctness for his own views. He preferred to moralize; he had a moral attitude against the regime's immorality. Dery helped us simply by the fact that he was; he was the only CP writer with such literary prestige.

Aczel was very bold and courageous in his fight against the regime, and he had a very important role with respect to the writers' memorandum to the Party. In fact he was the ~~XXXX~~ <sup>soul</sup> and

and literally the motor of the memorandum because it was he who collected <sup>the</sup> signatures with his little Škoda car. The attacks in the exile press on ~~Aczél~~ Aczél ~~work~~ are extremely unfair. Today they are <sup>denouncing</sup> ~~Aczél~~ Aczél, ~~was a traitor~~ and that it ~~was~~ is Háy, now in prison, who is the martyr among the writers. Actually Háy's role was more showy than anything else, and it was people like ~~Aczél~~ Aczél who did the real work.

The idea for the memo was born sometime in the summer of 1955, after the Tito-Bulganin-Krushchev pact. Everything was dead; people on vacation, Déry in the mountains, and others on the Balaton. Then came the very annoying confiscation of an issue of Irodalom Ujság by that idiot Nón. We demanded that a meeting of the Writers' Association & Party <sup>group</sup> ~~cells~~ be called, but Andics vetoed this. Then the Communist members of the Writers' Association presidium resigned in protest, which aggravated the situation. We felt that we simply had to do something. Question: What was your aim in preparing this memorandum; what did you try to achieve? ~~Answer~~ Answer: "Hogy zűr legyen" - (to cause a commotion.) You see this is why I don't approved of these interviews, this is why I prefer to write of my experiences. I suppose that an interview is more revealing, but I don't see how an unguarded, undignified ~~stat~~ statement like this could serve the cause of the Hungarian writers. What I really meant to say was that we wanted the country to know ~~about~~ what we were trying to do. To put it solemnly, we wanted a

"great scream in the night".\* We wanted the country to talk about what we were trying to do, to show the people how many of us writers and actors there were in opposition to the regime. We wanted this to be a slap to Rákosi, and we succeeded.

The writers' revolt was based on the difference in the ~~phase~~ phase of development (fázis(különbség)) between Russia and Hungary, emphasizing this difference in order to hurt the Hungarian leadership. We weren't trying to prove that the Russians were better leaders but did it simply because we knew that it would be unpleasant to Rákosi. We knew we wouldn't hurt Rákosi by saying that he was a stiff sectarian Communist, but realized that we could hurt him only by saying that he was anti-Soviet in his policies. We had no illusions about the Soviet Union but knew that this was the tactically ~~is~~ correct policy.

In the memorandum we wanted to bring up grievances which were not personal but which touched the cause of literature as a whole, which were national and above Party interests. We wanted to bring up grievances which hurt everybody such as the dismissals at Szabad Nép, László Németh's Galilei, the question of the ~~prefix~~ performing of The Tragedy of Man whose ban we considered a national insult. The same applies to the ban on the performance of Bartók's Csodálatos Mandarin - (The Wonderful Mandarin) and the question of Benjamin's book of poems.

The writers' revolt had no deliberate organizational machinery

\* (nagy sikoltást az éjszakában.)

but was based chiefly on personal friendships and <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ agreements of principle. As for the Petöfi Circle, the writers and the leaders of the Petöfi Circle sympathized with each other and were influenced by each other but they had no united plan of organization. The leaders of the Petöfi Circle respected the writers however and were to some extent under their influence ideologically. After Gerö's speech attacking the Petöfi Circle there was a campaign in the factories, which consisted of reports on the rehabilitations held at the factories, and demands that the entire country should be rehabilitated. We discussed the plans for the press debate with each other and with Losonczy. At the press debate I sat beside Déry who gave me his speech to read. Then János told me, when he entered the hall, that the "old man" wanted us to mention the fact that this was the third anniversary of the June Resolution. But somebody else, somebody intimidated by this idea, suggested that we keep quiet. I think I know why I was not expelled from the Party as a result of the Press debate, the way Déry was. Déry was essentially the original enemy\*, the Emanuel Goldstein of the regime, whereas I was supposed to be a good Communist. Because of my Korean articles, <sup>country</sup> the/wouldn't have believed that I was a petty bourgeois deviationist.

The atmosphere in which the memorandum was prepared was full of rage, nervousness, fear and intimidation, and passions. Often we felt discouraged but then we started again. Often we decided

\* (ösellense'g)

to drop the whole thing, to go home and write a romantic drama about love, saying: "let them drop dead!". The atmosphere had something about it of Ady's poem in which he says: "We need Mohács...", proclaiming that the Hungarian people would only awake when everything was on the verge of destruction. We had "deep Magyar" Ady lamentations. The next day somebody would come and say: "Did you hear what the crazy Rákosi said at ~~the~~ Csepel?" There was a tremendous passion in the air. There was also a lot of humor, it was always when things looked darkest that we cracked the most jokes. The memorandum was a terrifically big issue all over Budapest; everyone in Budapest knew about it, but people didn't have the text which made it all the more exciting.

The way it went was that we said, now at this coming Party membership meeting, we'll really give it to them. Then after the 20th Party Congress we said: "this is something we have to make use of; ~~we~~ the bloody scoundrels, they're kicking their last..." The 20th Party Congress justified us and was closer to our tactical line than to Rákosi's although it didn't really reflect our feelings and ~~x~~ beliefs. Afterwards when we <sup>were</sup> cited before the Central Control Commission on the charge of organizing a faction~~s~~ by addressing a memorandum to the Party, I took out my Party membership book and read from the rules of organization that ~~the~~ rule which stated that an extraordinary Party Congress could be called together if one half of the members demanded it. I said that this

implied that the members should sign a petition to demand such a Congress. Thus, if it was alright for the members to do so, why was it wrong for us to do so. But Ságvári and Péteri (?) told me that I misunderstood the rules of organization, because this rule merely meant that the Central Committee could initiate the calling together of such a Party Congress from above. In other words, they stated that the rule didn't mean what it said.

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Fear. I was never acutely afraid, never afraid of being killed, but a number of times I was afraid of arrest. 1) On December 15, 1954, a number of the rebel Szabad Nép staff members were fired, but I was not dismissed. I was supposed to go to Berlin as a correspondent but I procrastinated. Then Malenkov fell from power, and early in February 1955, I went to see Horváth to get some idea of the prevailing atmosphere, to find out, if possible, what was going on. I knew that Imre Nagy and Malenkov had been friends so I was very much disturbed by Malenkov's fall and furthermore I was concerned about the fact that a marshal, Bulganin, had been made prime minister. That was the first time I was afraid of arrest. 2) I was dismissed from my job at Szabad Nép on May 7th, after my return from Berlin. I thought then, and I remember saying to Lénárt: "They won't touch us for a month or two but I think eventually they will make a faction out of the seven Szabad Nép rebels. In fact I am certain that after they arrest

Imre Nagy, we will also be arrested." My reasoning was very realistic, and if it <sup>had</sup> depended on Rákosi, this would have taken place. However, meanwhile, the <sup>h</sup>Krushchev-Tito meeting took place, as well as the Geneva Conference, and so we were not arrested.

Although the Central Control Commission meeting at the Steel Workers' Trade Union was terrible atmospherically, I felt, <sup>in opposition</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>to</sup> some of the others, that this did not indicate the mechanism of arrest. When they want to arrest you, they do not invite you to a meeting of the Central Control Commission, etc. I felt that the mechanism they employed was too legalistic for this. By the way, after this meeting, Cini said to me: "Well, they sure tricked us into this." (Beugrattak). He didn't mean Rákosi either; he meant Imre Nagy and Haraszi. At this time, I counted on a further stage of development, before my arrest, such as their demanding that I attack the imperialists. That is, I thought there would be a further provocation and in case of refusal I would be arrested. 3) In January, 1955, after the Szabad Nép business I was afraid of arrest and I actually left Budapest for two weeks in order to make it more difficult for them to find me, and also to get away from their pestering. This is the sort of pestering I had to put up with. Once Horváth and Pándi phoned and said that they wanted to talk to me. I went to see Pándi who asked me what solution I saw to the problems confronting us. He asked me to write an article which would help



solve our problems in literature, which were ~~among~~<sup>among</sup> the central questions facing us; he said that such an article would clear the air of suspicion and would bring an atmosphere of confidence, etc. ~~Further~~ Two days later, I received an invitation from the Party organization of the Writers' Association and the Budapest Party Committee to visit the Ganz shipbuilding factory. Kuczka and Máriaassy were also summoned. The factory's Party secretary, Lajos Balogh sat next to me at the meeting held at the factory. He was a shrewd, stupid worker, who stayed simple out of shrewdness. At the meeting they told us that we didn't know life and didn't sense the real mood of the ~~working~~<sup>working</sup> class. Then they took us around this factory which I had visited at least 25 times, as though we were foreign delegates to a peace congress, as though we were Negro or Hindu visitors who came to the factory for the first time. The workers were welding and when they were asked what they earned, they said: "Everything's fine. I make 1,600 forints a week." Then for four hours we had to listen to their talk in the room of the Party organization. They read us the workers' pledge for April 4th and said: "Well, what do you think of our marvelous working class?" Judith Máriaassy said, quite truthfully, "This was an unforgettable meeting." We knew that we were leftist deviationists compared to the ~~welder~~ welder. An intelligent functionary told us the truth about the waste of money, the inefficiency,

etc., at the factory. Anyway, after all this, I just wanted to get ~~x~~ away and that's why I went to the country. Then I got a call from the Héviz Film Factory to write a script for them.

4) When Péter Erdős was arrested in February, 1956, we thought that we would also be arrested, and therefore, we burned Imre Nagy's manuscript, the manuscript of his 1955 memorandum to the Party which was in our possession at the time. 5) I was in Czechoslovakia when I heard about the Central Committee resolution against the Petöfi Circle. I was certain that I would be arrested on the border on my return. 6) I was also afraid of arrest on the day of Rákosi's fall. That morning around nine or nine-thirty, every newspaper and periodical received a phone call instructing them not to publish the paper until they received an important announcement. They also phoned me and I was convinced that this announcement would proclaim the arrest of Imre Nagy and a number of others, including me. An hour and a half later I received a phone call announcing Rákosi's ~~arrest~~ fall.

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I joined the Communist Party in 1945.

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In 1953-1954, I was Party secretary of the Writers' Association, and subsequently I became secretary of the Writers' Association. For five months early in 1955, I had no means of support because they boycotted me. In the spring of 1955, Szalai offered me a

free-lance job which I refused. He asked me: "What do you want to live on?" I said: "I will be able to make a living if you will only let me." He said: "What do you mean?" Then Szalai told the film studio not to ~~employ~~<sup>employ</sup> me as a writer because I was a rightist.

In May, 1956, Imre Máté, the editor of Béke <sup>és</sup> Szabadság became secretary of the Writers' Association. I was asked to become an editor of Béke <sup>és</sup> Szabadság. I discussed this offer with the old man ("a <sup>sz</sup> öreg") who said that the time has come to occupy the available positions and ~~we~~ urged me to take the job on the principle of striking the iron while it is hot. I accepted the job and from this position I was able to urge ~~me~~ others to write articles, etc., against the regime. It was we who published ~~the~~ Benjamin's poem to Haraszi.

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Rajk and Révai. We knew, and in recent years we received proof, that at the time of the Rajk trial there was an attempt to get rid of Révai as well. He was just as much involved in the Nékosz as Rajk, and thus the attack on Rajk for his support of Nékosz affected him too. But, after all, Révai was a Stalinist to the core and so he was saved.

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Darvas. ~~Rajk~~ Darvas was one of the most unprincipled scoundrels and yet he had at all times come out for the Tragedy of Man. He

defended Benjamin, etc.

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This was the sort of trick question which they might ask at a political seminar, hoping to catch people in an ideological deviation: "Which People's Democracy is more developed socially, Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria?" The answer is, of course, ~~is~~ that they are equally developed socially but people might easily be tricked into saying that Bulgaria was more retarded.

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Now, I buy the New Statesman and Nation every week, and find it quite good although occasionally it is a trifle too pink for me. It is strange to think that there was a time when I couldn't bear to read the ~~newspaper~~ New Statesman and Nation because I found its tone too reactionary.

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Mindszenty is a feudal, limited, stupid, homosexual. He reminds me of Archbishop~~Tom~~ Tomori at the Battle of Mohács. I think that on the whole, the people<sup>op</sup> posed the speech he made during the Revolution. There was a great danger that his political influence would have pushed the country to the extreme right after the Revolution. As Veres pointed out, in case of a free election, it would be the old women in the villages whose vote would count. Illyés, Németh and Bibó were worried that after the Revolution, they would molest us, the Communist writers. We were certain, however, that

those of us who were talented would make a go of it, could make a living.

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Szabad Nép. Szabad Nép was an extremely poor newspaper; I didn't read it except when I was on weekly inspection duty. There were sixteen checks and counter-checks to make sure that nothing went wrong. But the paper was incredibly bad. I think, however, that my Korean articles were quite readable. It is a paradox that a staff composed of talented and brilliant people could be responsible for the writing of such a bad paper. Take Gimes, for instance, a brilliant man, a polyhistor with a fantastic fund of knowledge.

(Interviewer's Note: Respondent showed interviewer the speech he made at the historic October 1954, Szabad Nép<sup>Party</sup> membership meeting. Respondent has the complete minutes of this meeting.)

In my speech I attacked the "double dealing policies of the top leaders" ("a felső vezetőség kétkulacsossága"). Farkas was furious and asked me: "Whom do you mean?" He knew, of course, that I meant him. I also called for a "purifying storm" ("tisztító vihar") to sweep the Party, ~~to~~ to get rid of the bad Party functionaries. The gist of my speech was that the Party would have to adopt an entirely new attitude.

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Imre Nagy. Imre Nagy brought up the possibility of the multi-

party system in 1954, at the time of the Third Party Congress. Although his 1955, memo to the Party (Interviewer's note: See Imre Nagy on Communism) reflected his true views <sup>at</sup> the time, one must also take into consideration that he was writing it for the Central Committee and therefore every sentence was carefully propped up ("körülbástyázva") in order to prevent a possible attacks on Nagy for lack of orthodoxy. Later his views changed, and he wanted a socialist, democratic state with a multi-party system. The trouble was that he didn't start organizing an opposition to Rákosi until he was out of power.

I am convinced that during the Revolution Imre Nagy proclaimed neutrality <sup>in order</sup> to assure the Russians that Hungary would not be used as a possible base <sup>of</sup> ~~for~~ attack on the Soviet Union. (Interviewer's Note: A friend of Respondent's who was also interviewed in Paris, stated that Méray and He spent many long nights wondering just what made Imre Nagy proclaim neutrality.) The Russians are unpredictable and therefore difficult to deal with, because as the Communist journalist Reismann pointed out, one would have to think with a Russian head in order to figure out how they would act. And this Russian mentality is a mixture of the Balkans, Asia, and the Russian folk soul. How can one think the same way?