

(1) Question: How did the Communists affect the Reform^{ed} Church in Hungary?

Respondent answers:

Let us start at the beginning right after the war. The whole situation begins with the semitic question. Some people say that the Reform^{ed} Church did not do anything for the Jews during the war, but in 1946 there is published a book by Albert Bereczky, entitled "Mit tett a Magyar Protestantizmus a zsidókért" (what Hungarian Protestantism did for the Jews). In 1946 this author's later edition, who serves the Communist regime, proves that the Reform^{ed} Church and ~~some~~ Bishop Ravasz did help the Jews who were being persecuted in Hungary. Later, the Communists attacked the Reformed Church and Bishop Ravasz by saying that neither did anything during the pre-war days in order to help the Jews. However, the document is there which proved in 1946 as to what ^{the} Reform^{ed} Church or Hungarian Protestantism actually did in aiding the Jews, and it is from the pen ^{of} ~~some~~ the man who later cooperates with the Communists as Bishop of the Church.

After the war, the country is very much beaten and the Church begins to explain this as God's judgment against the country ~~and~~ ^{and} some say this is God's judgment and approve the executor of the judgment, the Communists. But first everyone hated the Russians; at first Bereczky and others saw a positive judgment against the country,

but in further interpretation of this they isolated themselves from the rest of the Church.

At the beginning ^{of} 1946 and afterwards, there occurs a great re-awakening, ~~and~~ ^a revival within the life of the Church; the spiritual leaders of this movement, the Nyiregyházi^{tanács}, include Albert Bereczky and Benő Békeffi. The State allowed everything; up to 1948 all kinds of conferences to deepen the spiritual life of the Church were allowed freely.

Now the State power is more in the hands of the Communists; in 1947, during the elections, the power is practically in the Communists' hands and the pressure begins in 1947 during the autumn. This pressure is mostly felt in the agricultural areas with warnings to be seen in the political field

In 1948, the Reformed^{ed} Church found itself in a new situation. In October 1948 an agreement is reached between the Church and the State, which includes 9 points. Among them are:

1. The Church has complete free activity in church functions.
2. The Church Schools, elementary and middle schools, except four, which include Budapest, Debrecen, Sarospatak and Pépa, are nationalized. The four schools excepted are not nationalized because the reason they were allowed to remain in the hands of the Church was to continue the training of ministers which is done there. However, the State agrees to allow religious training and religious teaching to continue in schools.

3. The Church gives up all land and property.
4. But the State agrees to support the Church for twenty years, however, every five years this support will decrease 25%. This agreement was not too bad, every freedom was guaranteed for the Church; when it was signed, everyone was happy, at least it was thought so, but then there occurred attacks from various sides that the Reform^{ed} Church had made an agreement with the Communists. However, shortly there came an agreement with the Lutherans and then with the Roman Catholic Church.

Soon after the signing of the agreement, Bishop Ravasz was forced to resign. Although 95% of the Reform^{ed} Church was behind Bishop Ravasz, how did the Communists force him to resign? They said to him that they would arrest so and so many ministers, and close so and so many churches unless he resigns, or retires. Thus he was forced to retire and it was then that Albert Bereczky became Bishop. He was accepted in the following manner, most of the people saying, if we cannot have Ravasz, then Bereczky is good. His reception as bishop was not a divided reception because he had done excellent work in the re-awakening and revival movement within the Church. However, the election of Bereczky as bishop was done at the pressure of the State and not legally. Also, another consideration that occurred at this time, the eminent theologian Barth recommended Bereczky highly. This was Barth's great ~~error~~ ^{error} in the history of the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church.

The inner motives which moved Bereczky at that time were that

he wanted to save the Church in this transition of the Communist period, that is in Hungarian "átmenteni az egyházat". His error was that he did not believe enough in the Lord of the Church, that human manipulations were not needed to save the Church. The fact that Bereczky had fought so strongly against Fascism to a certain ^{extent} did not allow him to see the danger of Communism. Later when he became aware of this danger, and noticed the danger, the waves and flood or trend to which he had stepped swept him along and he didn't have enough strength to oppose that flood.

The theological explanation of Bishop Bereczky's behaviour at certain times and in certain situations is as follows: that he came under the power of the demon of the times, this was for moments or for periods, a person can explain certain things only in this way because the character and spirit of Bereczky is other than his behaviour in certain situations. A general opinion about Bereczky is as follows: "the poor, unfortunate man".

Now that Bereczky was elected to be bishop, he was isolated by the regular men of the Reform^{ed} Church who shut themselves off from him. They did this for two reasons. First, that Bishop Ravasz had been forced and illegally removed and therefore the Church disliked Bereczky for taking the position that formerly was held by Ravasz. Second, the regular men of the Church did not accept his theology of judgment. For a time the extreme pietists went along with Bereczky, but when Bereczky wanted to curb the pietistic or awakening movement, then even the pietists opposed him. Instead of trying to win the regular men of the

Church who could not go along with him because of his theological position, Bereczky selected a few men with dark pasts, some stupid men, who because of their bad character or stupidity were ready to do anything. And then Bereczky put these men into high positions in the Reform^{ed} Church, such men as István [redacted], the director of the Konvent, who had been an Arrow Cross member; Sándor [redacted]; Imre [redacted], who was the secretary of a theatre, and wrote racy novels, received a responsibility of dealing with all the foreign relations of the church; Péter [redacted], who was held as as the Church's most stupid man - and this is not an exaggeration. Thus the central leadership of the Church did everything the State wanted and was loyal to the State. It did even more than the State desired. Along with this, the leadership of the Dunamellék Church district was set up also.

The Lay President of the Konvent and the Chief Elder of the Dunamellék District were appointed by the State^{OR} that is forced to be elected by the State when the first and second man were not acceptable to the State, but the third man up for election was given the 'Yes' sign, he was Roland [redacted], a Social Democrat officially, but secretly a Communist. He was a State Minister but he was a sinister, stupid and evil man.

The bishop of the Dunántúli District was Elemér Györi. Basically he was a good man, but weak and very much influenced. Thus this Church District leadership fell under the Communist-dominated Central Konvent. The Tiszáninnen Church District did not participate in any anti-State activity, but at the same time retained

its freedom all the way to 1951. There an amazing church-life flowed. The Tiszántúl Church District, the largest Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church District, had an old and vacillating bishop who resigned in 1949 and by the personal intervention and arrangement of Rákosi, János Péter became the bishop. Up to 1946 this Péter was the minister chaplain of the Bethesda^d Hospital in Budapest. He did an excellent piece of work there and it was predicted that he had a fine future ahead of him in the Church. In 1946 he got into the Foreign Office of the Hungarian Government as an official and became the personal secretary of President Tilly^d who was a Reform^s Church Pastor. Tilly^d had little ability, but was well-intentioned. Tilly^d becomes a puppet in the hands of the Communists. In 1948 or '49 - I don't remember exactly - Tilly^d topples from office. All the followers of Tilly^d, his friends, lost their jobs with the exception of Péter. In the Communist regime this is a very strange thing, as usually the leader and all of his friends fall at the same time. The explanation for this unique treatment in the case of Péter is explained on the basis of documents found during the October 1957 Revolution. Péter was a spy for the Communists and on the basis of information that Péter gave to the Communists, Tilly^d's son-in-law was sentenced to death. His son-in-law had been the Hungarian ambassador to Cairo and Tilly^d himself toppled. The protocol about a talk between Péter and Rákosi, which I saw myself during the Revolution, spoke of the troubles the Communists were having with the Reform^{ed} Church, because the Reform^{ed} Church was too vital, and too lively. Péter arrived at the Rákosi

office and offered his services to Rákosi saying that Rákosi should make him, Péter, Bishop of the Reform Church and he would put things in order there. Rákosi agreed and then Rákosi said to Roland Kiss, who was a State Minister, "Jól használható fiatal oportunisták," that is a young opportunist whom we can well use. With this, Péter became Bishop and the Reform Church comes completely under Communist domination at top levels. The Church Districts lose their jurisdiction, the Church Districts are re-organized and Bereczky and others along with Péter bring orders and regulations according to the approval of the State.

If a Minister, as a delegate to the General Synod, Zsinat, a member of the Committee of General Meeting, said something opposing a bishop's recommendation or modified or added to a recommendation, the AVH would take this pastor away for 5 years. The statement of the pastor need not be an anti-political statement, just not that which the Bishop or the State wanted or had recommended. Thus the Zsinat life was undermined and the President of the Church was Bereczky, the Vice-President Péter, the Lay President Roland Kiss, the Lay-Vice-President Ferenc Erdei, the Communist State Minister. Then all the officials of the Konvent were the followers of these men. From the Government side there was set up a religious affairs office, whose director at first was István Kossa, later János Horváth. In the first place, thus the Church Government, as an independent jurisdiction, was eliminated and secondly, for all practical purposes, the congregation's right to elect ministers, was

eliminated. In this latter instance it was either the bishop who appointed the pastor or the Presbyterium or consistory of the church was threatened by the AVH if they did not elect the person who had been designated. Pastors were constantly changed in their posts and at times actually put into a state of fear and of uncertainty. Reasonably free church-life existed only in the Tiszáninnen District.

In 1950, an order of the Konvent restricted the activity of ministers, this order was modified in 1950 and thus tied the entire church-life. First, if a pastor becomes ill, then another pastor can serve in the first pastor's place only with the approval and permission of the Dean or Bishop of the District. If the pastor belongs to another District, then the approval of the Bishop is needed. Secondly, conferences and church gatherings were prohibited; third, the limitation of congregational Bible Hours; fourth, almost elimination of work with children, allowed only on Sunday during one Worship Service for the ages 6 to 14 held at one time. Just imagine the impossible situation to teach under such circumstances. Fifth, religious education was jointly limited by the State and Church in the following way:

- (a) many ministers did not receive permission to teach,
- (b) parents were threatened, if they registered children for religion in school by saying that the parents would be fired from their jobs and the children could not study in higher institutions of education. In Budapest from 1952 on as a result of this ruling there was no religious education in any of the schools, yet Budapest has a population of 700,000.

In 1951, the Konvent in opposition to every church law, which

limits the rights and jurisdiction of the Konvent, the Konvent closed the Saros^pyatak and the Pápa Theological Seminaries and Gymnasiums. Legally it is only the Church District which has the right to do this. The consequences of this action were that the training of ministers fell off and the two remaining Seminaries were limited to a number of students for a particular school year. As a result of all of this, in 1956, the remaining Rumanian Reform^{ed} Church, which is one third the size of the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church, had 60 more theological students than were enrolled in the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church Theological Schools. This will all lead to the downfall of the Church. In 1955 out of 65 students who applied, only 15 were admitted at the Budapest Seminary.

When the two Theological Seminaries were taken away from the Reform^{ed} Church, the Tiszáninen Church District brought forward a resolution saying that this action was illegal and directed the Konvent to open the two Seminaries the following semester. Upon the basis of this resolution and activity, the theological students would be moved away from these Seminaries and on the assigned day went back to Pápa and Saros^pyatak so that the Konvent could not oppose the Tiszáninen resolution. After the students returned to these two Seminaries, at dawn the AVH intervened. The best students of both of these Seminaries were dismissed and most of them were given a loss of one half year of their school records and the two Theological Seminaries remained closed.

In 1952, out of the four middle schools that remained to the Church, three were taken away and only Debrecen remained. At

the same time, the Tiszáninnen Church District was eliminated too. This District was merged with the District under the jurisdiction of Bishop Péter and the two Districts together were called the Tisza Vidéki, vicinity, Church District. All of these actions were in direct opposition to the agreement with the State, especially where the State guaranteed that all four schools would be allowed to remain under the control of the Church. The period of the darkest terror was from 1951 to 1953. Many pastors were jailed, many were dismissed, not allowed to serve, or charged from their posts, and the Church Press repeats the phrases of the Szabad Nep and the Church leaders work up the new theology into a theology of obedience. What is this new theology which becomes a theology of obedience?

1. The task of the Church to-day is not missionary, but to be obedient.
2. Obedience to God means in the present situation, present history obedience to the State.
3. Practically, the task of the Church is to be a helper in building Socialism.
4. The leadership of the Church openly says the preaching of Christian love must contain three elements:
 - (a) for the peasants about the ~~TSZCS~~ TSZCS that they step into it and develop it,
 - (b) for the workers, they should increase their production,
 - (c) for all the people that they should give their complete support to the Peace Movement in the world and aid this movement.

The Church leadership sinks to the point where Bishop Bereczky

on the 60th birthday of Rakosi, ⁱⁿ the newspaper Magyar Nemzet writes an anthem, praising Rakosi.

Church-life, although limited, is good and vital, the number of worshippers is large; generally the pastors and Presbyters are in ~~active~~ ^{passive} resistance to the State and Church leadership. About 95% of the pastors are against the Church leadership. All men, who were members of the local Church Presbyterium, who held twelve holds of land or more or perhaps held whatever wealth previously held a State Office, were eliminated from the local Church Presbyteriums. In spite of this action by the combined efforts of the State and Church leadership, the Presbyteriums today or previous to the Revolution were 100% opposed to the Church leadership.

The Church leadership and the State so tied the Church activity that youth work and children's work ^{were} ~~was~~ soon non-existent from 1950 on. If any such work was discovered, the AVH watched this. In 1953, when Imre Nagy became Prime Minister, the situation became a little more free. Deportation of pastors to concentration camps came to an end, the role of the AVH was lessened. However, the relaxation which occurred in the State Government could be felt in the Church only after some months, because the Church leadership was conservative, that is late in following the changes that had occurred in the State Government.

This one breath of freedom had great consequences. A resistance group developed, especially among the young pastors; however, this resistance had no anti-State character; the goal of it was to put the Church back on the basis of the 1948 Agreement and to

regain the freedoms of the Church thereby. This resistance was not organized and lived informally among ministers and friends. For a time the Church leadership resisted this growing movement strongly. The resistance could not make itself public, no newspaper would ~~use~~^{be} its voice, nor could the resistance speak publicly in meetings. No one was taken to prison except in 1955, and then these people were imprisoned only for a few months, and released after domestic and foreign pressure was brought to bear for their release. These people were not jailed because the Church leadership only suspected who the leaders of the resistance were and did not know exactly.

Out of the young ministerial group there was born a proclamation or statement in 1955 in which these young ministers criticize the Church leadership and brought demands against the Church and its particular theology, The ~~new~~^{ed} theology instituted by the Church leadership, that was favourable to the Communists. This proclamation was passed from hand to hand in secret and when one person got it, he copied it and passed it on to a friend. Even today, the State still does not know where it started. This statement was so developed and so formed that it expressed the common opinion of the whole Reform ^{ed} Church. In the same year 1955, this statement got out into foreign countries, being mailed from Hungary by ^a very ingenious means, that is that the return-address to Hungary was István Finta and so these letters were not censored at the border nor at the post offices.

In 1956, out of this statement, there developed a movement of 160 pastors. They addressed a statement to the Konvent and

demanded the change of the Miss^zio Order, which would allow pastors to preach in another church than his own on an invitation from the other church. By the summer of 1956, this statement travelled along pastors and the petition was signed by all the Reform^{ed} Church ministers who got it. On the basis of this pressure, early in the summer, a few of the Reform^{ed} Church leaders had to step down, such as István Finta, Sándor Fekete, the Dean of Budapest,^{and} Benő Bekeffi. With the removal of these men from the leadership of the Church, it was hoped that the criticism would stop and this would be a gag in the mouth of the resistance, a kind of piece of meat to a dog, but the inner pressure and resistance grew from day to day.

In early October 1956 it appeared that the State out of tactical reasons would agree to the removal of top church leaders. However, in reality for the resistance this would not be a solution, because as soon as the State regained its power, the same men or the same kind of men would be back to direct the Reform^{ed} Church. Then came the Revolution unexpectedly and in an unprepared way.

The Reform^{ed} Church, like every other group, or everyone else, had no preparation in the Revolution and the Church was unprepared for the Revolution.

In the first free day of the Revolution, October 31st, when people could travel on the streets rather safely, the Reformed^{ed} Church pastors of Pest and from the vicinity, the leaders of the inner resistance came together. This was a spontaneous meeting, only one man was called to the meeting and that was

the former Bishop Ravasz who had the confidence of the entire Church. Everyone knew that something had to be done, but how and what was to be done nobody knew. At this time, Bishop Bereczky was a very sick man, he had suffered a heart attack; Bishop Péter was in Debrecen and the Bishop of Dunántúl could not be contacted. It was evident that these three leaders mentioned could not remain at the head of the Church. These present leaders had compromised themselves with the Communist State even more than the ordinary Communist functionaries had. The Reform Church stood united against them. At the same time it could be feared that if these leaders did not step aside, the Secular Press of the Revolution would attack them and there would be demonstrations against them and the Reform Church at the same time. Thus the Reform Church as a whole would be branded as working with the Communists when this was not the case at all. The only solution seemed to be to have these men quietly step aside out of the Church for they really were not the true leaders of the Reform Church. This Meeting on October 31st expressed the total common will of the Hungarian Reform Church. It was decided that by a Radio announcement the public and the Hungarian Reform Church membership would be informed, that these Church leaders had been asked to resign from their posts. Furthermore, that until new elections are held, a National Executive Committee was formed (Országos Intéző Bizottság) whose first duty was to organize and prepare for the necessary elections. Furthermore, it was announced that every resigning official can be re-elected if a sufficient number

of people vote for him, this was included in the Statement, moreover, that the elections will be free elections. This Executive Committee asked László Ravasz to be the chairman of the Committee. The Committee announced that they hold Ravasz to be the legal bishop of the Dinamellék District and to be the legal Clerical President of the Konvent. This Committee under the name of Ravasz sent out a letter to all ministers and Presbyteriums, asking each to decide whether they wish to join the Movement or not (see photo-copy of this letter). This letter, because of the second Russian attack, could not be mailed out except on November 13th. Two thirds of the Congregations of the Reform^d Church immediately replied, the others^{were} unable to reply because of poor communications, but did so later; the two thirds reported their joining the Movement.

Resignations of Officials.

On December 16th 1956, the Zsinat Council held a Meeting where the resignation letters of the church officials were read. Two pastors brought up the problem of confidence in these men; on a secret ballot 69 voted against, one voted for, and a few ballots were invalid. Then the entire Zsinat Council resigned and new elections were declared. It appeared that finally the Church could elect such men, whom it could trust and would have confidence in. However, the State intervened and announced that it will not allow the new elections. The Church and the State do not recognize, they said, those who were members of the National Executive Committee, it recognizes only the pre-revolutionary officers of the Reform^d Church. Upon making this statement, the

Communist State Government formed a voluntary Committee out of the Church and included State Government men who were to discuss the problems between the two Parties. The representatives from the Church included no members who had the confidence of the Reform^{ed} Church at large. For a time nothing happened, the State did not allow even the smallest meeting to occur, not even the Consistory or Presbyterium Meetings could be held.

On February 1st, 1957, there started the merciless terror against the Reform^{ed} Church according to the old methods. Those leaders of the Reform^{ed} Church, whom the Communists wanted to put away, were accused on political charges and jailed. Against the National Executive Committee, a charge was laid, that money from American churches through the World Council of Churches was given and promised and this Committee prepared the counter-Revolution. The State charge said that the Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches - Visser't Hoff - promised these Church leaders 5 million dollars, if they make the Revolution succeed.

One of the Communist agents in the Reform^{ed} Church, whom the Communists themselves sent to Seminary and ^{who} then became a Dean of the Church at Tatabánya - Lóránt J. Mezei - wrote in the Komáromi Dolgozó Lap during May 1957, as to how he recognized and was able to discover that the Revolution was a counter-Revolution. One also needs to note that this particular Dean was 30 years old when the Communists sent him to Seminary. A part of the article follows:

"... hogy az EVT-nak Galyatetőn tartott értekezletén Visser't Hoff, az egyházak főtitkara, aki melleleg

Dulles sógora, nagyon melegen érdeklődött tőlem a magyarországi helyzet iránt, de amikor látta, hogy tőlem nem szerezhethet információt, az értekezlet folyamán nem törődött velem. Szintén ezen a konferencián Magyarországon járt a hírhedt Taft szenátor öccse fotóriporteri minőségben. Mirdezekre vissza gondolva és ezeket a vonásokat összerakva, jutottam arra a meggyőződésre, hogy Október 23-án ellenforradalom kezdődött Magyarországon."

(... that at the World Council of Churches Meeting at Galyatető in Hungary, Visser't Hooft, the Executive Secretary of the Council, who incidentally is the brother-in-law of Dulles, Mezei writes, enquired eagerly from me concerning the Hungarian situation, but when he saw that he cannot acquire any information from me, he did not concern himself with me during the rest of the Conference. Also at this Conference in Hungary, there appeared the brother of ^{the notorious} Senator Taft in the role of a photo-reporter. Mezei continues, and as I think back upon all of these things and I put all these threads together, I reach the conclusion ~~that~~ that on October 23rd ^{the} counter-Revolution started in Hungary).

In February and March 1957, most of the members of the National Executive Committee were arrested, the rest were forced to submit to AVH interrogation. Beginning in March, the pastors of the Reform ^{ed} Church were kept in constant terror, a tremendous number of the pastors were put in jail for shorter and longer terms. The pastors of the country-side in greater majority were beaten up terribly, there were hardly any pastors who were untouched by the AVH; while more and more pastors were arrested, others were let out, a few young pastors got one to five years sentences. At the end of May 1957, a middle-aged pastor was sentenced to death. The most active and vital members of Congregations were also put in jail. With these actions of terror, the State was trying to soften the entire Reform ^{ed} Church, so that by the Fall of 1957, the members of the Church should be in a position to tolerate the replacements of

a few former officers of the Church and a few newer men who will be made officers by the State within the Church. During this period of terror, the State placed such men at the head of the Church who, taken by themselves individually, are good men, but they are old men and incapable men in a sense that they cannot develop any resistance against the actions of the State. These men will be removed in time.

How do the eight Congregations react to these developments in Hungary.

For example, Lóránt J. Mezei, who on October 27th, as the Dean of the Church and minister in Tatabánya, the mining centre, had a Radio message announced, saying that he condemned the Revolution along with the leading Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church Grósz, later in the Komáromi Newspaper, wrote that his Congregation and other Congregations had shut him out of the Church just as it has ~~shut out~~ ^{shut out} all those people or leaders who had remained loyal to Communism, and his people turned against him because he gave Thanks for the intervention of the Russian troops in Hungary. The Community in which Mezei was a pastor, was a mining community and the membership of this Congregation is made up of miners. It was these people who shut him out of the Church and even to-day the members do not attend his Services.

The State has taken away the pay from those ministers of the Reform^{ed} Church, who took active part in the Revolution. However, the members of these Congregations take care of their pastors

and give them food at this time, so that the pastors and their families are living better now than when they received pay. However, this kind of aid will not be able to go on for an indefinite period.

When the State ~~was~~^{ended.} the National Executive Committee of the Reform Church, this Committee continued its work as the Movement of Renewal "Megújulás Mozgalom" and the Presbyteriums continued as before.

The effect of Communism on the Schools and Education.

With the coming of the Communists to political power, in the Schools there was an attempt to teach the youth that everything which preceded Communism was bad and that and that Communism had brought a tremendous progress to the Nation. We had to learn a great number of statistics, the 1938 standard of life was put before us and then compared with the present-day standard of life. The Capitalists were constantly painted as black, dark and sinister, contributing to the poverty of people. Also the attempt was made to make youth a non-thinking youth to eliminate thinking. This was done by raising the hours of lectures so high that the student could not digest the material and think about it. The goal was, the student parroted back exactly the lectured material, so that the youth would know only one set of ideas, Marxist, Leninist, Stalinist. Thus everything was ready given, ready made for the student. They, the Communists, through the educational system denied every other view, saying that all other views are conservative, all ideas are progressive, far superior to the other views which are stupid.

All of this practically meant that history was re-written, every historical event was put into a Marxist historical determinism, straight-jacketed and schematized history as a direct development from a class-less society to slavery, to feudalism, ^{to} capitalism, then to socialist society and then to communist society. Furthermore, they re-wrote the literature, the classicals were made to be pre-Communist; non-classical ~~best~~ writers were not spoken of or they were criticized, were made fun of. For example, how did the Communists deal with Shakespeare, whom they could not ignore. In Hamlet, they say Shakespeare pictures die in feudalism and points to the developing Communism. All of Hamlet's agony represents the decadence of feudalism and the soliloquy "to be or not to be" is decadent. In Hamlet the ones who looked to the future are the proletariat, the grave-diggers. The entirety of Hamlet shows that the future belongs to the proletariat. This is how the Communists interpreted Hamlet and Shakespeare.

In modern literature, only Russian literature is good, the rest of the world literature is zero except for one or two Western Communist writers.

The geography of the world was re-written or, in fact, the maps were re-coloured and re-painted or re-issued in a certain way so that by the colouring employed, ^{or} the map of Europe and Russia the Soviet Union appeared to be overwhelmingly big, painted in a reddish colour, that Europe appeared very tiny. The students would study mere Soviet economy and be introduced to the great wonders of that economy. They tried to make Western

countries appear to be poor and talked very little about them.

Furthermore, all inventions and discoveries belonged to the Soviet inventors, the steam engine was discovered by Bozunov, as was everything else. Thus children heard that all good comes from the Soviets or from the Russian people, who were the pre-runners and preparers of Communism.

The most important thing to know in school was the Soviet-Bolshevik Party history. The students had to memorize this and know it by heart. This history too was re-written every few years and had to be re-learned. It is interesting to note that the "Holy" Book always changed and was not standard and authoritative.^{ive}

The Communists tried to ^{to} curb or shut off even the most apolitical effects of the West so that ~~the~~ in the theatre modern Western writers' works were not performed. A few Russian classical plays were performed along with the new Soviet and satellite works, the great Western classical writers were performed and these later were introduced in the newspaper, on the Radio and in School, as being the forerunners and preparers of Communism. Thus, when the individual visited the theatre, he was supposed to look at the play from that point of view.

The neo-realist Italian and French films were shown; on rare occasions a Western film which had some strong social issue or judgment in it. Thus, these films too could be interpreted and put into the scheme of being preparers of Communism. They were most convenient propaganda-pieces to prove and to show how

rotten social life is and the kind of life that exists in capitalist countries.

As regards Western newspapers, the Press, Picture Magazines, only the Communist Press such as "Daily Worker", the and satellite papers could be read in Hungary. Even these were not available always. Certain copies of the "Daily Worker" and "Pravda" were never seen in Hungary.

In the area of sports, the Communists again wanted to show that everything which comes from Communism is good and, therefore, the pressure to reach great achievements in the area of sports throughout the Communist countries. For a long time, the Communists did not mention Western sports^{or} athletes; if they reported it was usually in an insignificant place in one of the newspapers.

As regards music, no Western modern music was played nor heard, except in the last days before the Revolution. The great classical composers were played very much, but they were interpreted and had to be listened to sandwiched-in with many Soviet composers.

So also with creative art, nothing but Soviet realism was emphasized.

So that the youth could not get another view, the Western Radio Stations were jammed and the Communists attempted to isolate Hungarian youth, and make the Hungarian youth completely dependent upon Communism and instill within them a faith that was communistic, so that they would know only Communism and believe and have faith that Communism will be victorious.

The classical education was completely oppressed, no great language was taught, Latin was taught only in extra hours after the required 6 or 8 hours a day, the classics were denied because naturally they pointed to another view of culture and society and to another spirit than Communism.

The Communists gave an over-emphasis to the natural sciences and reached two goals thereby or rather based this emphasis upon two basic reasons:

1. that only the material exists and only that is important,
2. natural science has fixed parts which can be accepted and the student did not have to work over, think, but only to accept the definite masses and quantities of natural science.

In the gymnasium and even at the Theological Seminary, the study of philosophy was turned into Marxism and even this was mainly economics. In the Seminaries the usual two years of philosophy was reduced by the State.

In the schools there was nothing like a Communist part or group of the class and a non-Communist part. Perhaps there were a few students whom everyone knew as being big Communists, but everyone feared them or him, because if, for example, I said a bad word against Communism, my father was liable to lose his job, and perhaps I could not study any further. The students lived in a dualism and expressed themselves in a dualism. In school they learned that Communism was good and also how good and how high a standard of living exists under Communism, whereas on the other hand at home they saw how bad things are and how the family had to count every penny.

Up to 1949, 1950, there were some enthusiastic students who believed in Communism. In 1949-50, those students who argued against Communism, were dismissed from school and so debates stopped. There was a real development from 1945 to 1949, but in 1949 any development within the country stopped, stagnated.

The Writers.

The writers turned against Fascism in 1945 and they^{now}/something of the beginnings of a democratic order in Hungary. A few Communist writers were happy that Communism existed, few socialist writers gladly did things with the Communists and maybe only in 1949 in the autumn, did they give up their contacts with the Communists. Another group of writers already in 1947 became inactive, such as Lőrinc Szabó. There existed a younger group of writers up to 1940, who were enthusiastic and helped the Communists in the transformation. By and by, in 1953, the larger group of writers woke up and openly began to express their ideas. In the Fall of that year, again they stood back in the Communist line and then in 1955, in the autumn, when the big Rákosi-terror ensued, they openly denied socialist realism, and they did not recognize Party orders and even published articles against Stalin. In March 1955, when the Petöfi-Circle was formed, the debate grew stronger. The writers had an important role in preparing the spirit of Revolution. Some writers, who changed their views in the Revolution and joined the Revolution, stood their ground and

were arrested in January and now are in jail.

The Church Leaders and Communist influence.

Openly the Church leaders said in 1951 to 1952, and in 1955, that the Church cannot talk about sin, about evil and badness, because talking about sin is sin itself, that is, such talk impedes the impetus and forward-motion of the country for building the beautiful future. This is part of the Communist theory brought over into Christian theology, that in Communism evil does not exist. There only good exists.

Wherever in a congregation there existed an active spiritual and vital life, the minister of that congregation was threatened or removed from his office. At various times, pastors had to read or submit sermons to the higher church offices and if such a sermon was not sufficiently in line, (nem e' lég vonalas) perhaps he was criticized severely or penalized in some way. Often, the future of a minister depended upon very small, tiny things. The excellent pastor usually was put into a tiny congregation, whereas the less effective ministers would be placed into big city congregations which were difficult to administer, this less effective minister pastor perhaps would have been very good in a small village church, but he was put in the big city church. In 1946, a Movement was started within the Church to divide up large congregations. This was before the Communists had gained control of the Church leadership. The idea behind this division was to use more pastors and to make the work more intensive and to reach more people. When the Communist-dominated leadership took over in the Reform^{ed} Church

under Bereczky and others, they did just the reverse. They united the smaller churches, making larger churches and put many pastors on pension, so that there would be fewer people reached by the Church through an effective Ministry. For example, the Calvin Square Church had a membership of 10,000. During the war, this congregation started another smaller congregation out of its membership, but when the Bereczky-group took over, this smaller congregation was once again united to the Calvin Square Church.

In the Dunántúl District and the Tiszáninnen District, there were many small congregations with a few hundred members or fewer. Each of these congregations supported the pastor, then when the Bereczky-group took over, the merging of congregations in these two Districts under one pastor took place. All of this was under the direction and pressure of the Communist State.

The role of Hromádka, the Czech Theologian, in the affairs of the Hungarian Reform^d Church.

Since 1949, the Czech Hromádka, a very talented man and theologian, has had an extremely significant role in the development of the Hungarian Reform^d Church. His tactics^{are} as follows:- In the West he appears before the Western Church leaders with a theory of how he and his Church in Czechoslovakia has solved the problem of the Church and State in co-existence, which means that the Church supports the State in all things which are for the people, and in return, the Church is given freedom. However, this is for propaganda purposes for the outside world: the truth is that he is as dark as the rest of the Communist Church leaders. He has

compromised himself with Communism. In Hungary, Hromadka supports the Hungarian Church leaders with advice and also gives advice to the Hungarian Communist State. He gave the Hungarian Church leaders theological impetus and support. With his foreign contacts, he got the Hungarian Church leaders almost completely accepted in the West. Now the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church leaders, held in office by the Communists, invited Hromadka three or four times in recent months to Hungary to advise them and in this way Hromadka dictates^a certain policy in the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church.

Interviewer's Portrait of the Respondent.

The respondent is one of the brilliant young men of the Hungarian Reform^{ed} Church. He did not want to name names concerning those who participated in the inner resistance in the Reform^{ed} Church. He said, too many of these people have been discovered or uncovered by information which was given out in the West and then returned by various means to Hungary. The integrity of this young man is impeccable, he is highly regarded by all his colleagues.