

(Life in the Hungarian Reformed Theological Seminaries.)

At the theological seminaries at least 98^{per cent} of the students opposed the leadership of the church which was held to be an opportunistic group in one form or another. The remaining 2% of the students included a few informers. By and large theological schools were an oasis in Communism except that we feared a few informers or spiclik. There were at the theological seminary such courses as philosophical sociology and sociology seminaries. These courses were taught by Mihaly Bucsay at the Budapest seminary. The course was Marxism and the study of the Hungarian national constitution. The ecumenics professorship was held by Istvan Kadar. Here in this class were held the Szabad Nep half hours at which time a student who had read the Szabad Nep reported upon an article during a half hour. In the class we had to know about the peace movement and politics. Kadar would ask us questions to see whether or not we read the daily Communist paper.

When 2 of the 4 theological schools were closed, that is Sarospatak and Papa the reason given was that the church does not have sufficient money to maintain these schools. Recently before leaving Hungary and before the Revolution the idea was aired of merging the 2 remaining schools, one at Debrecen and Budapest. When the 2 theological schools were closed and the boys were dispersed to the other 2 remaining seminaries, a minor revolt was

created by the theological students. Some of the students who wanted to return to the seminaries were kicked out of school, some faced court trials and others were inducted into the army. In fact, the boys did go back to their respective seminaries on one day attempting to force the hand of the church officials.

The theological students protested and demonstrated against a number of decisions of the church leadership. For example, when the trial of Pastor Morvay who had been accused of embezzling was being held at the bishop's offices in Budapest, theological students all dressed in black and in a procession marched down to the office of the bishop. There they asked that Morvay be released. Of course our efforts were of no avail. Morvay was defrocked and kicked out of the church. He was a strange sort of a person, a bohemian type. We also as students had extra jobs outside the seminary. Some of us received 40 forints a day at the film studio as stand-ins. Once 40 of us wanted to go to the studio for a particular job for which we were called. But the school officials did not want to let us go. We went anyway, because we needed the money.

The theological students have not been overcome by the new theology which is ~~born~~ born out of the influence or adjustment and adaptation to the Communism in Hungary. This new theology is propounded by the church officials, a very small circle. The church as a whole falls into 2

parts, the officials and the rest of the people. We theological students were frequently called upon to be waiters at various plush banquettes that were served at the konvent office. ~~While there we could see the wealth and the plush of the offices with coffee every afternoon, all the food that these church officials would want to have. Some of these leaders were vulgar such as Jandor Virag who was a minister and dean of the church. He had been drinking and was already drunk when he met the theological students after a banquette and taking up a bottle he said: "Let us have Holy Communion." This kind of behavior disgusted the theological students who did not want to have anything to do with these officials.~~

After worldwar II within the Hungarian Reformed Church there came ^{to} the fore an awakening movement which also produced some extremely fanatic pietists. One fellow ^{of} ~~and~~ ~~a~~ ~~seminary~~ ~~and~~ ~~some~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~students~~ by saying that if you do not meet Jesus in 5 minutes you will perish. Some of these pietists said that Christians cannot dance because Jesus did not dance. The movement was the result ~~and~~ consequences of the war, the movement became rather strong, at least 20% of the theological students and even some of the professors were part of this awakening movement. Up to 1949 the movement was ^{active.} ~~active.~~ There was also a confessional movement to which I belonged. The official church and the Communists attacked the ~~awakening~~

movement. Oddly enough it was this movement that first gave ~~it into the~~ into the Communists in Hungary. When the government and the official church attacked the awakening movement the theological students all united behind the movement and those members of the movement who were extremists or fanatics left their extreme positions thus a united student group faced the government and the church officials. After 1951-52 there occurred no debates along these pietistic ~~mind~~ lines.

In every dictatorial system the youth movements live in the circle of friends of various youth. It is necessary that it be so. Groups of 8 or 10 young people or students from perhaps different parts of a city and even different ~~parts~~ faculties of a university come together as friends to discuss and debate. They are Roman Catholics and Protestants crossing various lines. Just these circles of friends train the elite in a more intensified matter. Every city has quite a number of such circles or groups. In the countryside, however, they do not deal with the workers' problems. In the Reformed Church whose pastor was Sandor Joo there was a youth group of young intellectuals and university students. Interestingly enough, out of this group came many leaders for the Christian Youth Federation which was formed during the Revolution representing the Reformed Church, Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran Church.

The Christian Youth Federation, Keresztyen Ifjusagi Szö-

vetség was formed to be a peak organization and not a mass organization. It had 3 co-presidents. I was the president for the reformed Church. The co-president from the Roman Catholic Church now has been arrested. He remained in Hungary. The organization was formed ~~in Hungary~~ on Sunday and on Monday we were in at the offices of the university revolutionary committee asking them whether they would recognize us or not. We were recognized and received office space there. I received a post in the committee of the university revolutionary committee. Our organization went on for a few days until Wednesday and then when the Tildy group was called ~~in~~ into the government, they proclaimed an order allowing all former youth groups to exist, such as Boy Scouts etc. These small groups were channeled through representatives into our group so that all of the Christian Youth may have a solid and united form. We decided to have a common Christian stand adopted and second to have a ~~forum~~ ^{forum} where all could meet and represent a tabula rasa where the voice of youth could be heard and could achieve certain ends. The World Council of Churches did not like the Christian Youth Federation because it was involved in politics. However, we could not do otherwise. The only ~~political~~ ^{political} thing we did was we wanted people to pray for neutrality of Hungary and we supported the 14 points. We also cooperated with the Youth Workers Committee.

In the Revolution the central offices of our Federation

did not know what was going on in the other parts of the country and nor was there any communication between the various parts of the country and our office. Thus it occurred that at Mosonmagyaróvár someone heard that the Christian Youth Federation had been formed, however, they did not know the kind of organization it was, but they felt that they wanted to get members for the organization and later we found out that the Christian Youth Federation had 800 members in the Mosonmagyaróvár area. However, our aim was not to gain membership in any large numbers. ^{The} My work locally in Budapest was gathering of the dead, bringing wounded to the hospitals, and gathering lists of those who were in the various hospitals and helping to care for the wounded. We also carried arms and munitions. The theological students fought with guns. 2 of the Budapest Reformed theological students had died in the early days of the fighting. The Keresztyén Ifjúsági Szövetség in principle was established so that it did not belong to any particular church body. Because in the Revolution the Marxist, National Communists, the Leftists, the Peasant Party group youth were the leaders of the Revolution and the Christian Youth had to be represented as the entirety of the Christian Church in a united group of Christian Youth. We visited Mindszenty and Ravasz and also saw the Lutheran bishop Ordass and received their approval of our organization.

The concept of the Christian Youth was to represent a

middle road and complete democracy with enlightened socialism. We had excellent contacts with the Marxists and also with the tiny group of Rightists. The Leftists and Marxists trusted the Christian Youth Federation, because we took a definite Christian stand. However, we accepted some of the Leftist views and at the same time the Rightist groups trusted us also. Quite beside that the Christian Youth wanted to find a third road we did not want the Horthy pre-war system nor did we want the Communist nor Soviet system. We believed that there was a middle road or a third road. We ~~decided~~ ^{wanted} a parliamentary government, not big capitalism, but certain limits being placed on capital. We did not want the restoration of the large estates. The Roman Catholic youth opposed the Roman Church in its desire to regain its property. The Catholic youth did not want the estates to be returned, did not want the Panonhalma estate to be returned. We ~~decided~~ ^{felt} some kind of cooperative ~~handling~~ ^{handling} of the csepel industries and not necessarily being a state-owned. These ideas which we had were unsculptured because we did not have time to work them out. With regard to Hungary we have to take into consideration what ~~happened~~ happened in Hungary during the last 10 years. It had changed tremendously. We also wanted to consider the curbing of nationalism within the small nations. The problem of anti-Semitism ~~was~~ from pre-1944 had a significant affect in that many Jews in Hungary

received positions in the Communist government and many of the AVH officers were Jews. Anti-Semitism as such did not get any voice in the Revolution which indicates that the leaders of the Revolution were serious minded and well-balanced enough that they wanted to keep the Revolution pure and not to allow it to get into anti-Semitism.

Many national Communists are anti-Semitic.

The moral basis and the larger view which needs to be taken towards the Communists is one of individual responsibility of who committed what kinds of crimes.

On November 4th we were still able to go to the central office of the Christian Youth Federation and up to November 7th we went to our other office at the university. On the 7th when we were going over to the office a number of young freedom fighters told us to watch out: the AVH is inside the door and will grab you as soon as you step in. We were able to later burn the contents of our safe all the papers and our seal. Only this was merely a kind of a *sauf* for our conscience, because in reality our names, the existence of our organization had been published in the newspapers and also as to who represented the organization at the university youth committee.