

In 1945, when I went to the university to study, the tradition of freedom and autonomy ruled at the university. We looked to the continuation of this freedom and looked hopefully at the liberation. Prof. Ortutay, whose first assistant I later became, was pushed ahead for political reasons and in 1945 received a professorship where ~~where~~ the previous man died. This was in the area of ethnography. The other candidates for the professorship had better qualifications, Ortutay had ~~been~~ ^{been} attacked for a poor scholarship and for some of his points of view, which were weak; he also became the director of the radio and then became the Cultus Minister. Immediately he was elected corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of ~~Learning~~ *Learning*.

In 1945, the mood of the students was one of eagerness. I was a law student at that time, the professor would usually be late in arriving at his class or lecture, and the students used these 20 minutes before the professor arrived, to propound ~~the~~ certain political beliefs. A student would go up to the professor's chair, and from there talk about the views of the Smallholders Party, another student about the Social Democrats and maybe even a student with the views of the French Radicals would speak. *Political* life was rather *democratic* and liberal. All the parties tried to win the students.

The university students can be divided according to their

political interest as follows: 20% interested in the Social Democratic Party, 50% in the Smallholders Party, an insignificant number interested in the Communist Party, and the rest of the students were outside of any Party interest.

~~The~~ The first and last procession and demonstration by university students after the war, was held immediately after the first general election. The students then marched to the headquarters of the Smallholders Party, there Bela Varga addressed the students from a balcony. The students liked him a lot. The street was crowded, all the students were there. This demonstration started at Semelweis Street, went through the Körút, and then to Szabadsag Square the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~, all along the way the police accompanied us. We knew then, that the police are under Communist control, and that the officers especially were ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Szabadsag Square Communists. When we got to the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~, as if at a unified command, the police turned on the students and told us to dis~~perse~~^{perse}, then with their butts of their guns they beat the students apart. Some of the students were arrested, others wounded, during it all we shouted "we do not want Rakosi".

During the first academic year, this beginning in 1945, there was no so called cleaning out of the Student Party and eliminating certain elements. In 1946-'47, there did occur and begin the cleaning out process on the basis of politics. Student committees were formed, who outwardly

were responsible for this cleaning out process, and some of the professors were dismissed also. When the university students heard that the Werböczy statue was to be pulled down by the Communists, the students planned a demonstration against this. At the statue a tank appeared from somewhere, and with a rope pulled the statue down. In our law classes, one of our professors, Eckhardt, during this time spoke superlatives of Werböczy and his part in European history and law. Werböczy was the great codifier of Hungarian law, after every lecture the students clapped. This was their show of opposition toward the regime. When the statue of Werböczy which was in the Karolyi garden, was pulled down, people visited this site of the statue and constantly brought a hill of flowers to cover that site, many people cried there.

A change that took place in the organization of the university was that next to the rector's office a studies, Tanulmányi, Division was set up. In my second and third year of studies the ^{Prohászka} ~~Study~~ ^{Office} ~~Office~~ came to an end. The officials of this ^{Studies} ~~Study~~ Division were the darkest underworld characters.

At the university, a Szakszervezeti Bizottság (Union Committee) was formed, which would supervise and oversee the instructional staff. This committee was usually headed by an assistant to a professor, and this assistant was over the heads of the professors.

The crisis at the university in Budapest occurred in 1948,

Gyula Németh became the head of the university and Zsirai was made Dean of the philosophy faculty. Both were Communists, but then even fourth year students were appointed as assistants to professors, and such an assistant at times even had the right to give examinations. This privilege was unusual, but was given to such people who had done outstanding Communist Party work. One that I recall is Piter [REDACTED].

One day, while I was working in the other office of one of the professors, and another professor who was a Communist was using the professor's office to examine students. One after another as the good students went in for the examination, they came out with very sad faces, because they had been failed by this professor. Later I went in to the office after this professor departed, and found a hand-written note on the desk, which the professor undoubtedly had left behind since he hurried off. It was addressed to this particular Communist professor, saying that the following students have to be failed in their examination, because they are dangerous to the Communist Party. Those who were to be passed, were also listed, these students were usually the poor scholars or students. The note went on to say, that the names for tomorrow's examination will reach you tomorrow, it was signed by Piter [REDACTED] who was the president of the student committee at the university. I have kept this note, because it indicates how the Communism got rid of those students

from the universities whom they held to be dangerous to their Party and to their cause.

Two of the most brilliant students who could not be failed by the professor, I knew both of these students personally, had to face a Társadalmi Bizottság of students, which was formed to examine these two students in Marxism. The students were failed by this committee and had to leave the university. Soon everyone learned how to play an ^dact, and Hungary became a country of 10,000,000 actors. The joke usually expressed, was Magyarország a legműveltebb ország.

Then in 1950, a Jesuit priest László [redacted] had a series of sermons at the university church. Tremendous crowds of students came Sunday after Sunday, the students even sat on the side ^{altara} [redacted] with their legs hanging down over the altar. The priest did not mention ~~the~~ Communism in his sermons, but he spoke about materialism, the students even clapped during the sermon. This was a demonstration against the regime. [redacted] was able to appeal to the students and ignite their feelings. He was a most respected and well educated man. I attended these services at the university church, and later when I was kicked out of the university, that was one of the charges brought against me. As an assistant to Professor Orvutay, I was not immune to Communist charges, the student committee brought the following charges against me: that I attend church, secondly that I do not sing ~~the~~ ^{the} songs as I marched in the processions on

the days when the students were required to be in the procession, third that I did not take my seminar group to see any Communist movies or Communist plays. On these charges I was kicked out of the university, by the student committee.

It is interesting to note also, that the university boiler-fireman held a lecture on Communism before a meeting of Teachers Union-Division^A for professors, this was a disgusting thing for us.

An ironical thing began to happen in 1953, when those university professors and assistants who ^{were} ~~had been~~ the first Communist enthusiasts^{ts} at the universities, began to leave the Party, or began to talk against Communism. At least 20 or 30% of ~~the~~ ^{the} first or early enthusiasts left the Party. The second ironical thing that occurred, happened among those professors who tried to hold their jobs in the early Communist days, by attending Communist meetings, and clapping when they had to clap, they were not Communists at that stage. Some of them were allowed to stay in their positions by the Communists. However, by 1953 this group ironically enough, stood strongly next to Communism. In 1951, I knew of 3 young men with whom I played cards, ^{handed} ~~had~~ in their Party membership, they had been early enthusiasts and had entered the Party in 1945, two of them were research men and one was a painter.

In Hungary every division or area of knowledge had its own society or institute of learning. The overall organization

which had a tremendous apparatus and aim to organize under its power, every individual learned society was the társadalom-és természettudományi ismertető társulat; this ~~is~~ group published a semi-scholarly and very popular publication in 240,000 copies, entitled Élet Es Tudomány. 10% of the articles were Communistic, they were trying to feed Communism bit by bit or drop by drop to the public. This group also organized lectures on Darwinism and human development, in this way trying to undermine religion and to push forward the Communist ideas. Many other lectures were organized by them also for the public.

When I was secretary of the Ethnography Society, I wanted three scholars who were Hungarian and were living outside of Hungary, to come to lecture in Hungary. One lived in Czechoslovakia, the other in Romania, and the other in the Ukraine. In writing to these three men, the Romanian fellow answered that the Romanians just would not let him out, the fellow in Czechoslovakia was inducted into the army, and the Ukranian scholar's wife sent both an air mail letter and a regular special delivery letter saying that he is very ill, has a blood sickness and can not come. However later the scholar wrote saying that if we want him to come, we should arrange this invitation perhaps more successfully through the Hungarian-Soviet Cultural Society, Magyar-Soviet Művelődési Társaság.

I have an interesting story to tell about Rakosi's wife, who is of Uzbek background. She would come to the

Ethnography Museum regularly to paint ceramics, she would copy various patterns, she worked in a room by herself. One day, the girl who regularly brought her ~~to~~ the museum pieces, told her about a young man who also worked in the museum, and was interested in the primitive peoples. Mrs. Rakosi indicated an interest in talking to this young man, because he wanted to talk to her about the Uzbek people. The young man, during the first visit with her, told Mrs. Rakosi that he was interested in writing a book about the Uzbek people and perhaps through the information that she could give him, they could co-operate in this publication. She was very interested in it and they began the work.

The AVH was always present outside the room where Mrs. Rakosi worked, and after the first visit with the young scholar, the AVH man told the young fellow not to appear anymore. ~~After~~ ^{he had} the second time Mrs. Rakosi returned to talk to him, but ~~after that second visit~~ to tell her that he had to take a "trip" and could not continue their discussions. Mrs. Rakosi continued to return to the museum after the second visit, and continued to paint her ceramics. One day Mrs. Rakosi asked the girl who brought her the ceramic objects, about this young research scholar who was interested in the primitive peoples, and Mrs. Rakosi asked whether the young man had returned from his trip. The girl innocently said that he had not been away on a trip, not knowing what the AVH had told the young man to

tell Mrs. Rakosi. She merely told the girl to tell the young scholar to come up, and she wanted to continue giving him information about the primitive peoples, she also called the AVH man in, and scolded him and later told the girl museum attendant^a, that she has been suspecting the fact that she is isolated from people by the AVH. This up to this point indicates ^{how} the Communist system even keeps the Prime Minister's wife under its power and ^{surveillance} under its ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~. After this third visit with the young scholar, the AVH man returned to the room when Mrs. Rakosi left, and told him that he ~~must be~~ ^{was being} warned for the last time not to speak with Mrs. Rakosi. This young scholar had wanted to go to the Soviet to study the primitive peoples and Shamanism, but he was not given permission to leave the country and to do his study and research in the Soviet, and he was delighted when he had this opportunity to speak to Mrs. Rakosi who had come from that area that he was interested in.

It is interesting to note, that it is easier to get books from the West upon any subject that is scholarly, than it is to get Soviet books. Now that the satellites are held under toe, the Soviet does not have to give them anything. We in Hungary could not correspond directly with a Russian scholar, even as secretary of the Ethnographer's Society, I had to write to the Soviet Society of Learning, which first received the letter. From the Soviet I was also trying to get certain material about a group of fishing

people in the Soviet. I was unable to get this material from the Soviet, luckily I learn^{ed} that a Swedish professor was interested in this same group of fishing people, and through him I got the material immediately when he asked for the material from the Soviet for himself. Thus from Soviet to Sweden to Hungary it is easier to get scholarly material.

The two Lenin Institutes, one in Budapest and the other in Szeged are manned by Communist professors, and many of them are Russian. Here the elite students of the Communists went to school. My wife had been an assistant to a professor at Szeged Lenin Institute, when that institute got started. Later she was dismissed from the institute; she was interested in old Slavic.

Throughout Hungary, certain important professorships at the universities, that is heads of departments were given to Soviet professors for four or five years, so as to re-educate Hungary along Communist lines.

When Gyula Németh had to resign as rector of the Budapest university, the Communists could not find another man at the Budapest university, who was dependable and reliable enough for the position. They had to bring a Communist all the way from Szeged. The autonomy of the Budapest university was injured time and again by such incidents, in this case the university rector by tradition always comes from the same university, that is he should have been elected from the Budapest university. The Communists

did not even bother giving the Szeged man a professorship or chair at the university before making him rector. Our university system and educational system was built up on the European basis, but the Russians brought in their own system of aspirantor and kandidátus. If a student finished the university, then he reported to be an aspirantor which was three years in ~~length~~ length. There is time to prepare a dissertation, ^{during} which time he learn^{ed} Russian well enough to speak it. After three years' time, the aspirantors could become kandidátus, and this kandidátus could become tudományos doktor, if he wrote another essay and passed an examination. As an aspirantor some of these people were taken to the Soviet for three years, to study a special field. In the field of ^{the} social sciences, only one research man was able to go to the Soviet who studied the Finno-Ugric people and language. Mostly the natural scientists were taken to the Soviet, this was a kind of re-education system for these scholars who spent three years in the Soviet.

To illustrate how one of the young aspirantor students behaved during the revolution, I want to ^cite one young man who, while in Russia, did a great deal of engineering work for the Soviet. He received a great many favors, and we at home were not able to figure him out, that is at least according to his political beliefs. When he married his wife, who was a Catholic, she made him into a regular fellow but outwardly he held his Bolshevik ideas.

This young fellow at the Bosnyák Square showed his true colors, and ~~that~~ ^{that} he really could not stand to see innocent people being killed by the Russians. Russian soldiers were firing upon an apartment building opposite a church where they were; people in the building came out and started extinguishing the fire that the Russians had started in the apartment building. The Russians had been using flare shots, the Russians machinegunned 30 or 40 of the people who were attempting to put the fire out. This young man could not hold himself back anymore, at the ~~sight~~ ^{sight} of this butchery that the Russians were doing; since he knew Russian he ran into the church, where he wanted to convince the Russian soldiers to stop shooting at these innocent people. Shortly thereafter, his dead body was thrown out of the church; he had been shot in the head. It is thus, that those who had been Communists returned against the Russians during the revolution.

Interviewer's rating: This respondent tried to give a picture of university life, through a number of illustrations and also to illustrate the kind of things the Russians did in the field of education. The respondent is a scholar with deep interest in his field of ethnography, he has offered his assistance to supply bibliography and documents concerning the developments of the peasant's status during the last ten years. Moreover he is familiar with this area in Hungary.