

Respondent, an ex-Party member, is a writer who has produced some novels, studies, rather essays, on Hungarian and especially French literatures and a History of the Hungarian Theater (1954). He has been a teacher at the Színházművészeti Főiskola (Academy of Dramatic Art) and the director of the National Museum's Division of History of the Theater, till his arrest in 1951, when the Communist Party discovered a "conspiracy" at the Academy of Dramatic Art. He, among others, was accused of enticing the youth against the Soviet culture. Although his course was entitled: "The Universal History of the Theater", it was considered maximalism to require from the students the knowledge of Western theatrical history and the precise definition of foreign words.

From 1951-53, he was in the prisons of: Fótca, Kistarcsa, Tolonc and Gyújtó.

In 1953, he was released and, for a couple of months, worked as an extra at the Film Studio.

Since '53, he has ~~now~~ adapted and translated Russian plays for the stage and radio, directed several ~~nx~~ plays in Kecskemet, became lately a reader of the ~~theater~~ theater of Kaposvár, and, for the last three years, worked permanently for the drama section of the Folkloric Institute (Népművészeti Intézet): this assignment included that of teaching the art of directing and acting to the numerous amateur theatrical groups which had mushroomed in the Peoples' Democracy.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies, Respondent has written a more or less autobiographical novel (which covers, as background, the last ten years in Hungary), which he would like to have published ^e either in America or France.

As the manuscript of the novel "happened" to be in his briefcase, he often read passages from it, during the course of the interview. —

A man is not a man, in the real sense of the word, unless he obstinately attaches himself to the nation the progeny of which he is. I left Hungary in order to be able to stay Hungarian. I felt that ~~that~~ only on the other side of the Iron Curtain will I be able to fight for what, since my early youth, has been the goal of my life: the liberty of my unfortunate but ~~heroic~~ heroic nation.

During the last ten years which compressed the soul and stole the spirit, ^{the Hungarian} has forgotten how to believe in something. The law forbade him to believe in what he would have liked to, and what the law prescribed him to believe in, his common sense forbade. People forget to believe in higher ideals and they forget to pray.

His story, like the one of the hero of his novel, is what happened to a basically insignificant person whose only virtue was to cling, in spite of all the humiliation and sufferings, to the truth and to his nation. This love for the truth and this attachment were responsible for having brought him twice back from the ~~west~~ ^{free} West to the soil of his ancestors, and they were

responsible for him having suffered imprisonment and slave labor. (He wasn't kidding, I thought, when he compared his own life to that of his hero - it does read like a second rate novel, doesn't it?)

Actually, he continued as if he had read my thought, I have written this novel when I had no ink or no paper and when I could not count on any reader except myself. This happened in 1952, in a Budapest prison - that's where I wrote my novel on the circumvolutions of my brain with the black ink of my feelings and of my thoughts.

The Gestapo arrested me for the first time in 1944. Due to the beatings gotten in their cells, my left ~~an~~ eye and left hand had been paralyzed for a long time. Nevertheless, I was sent to the front in a company of refractory soldiers and arrived, two years later, at home more dead than alive. I was immediately taken to a hospital and the doctors did not think that I had much chance to live. I had to stay in bed for seven long months.

Suddenly I had an entire army of new friends. First they didn't seem to be concerned about anything else but my state of health, later they brought me books and started conversations about literature and art and stated that the new Hungarian art had to be severed from the ancient poisonous traditions of the Occident. When I contradicted them, they raised their shoulders and said: "You are not in the position to judge, as you are not a member of the Party."

While a prisoner in Russia, I did have some occasion to find out what it actually meant to be a member of the Communist Party.

And yet this strange paradox of my life occurred: I did enter the Hungarian Communist Party. Actually, nobody forced me to, neither my superiors nor my new friends. But all of them wanted to convince me that if I did not join, everything for which I had fought would be lost - "in our society the writers, the artistⁿ can work freely. We preach the liberty of humanity and we affirm with Stalin: the greatest virtue is man, especially the creating man!"

In 1947, the Communists handled the intelligentsia with gloved hands (kesztyus keszel). The artists, scientists, writers would not even ^{be} obliged to go to the seminars. But in 1948, the Party's attitude changed ~~us~~ suddenly and turned with a fervent interest toward the intelligentsia - he himself received invitations ^{to} ~~for~~ meetings, ^{to} ~~for~~ reunions, ^{to} ~~for~~ different discussions. And the kader files, where it was carefully marked whether the invited attended ^{the,} ~~from~~ now on obligatory meetings. It is worthwhile to note, that ^{those responsible for} ~~the managers of~~ the kader files were usually women, and usually unbelievably ugly. "Smear" people did give them a satisfaction, the only one they could aspire for. And all this was done in the name of the human valve.

The "authorities" in different fields made ~~me~~ themselves more and more felt. In Respondents particular field, the "authority" was the drama critic of the Szabad Nep. If the latter did not write a review about a certain play, that automatically meant that the other newspapers did not dare write about it either. And if he wrote, the others only echoed his opinion.

Only the construction of the sentences varied and their voices were a little bit more ~~more~~ polite. (The drama critic to whom Respondent is referring is Respondent 616!)

Coming back to the Party meetings, they strangely reminded Respondent of the ceremonies of the Orthodox liturgy. The table at which the secretary of the group, the sacred Pope of Marxism, was seated, in the midst of flowers and ~~x~~ of some examples of the Lenin-Stalin bible, was covered with a red flag. On the walls were also blood colored flags with ^{quo} citations of the "bible". On the main wall was written in letters ~~xxxxxxxx~~ greater and more decorated than any other place: the great ~~Stalin~~ Stalin - Hagios Nos ~~Stalin~~ Theos - Hagios Iskarios...! And on the same wall there were three icons. -The pictures of Stalin, Lenin and Rakosi. The one of Stalin was placed at the highest point, a little below it was Lenin and lower Rakosi. There was definitely a ~~high~~ hierarchy in the Marxist ^t heaven.

And the Party, the Orthodox church, had to know everything: it needed humble sinners.

In the beginning I watched these confessions with decided interest, which gave way to a nausea - people ~~kept~~ kept confessing and lying in a hypocritical way in order not to lose their daily bread.

I wanted to know whether the workers, in the name of whom the vicious clique usurped the power, were also lying. I visited them in their plants ~~and~~ at Angyalföld. No, already in 1949-1950, the workers did not lie. Their eyes were opened before

those of our ~~in~~ unfortunate intelligentsia were. I was discussing with them the plays which were performed at the time. Their complaints, in ^{this respect} ~~connection with this topic~~, were: we work hard all day long in a factory - why do we have to see a factory when we go in the evening to the theater? We cannot find any beauty whatsoever in the plays imported from the Soviet Union. We have cultural traditions in Hungary - we know what a good play is like - don't those people who make policies know that one cannot revert the history of a certain nation, who ~~has~~ has proven not to be barbarian, through barbarianism?

The workers' complaint did not go by unnoticed by the "high priests". They exhumed a little a play I had written during my youth: "St. Nicholas and the Thieves". ^{It} ~~I~~ was a so-called laic mystery. ~~un~~ Fortunately, I found in the ^{si} ~~president~~ ^{investigating} of the/ ^{an} Committee/ unexpected and fervent protector. Lenin told us to ~~we~~ work with the people ~~we~~ possess - alas, our intelligentsia had been brought up by priests. Thus, it is understandable ^{that} ~~xxx~~ it is difficult for it ~~xxx~~ to liberate itself from this unfavorable influence. We do need patience until our new intelligentsia will take over. Thus, I was forgiven, but the president benevolently gave me the advice ~~I~~ to "deepen" my studies in Marxism and take ~~a~~ part actively in the life of the party.

The Writers' Union ^{ex} ~~ex~~cluded me from the rank of its members, because I had written a bad review about a novel of Illes Béla, the famous Muscovite. After this incident, the doors of the Radio ^{and} of the publishing houses closed ^{before me} ~~one~~ ^a after the other - I

was not anymore on the list of the acceptable writers.

My teaching~~s~~ at the Academy of Dramatic Art ~~were~~^{was} labelled as anti-democratic - I had contaminated the youth with my idealistic doctrines.

I will skip the years of my imprisonment and the months following it.

As an employee of the Drama Section of the Folkloric Institute, I had to be almost constantly on the road. I traveled by train, by bus, by motorcycle, by bicycle, by foot, - how didn't I travel? Each plant, each organization, each little village had its society of amateur actors. And of course, the majority ~~xx~~ presented a lamentable picture. Due to the zealous employees of the Folkloric Institute, the one and only quality - the natural grace and ~~xxx~~ spontaneous art - of these little groups of Thalia vanished.

Why did people of all ages suddenly turn ~~out~~ "actors" ? Playing was considered social^{istic,} or ~~as~~ a work for the Party, but the chariot of Thespis was drawn by poor amateurs instead of work for the Party.

Besides being attached to the Folkloric Institute, he directed some operettas and dramas for the theater of Kecskemét. Each ~~manager~~^{director} of a theater had to establish his program according to very severe points of view - according to the program of socialistic politics. During the months of Soviet-Hungarian friendship (September, November, February,) the presentation of a Soviet play was obligatory: besides, ~~is~~ a minimum of one play of

a contemporary Hungarian writer and one of a contemporary writer of another Peoples' Democracy had to be produced. No more than two operettas could be presented during one season and ~~there was no question about~~ ^{were out of question} Western writers, with the exception of Shakespeare and Schiller. Under such conditions the theaters worked with terrific deficits, although the performances were "sold out" due to the dictatorial system of organizing the public.

One should also add that the Party secretary checked "secretly" the audience of a Soviet play. But a time came when this did not scare the Hungarian people anymore, which ostensibly abstained from the chef-d'oeuvres of socio-realist literature.

In connection with the Calvary the actors themselves had to go through, one should certainly mention the institution of traveling companies. This particular innovation of the Communist regime was the terror of provincial actors. Those who did not have a performance in the evening, had to take the bus in the afternoon and go to a forgotten village - usually about a hundred kilometers away, to spread culture in the most frightening conditions. The performances were given on the shaking scenes of the so-called Cultural Homes usually lighted by kerosene. On the small scenes made ad-hoc, there was usually no space for scenery or any type of effective lighting. The work was forced, soulless. And ~~the~~ ^{as} salary for such an ordeal, the actors received the equivalent of two pounds of sugar.

Actually, there is nothing one could say against the idea itself -

it and is indeed a magnificent duty to carry theater to hidden villages and to elevate the culture of the retarded peasantry. But the practice was shattering. At the end of the season, the majority of the provincial actors had nervous breakdowns from overwork, knowing, at the same time, that they had done a pitiful job.

What about the engagements? Wasn't it the ~~manager~~^{director} who had to engage the members of a company? Of course, but his signature had to be ~~sanctioned~~^{sanctioned} by the Ministry, that is by the Party. The directives of the latter had to prevail in the totality of life, especially in personal matters. The predominance of the Party's interest was more important than the desire of the actors, which was, by definition, negligible. How much bitterness this caused! The theaters were unable to establish a definite troop and create a certain artistic profile, because every one of the members tried to get out of his forced engagement.

The general composition of a provincial company: it was in the small provincial towns that the aged prima donnas having lost their voices were sent, together with the dramatic heroes of chronic alcoholism, and comic dancers obsessed by sexual aberrations, and ex-political prisoners to whom the regime had forgiven. The ~~managers~~^{directors} usually navigated between Charybdis and Scylla - usually their wives, a former chorus girl and the intriguer of a company, the representative of the Party. The provincial

theaters were usually the asylums for the graduates of the socialist school or advanced studies. - Generally the favorites of the Party secretaries. As a general rule everybody was drinking to bear life which was unbearable. These derelicts were usually sleepy during rehearsals, because they had to be extremely alert while not on stage, to pursue their small and big intrigues.

During the ^{gruelling} ~~gruelling~~ tour of the provinces, the people they would most often ~~met~~ meet were inspectors. Each field of life was controlled from a financial, administrative, statistical, and millions of other view points. And ^{there} ~~they~~ were controllers who checked the controllers. The controllers who were called inspectors or propagandists had to give directives: and the whole world had to conform. And life lost more and more of its colors. Yet, the controllers themselves did not have an easy life - being eternally ~~on~~ on the road, they aged before their time, not only due to the miserable railroad communications but also to the fact that they could never get a real rest in any hotel; in provincial towns, at the best, there were only two old shabby hotels - the others were taken up either by the Party or by the state. Thus, in the rooms the beds were pushed one against the other and, ^{in addition,} one ~~is~~ invariably squeezed in one ~~or~~ or two sofas. In ^{poverty} the name of ~~poverty~~, one agglomerated unknown people one on top of the other - in other ~~words~~ words, each provincial hotel looked like a night refuge. And the pictures - that's a new ^{chapter.} ~~chapter.~~

Talking about art - private people did not have the possibility to buy paintings or sculptures, although, from time to time, exhibits

were organized. If a private person happened to have money, then he would buy old pieces. A man of good taste certainly did not want to spoil his home with socialist realistic oeuvres, and if a modern artist did not work according to the prescriptions of the regime, he was marked as decadent.

If painters wanted to make a living, then they had to go as chief decorators in trade enterprises and paint the icons of the Marxist trinity.

Under the aegis of Art, a clique system was at work having at the top the careerist dilettantes, who decided whom to sustain and whom to ~~xxx~~ drop.

Cland^estine lists were drafted, where the names of those enterprises figure^d which were willing to buy such and such statue or such and such painting. The great enterprises had a fund destined for cultural goals and with it they had to support art. The managers, not knowing anything about it, left it up to the jury of the ~~artistic~~ ^A association ^{of Arts}. When an exhibit^{ion} opened, the above mentioned jury was responsible for putting the magic word "sold" in the corner of certain works of art, while others did not ~~xxx~~ find any buyers.

Coming back to the factory managers who were entrusted with the purchase of works of art and who did not know anything about it, it is equally true to say that there were other more important fields they didn't know anything about either. In 1945, propaganda on a large scale was made in favor of the propagation of secondary schooling and university studies. One wanted

to form a Communist intelligentsia at any price. Specialized graduation exams were invented - an assembled thousands of people who hardly knew how to read and write and their poor brains were filled day and night for one whole year with all types of concepts, mainly those of Marxism. One year later, with a graduation certificate in their hands, the poor devils were sent to college or to a school of advanced studies, where the lack of previous systematic study started to wear them down. In spite of this, with the help of the state, they finally received a diploma, but their incompetence was revealed in the midst of their practical work ~~and~~ and was felt by them and their surroundings.

After nationalization, at the head of enterprises were placed matured workers, who usually were honest people. Good intentions do not run a great enterprise, however, thus they could not get by without the help of the old professionals (engineers, economists) and even so, they only had a ~~g~~ vague idea of what was going on. Necessarily they did not have any authority at all, even in the eyes of their ex-companions. In order to remedy the situation, they had to take evening courses. This inhuman system caused a big number of family tragedies. Respondent talked to many of these ex-workers elevated to the rank of factory managers. They all complained bitterly about the hopeless situation the regime forced them into. Even their grandchildren were laughing at them, because the youngsters knew more about mechanics than they did. They would have been much better off, if the regime ~~st~~ had not promoted them.

Actually, it would have been better for the younger ^{generation} of the intelligentsia who, after having been elevated from the proletariat and received a systematic schooling, wanted a place under the sun, that there were no more vacancies, due to bankruptcies in every field. Then came the reign of "rationalization" or rather that of the fusion of different institutions, ^{or} of the reductions in jobs. The intelligentsia found itself in a desperate situation and the dilettante government could not help it.

For instance, the situation of the musicians could have been ameliorated immediately if one had given them free passage through the Iron Curtain to go to the West. The musical talent of the Hungarian people is known all over the world. Numerous Hungarian musicians made brilliant careers in Western countries.

During the last ten years, ^a valuable generation of musicians was developed. Advantageous engagements were offered to them by Western countries, but they were not granted permission to leave. Let them rather suffer, let them suffocate in the midst of sur-
[of musicians] plus production! No more than two concerts were ^{organized} staged yearly for the ~~best~~ best of the musicians, and the radio and the two or three symphony orchestras were not capable of taking care of the graduates of the Academy of Music. Only those were granted permission to tour in Russia and the satellites in whom the regime had absolute confidence. Even those concerts did not take them very far - financially.

Most of the musicians were "free lancers" which meant that they lived as they could - in one word, they vegetated. They

could not make any money from private tutoring either, because private tutoring ceased to exist in Hungary, due to the lack of money. ~~Gifted~~ Gifted children were usually accepted at the Academy of Music. The only ¹field left open was that of the "musical arrangements" ~~is~~ humiliating work. Busy musicians, possessing a good ~~order~~, hired their less fortunate colleagues for ~~a~~ ridiculous sums of money.

The ¹Legion of the free lancers was formed though by writers; with the exception of the pets of the Party, who were seated in publishing houses, in the Writers' Union, and occupied the dramatical positions at theaters, or as members of the Literary Foundation, ~~regularly~~ regularly received advances - ~~who had~~ ^{the rest had} to carry on an incredible struggle for the daily bread. - Especially those in whose past there were "spots"! Generally, they were hired by the powerful and ungifted ~~writers~~ colleagues who ^{write} prescribed articles, essays, studies. Being incapable of finding publishers under their own name, and being incapable - most of them - to perform any type of ~~any~~ physical work, they had to chose this humiliating way of ~~an~~ earning a livelihood.

The Hungarian journalism found itself caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. Even the ~~writers~~ collaborators of the Szabad Nep found themselves in a blind alley. The discontentment and the hatred ~~of~~ of all the strata of society started to represent a force ^{which acted on} ~~due to which they asked~~ the writers ^{to make} ~~the~~ voice of the public opinion heard. The people, as a reaction to the inhuman ~~any~~ oppression of the last ten

years wanted to hear its own voice in the press. Everybody shouted for the cessation of injustice and for the rehabilitation of the innocent.

The regime of Kadar accused the writers of having excited the anger of the people; but, according to Respondent's opinion, it was the pressure of the public opinion which forced the writers to give way to the frightening anger of the people more and more. He is backing this opinion with the ~~an~~ afflux of thousands of letters which, ^{for months,} arrived daily ~~for months~~ to the offices of different newspapers, which all asked that a courageous tone should be taken in favor of the truth and of the rehabilitation. The writers did walk on a razor's edge. If the antique sentence could be applied to somebody today: "The gods put a pen into the hands of those they hate", ~~then~~ it certainly could to the Hungarian writers of 1956.

I had to interview a playwright who, due to his Nazi brother, who later was hanged, left, ^{Hungary in} ~~for~~ a voluntary exile in '43, and only came back in '47. Everybody received him with great respect and, although he was not accepted by the Party, due to his hanged brother, he was installed in good positions, which he deserved. His submission to the Party line was not shocking, because he did not ~~make~~ cease to be an individual with definite original ideas.

The interview took place in 1955, and he talked about his recent trip to democratic Germany where the situation was much better than in the Hungarian Peoples' Democracy. He went on

to complain about the lack of good newspapers, about the fact that the tone of the Szabad Nep was religiously copied, about the lack of culture of the theatrical reviewers, etc. Everything was due for a change, he emphasized. This undoubtedly was a very courageous affirmation, at the time.

The next day, before my article could appear, it was announced in the Szabad Nep that Rakosi was re-installed. The playwright^{akt} came to me and begged me to give him my article which was ready to appear the next day.

The irony of the story is that the article did appear eight days later, with my signature, but with a completely changed content - the chief editor, in collaboration with the playwright, had taken care of it!

Another illustration of the fate of a Hungarian writer is the story of György Lukács.

His father had been a great capitalist, one of the richest bankers in Budapest, who had bought himself a title of nobility. Young Lukács left the paternal house and joined the Galileo-^{young} Circle, a group of radical-socialists. He attracted attention pretty soon ~~to himself~~ by his subtle essays in which the new ideas ^{were combined} ~~associated in themselves~~ with a considerable Western culture. The Academy of ~~Sciences~~ Sciences awarded a prize to his "History of the Drama."

In 1919, Lukacs abandoned the theoretical roads in order to enter the field of action. He became the youngest commissar of the People. Then he emigrated to Vienna, and later to the Soviet

Union, where, in collaboration with Berthold Brecht, he edited a literary review in German, and ^{published number} a great ~~quantity~~ of books.

The same books, after 1945, were also published in Hungarian. And from one minute to the other, Lukács became the mentor of the Hungarian youth.

Respondent was present when, after the arrest of Rajk, during a lecture at the university, Lukács emphasized that the Hungarian culture had to undergo a radical change. The "rotten" Western ideas had infected our intelligentsia, and we cannot remedy the situation unless we turn our looks toward the realist Socialist-Soviet culture. A discussion followed the lecture and a woman said: "We should rather renounce ~~the~~ Shakespeare than let one single Western author harm our budding Socialist society." And she added: "It is not ~~absolutely~~ necessary to teach Western literature ^{at} ~~in~~ schools and ^{at the} ~~in~~ universities." Lukács didn't have the strength to answer. He probably thought of those dozens of years when he, during days and nights, read Western authors - probably the volumes of his vast library were defiling in ^{his mind,} ~~front of him~~. Books through which he approached and learned to like the Western culture - that is the human culture. Lukács stood there silently.

And Lukács remained silent when his ancient adversary, László Rudas, attacked him. Suddenly Lukács became a corrupter of the youth. This self-imposed silence did not last long - Lukács had to apologise public~~ly~~ly - his ^{self} ~~auto~~-criticism was nauseating.

He denied his past. He denied those innumerable nights during which he pursued knowledge. He denied his articles, he denied everything.

The Party magnanimously forgave him and he ~~was~~ again was allowed to teach that youth which he had been charged ~~to corrupt~~ ~~supt~~ with having corrupted.

After having had reviewed the fate of Lukacs, let's turn to mine, Respondent said.

On the 12th of July 1956, I was asked by the Folkloric Institute to hold, the next day, in Szombathely, two conferences ~~on~~ on Shakespeare. The ~~at~~ notice was extremely short (the person who was scheduled to hold these conferences suddenly found the remuneration too small) but I accepted. I was lucky to get a plane ticket at the very last minute although, by telephone, I was told that the chances for this were very slim.

This trip by plane to Szombathely on the 13th of July made a noise which echoed in the whole world. Seven young Hungarians - six men and one woman - after a bloody fight in the air, in the course of which they subdued the personnel of the plane, took charge of the plane, crossed the Iron Curtain and landed on an airport of the OTAN in West Germany. The passengers were taken out from the plane bleeding and there were wounded also among the assaulters.

The event made headlines everywhere: "Seven heroes chose liberty - let's find out the truth what is going on in Hungary."

And hundreds of newspaper men descended on the small Bavarian town of Ingolstadt. As usual^y, this strange history was written up in a hundred different ways. Which is the real story of this adventure in the air?

After the take-off, I took my Shakespeare out of my briefcase and ~~started~~^{started} to memorize some passages of Hamlet. The noise in the plane is disturbing - there are plenty of young people around who just don't seem to have any manners at all, they drink. What do they drink? It isn't cognac. It is something else. Today's youth doesn't know what is good. Suddenly one shouts: "Look, Győr!" The youngsters of today are definitely impolite - no wonder, Communist educations... Something heavy hit my head. Maybe my briefcase fell out of the net. But that couldn't hurt like this. I look up - there is no net, what is it? Two more blows. It hurts. A terrific anger takes hold of me. I get up and look around. Everywhere bleeding people - and I am one of them. "What's happening, did you lose your mind? Are you assaulting defenseless passengers?" - "Sit down!" I am enraged. I hear many voices: "Sit down and shut up!" - "I do not want to sit down, I demand an explanation." - "Well, if he wants one, let's give it to him." Three people assaulted me - I did feel the first three blows. And then nothing.

After a long time, I opened my eyes: disorder everywhere, luggage all over the place, and there is a hole in the ceiling of the plane from where refreshing air penetrates. Everywhere blood. The personnel of the plane is tied, with the exception

of the pilot who is at his place - who ~~drives~~ ^{flew the plane} - it is that young slim man who had grabbed me...

I want more than anything else a cigarette. Apparently my desire is written on my face, a young man hands me one: "Don't be angry, we didn't have any choice. I personally am waiting for this minute for eight years. I have lost my parents during the ~~seige~~ ^{siege} of Budapest. My uncle took me to a Western country, but I came back to Hungary. I was a child. But ever since my conscience is troubling me - I have left everything in the West. The constant comparison is driving me crazy." - "Evidently you don't have a family." - "I have a young wife and a three months' old ~~girl~~ ^{be angry with us} baby - don't ~~mind us~~, those wounds will heal ~~quickly~~ quickly and the whole world is ahead of you. You actually owe us a great debt of gratitude."

I found out the rest of the story at the hospital of Ingolstadt.

The chief of the band was György [REDACTED], who had been, two years ago, an air force lieutenant in the Hungarian army. He was discharged, for having committed a disciplinary mistake. He went to work in an enterprise. But aviation haunted him day and night. It was his passion and he thought that he would never again be able to be a pilot. All he wanted in life was to be a pilot and, as long as Hungary refused to satisfy his desire, he decided to go to a Western country. He "enlisted" his sister and his brother-in-law and ^{four} other young men.

Later I was told that after [REDACTED] had taken command of the

plane, he flew it at such a low altitude that it should not be picked up by radar. After the crossing of the Iron Curtain, the wildest dreams found expression: "In one year I'll have a Hudson." - "I'll have the most beautiful babe of Broadway." -

What some of the passengers did not understand, though, was why they had been attacked. The explanation was given: "They ~~did~~ did not know who was the AVO among you."

In Ingolstadt, asked me to forgive him. But, although my head and chest wounds were serious and I could have easily died from the blows received, I couldn't help forgiving him - courage is fascinating and this boy did fight for the victory.

The rest of the ^{ers} assault were less sympathetic - they were all born demagogues. Maybe it would be fairer to say that they were all taught demagogues.

In Ingolstadt, I received a telephone call from the ^[Hungarian] commercial delegation ^{at} of Frankfurt. They arrived at the hospital and gave me a letter written by my wife, imploring me to go home. It was her writing but it wasn't her style. I've known her style for many years. And now I suddenly don't recognize it. The letter said that it was my sacred duty to join my family which had suffered so much. It was not her style. How did they force her to write like this, I kept asking myself. I did go back. It never entered my head to leave my family - my wife and my son. Delegations waited for us at the airport of Budapest - journalists with microphones: "I'm here, that's all I can say." An AVH came

to my side: "Tell them that the Americans had promised you everything and you refused." - "I could not say it." - But somebody took the microphone and said it in my place. Did anybody notice the difference of voice? I don't think so. Everybody is aware of the fact that the microphone ~~is~~ deforms the voice. Who could differentiate two voices on a tape? And then there is always the explanation that I was under strain and, due to emotions, my voice was trembling.

My wife never told me how the AVC had forced her, during one night, to write the ~~last~~ letter they were dictating. I was in a hospital in Budapest. The wounds inflicted were not easy and the microphone scene at the airport kept torturing me - shall I deny it publicly? What newspaper would publish the real story?

My mother visited me. She was old, she had a daughter who was married in Switzerland and she wanted to visit her. She was told by the AVH that she could get a passport if I would be amenable and make a tape recording in which I would state that the Americans wanted to give me everything under the sun in order to stay and I chose to come back to the Peoples' Democracy. The passport would be ready in three days, she told me. "Do it - for my sake."

I protested and the doctors protested, too. The next day the radio man came to the hospital and put a microphone again in front of my mouth. "We don't want anything ~~else~~ else but your

impressions." - "I will not make a declaration of faith." - "We only want your impressions." When we arrive at the end of the tape, the reporter puts a question which sounds like a statement: "Evidently the Americans wanted to close in on you." - I want to interrupt, but the technician makes a sign. The tape has come to ~~the~~^{an} end. They don't let me talk, they leave the room in a couple of seconds. The AVH did not give a passport to my mother.

One visit follows the other. Delegations from the Ministry, from the Party, from the Councils, from the AVH, etc. The good "news" arrives: the members of the crew have been decorated and the Minister, in doing so, also cited my name and my faithfulness, ~~that~~ ~~that~~ it was not in vain that those wounds have been inflicted ~~on~~ ~~them~~ - they served ~~a~~^{the} purpose ~~to~~^{of} bring^{ing} home some real patriots. Evidently, they are going to be rewarded. Respondent will become a drama critic in Kaposvar! And the fact that the insurance company will pay them a tremendous sum, is not to be neglected!

I did not receive one filler¹ from the insurance company. I was told that the gifts received in Ingolstadt amply rewarded me for my losses. And anyway, the air force could not be held responsible for the attack of the bandits.

(I had mentioned before, during the course of this interview, that Respondent made allusions about the inflexibility of Respondent 616 as a drama critic of the Szabad Nep. I believe it worthwhile to mention at this point that Respondent 616, without knowing that the "hero" of the plane adventure also happened to

be one of my "clients", made an allusion about the blindness of certain people, and quoted as an example the sugar-coated ^{returned} interviews the/"hero" had given to the newspapers ■ in the month of July of 1956!)

During the month of September, he was asked to give a lecture on the subject of the kidnapped plane, to ~~the~~ air force officers stationed near Kaposvár. Looking straight at the political officer who was seated in the first row, he said the following: "I was deeply impressed by the attitude of György ■ - he was made of the stuff heroes are made of and yet he had been discharged from the air force. What glory he could have meant to the air force, if he had not been treated the way he was." He threw in the question of dilettantism in every field; he did ask why does the Hungarian youth abstain from going into the army. The atmosphere was tense and with the exception of one young lieutenant, every single officer was on his side. The political ^{officer} ~~one~~ did not open his mouth. After the one-hour lecture, which actually lasted two hours, was over, he walked up to the officer and asked him what he intended to do. The answer was: "I have no power today to do anything." - "And I'm not going to leave Kaposvár and I'm not going to hide - you know where to find me." But nobody bothered him. After this ~~episode~~ episode I felt much relieved: the lying declarations which had been put into my mouth did leave a very bitter taste.

During the same months I received a postcard from the Ministry of the Interior which came too late. - Long live the famous

Socialist administration! I was asked to present myself at such and such date in such and such office - and the card arrived two days later than the date I was supposed to present myself. Yet I went and found myself in the presence of an extremely amiable employee who made excuses for having held me imprisoned for two years and asked me to sign a declaration of rehabilitation. After having read the paper, I refused to sign it.- "Do you mean to say that you have not been innocent?" - "I simply refuse to sign because I have never asked to be rehabilitated by your regime."

It was in this atmosphere that the play of József Gáli: Szabadsághegy (Mountain of Freedom) was presented. Its subject: a worker woman has three sons. The oldest is a minister, the second is a manager of an enterprise and the youngest is a Party functionary - the latter is imprisoned on the basis of a suspicion and dies. The mother lives in the midst of great luxury in the villa ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ the Mountain of Freedom, in the house of her son who is a minister. She does not know anything about the fate of her youngest son - she is being told that he is in Moscow for advanced studies. Finally she finds out the truth and then she accuses herself: I have been living on the Mountain of Freedom and I have neither seen nor heard anything. I have not stopped the assassins. I also am responsible for whatever has happened. She ~~then~~ leaves the luxurious quarters of her eldest son and returns to the midst of the workers, the only place where honesty can still be found. The theme of the play was cowardice.

The minister could have saved his brother if he had not been a coward. Our epoch is coward. Wake up workers! ~~Shake~~ Shake cowardice - perhaps tomorrow you'll be able to ~~step~~¹⁰ into action!

The actress who played the magnificent part of the mother had been a fervent Communist, even during Nazi times. It was Hilda Gobbi. She had been an excellent friend of Respondent and his family, and when he was arrested in '51, his wife ran for help to Hilda Gobbi, who happened to be a close friend of Gábor Péter, the head of the AVH. Her answer was: "I will do ~~nothing~~ nothing, let the guilty ones be punished!" Playing the part of the mother in the Mountain of Freedom was a penitence for her.

(This was one of the most difficult interviews I've ever had. No matter what questions I would put to the author, he started to answer and then said: "I have described this beautifully in my novel, page so and so," and he started to read. I could not discern what the hero of the novel was saying and what the author was saying - neither could he. I was utterly embarrassed to rate this Respondent, as far as frankness is concerned. He is as frank, I suppose, as any novelist, writing a novel, is. And this interview for him was nothing more than the delivery of certain passages from his novel. To give an example, if the above had not been sufficient, when asked about the part of the writers, about their revolt, he answered:)

To write poetry, as Ibsen said, ^{is} /judging yourself. Indeed, the poet, taking advantage of liberty, pronounces his own judgment and

each of his words is charged with responsibility toward himself and toward his readers. The responsibility of the Hungarian poet is particularly great. Since the Middle Ages, he created freely only at certain rare moments of ~~his~~ history in a country which was the eternal crossroad of many many nations.

The history of Hungarian literature does not contain one chapter which could be consecrated to poetry written ~~l'art pour l'art~~ pour l'art. The Hungarian poet never climbed Mount Parnassus to juggle there with ~~his~~ glittering words and to find a pleasant form. A Hungarian poet is not only a troubadour and a magician of startling words like Tyrtaios but he also wages a war like Horatius and teaches wives ~~to~~ patience. At ~~his~~ each period of ~~his~~ history, the Hungarian poet has been a politician, a spiritual chief and a leader of his people. Always "plunged" into reality, it is from there that he took his poetic message and directed the fate of a nation which was fated for an important historical part.

Each time when the Hungarian poet took the pen, it was with the goal of light^{ing}~~ning~~ to his people the road of the future. It is this duty which renders the responsibility of the Hungarian poet ~~to be~~ so heavy: from this poetic message will depend the fate of his nation and, in a certain way, that of Europe.

Hungary had the following publishing ^{houses} ~~companies~~: Corvina (for export, like the treasures of the Museum of Fine Arts); Magvető Könyvkiadó and Szépirodalmi (Belles-Lettres/^{publishing company} in the true sense of the word); Képzőművészeti Alap Könyvkiadó (the Company of the Foundation of Fine Arts); Akademia Könyvkiadó (the publishing house for first-class authors - Hungarian as well as foreign); Uj Magyar Könyvkiadó (publishing company for translation of foreign literature, mainly Russian - it also published Hungarian authors); Műszaki Könyvkiadó (published technical books exclusively); Orvosi Könyvkiadó (published medical books exclusively) Tankönyvkiadó (published ^[+textbooks] pedagogical books exclusively) and finally, the Népszava Könyvkiadó (published popularizing^g editions on low scientific plane.) All these publishing companies were handled by the ^{Board} ~~Inspectorate~~ of Publishing Companies (Kiadói Felügyelőség), a division of the Ministry of the Peoples' Culture.

The Állami Könyvterjesztő Vállalat (Government Agency for the Dissemination of Books) ^{controlled} ~~handled~~ the bookstores of Budapest - the provincial bookstores were controlled by another division. There were approximately sixty bookstores ~~ix~~ (fifty handling new books and ten handling old and second hand ones.) This agency was attached ⁱⁿ ~~xxx~~ 1955, to the Ministry of Domestic Trade, but was then ^s ~~transferred~~ to the Ministry of Peoples' Culture, under the jurisdiction of which also belonged the theaters, the film industry, the arts, the libraries and the ^{Board} ~~Inspectorate~~ of Publishing Companies.

In 1951, the state took over the bookstores. Each store ordered individually from abroad, but the order was forwarded by a central agency of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, ~~which~~ called Kultura.

~~The foreign~~ ^{The} German books one could easily find in each Budapest bookstore were: technical literature (architecture, mathematics, physics, etc.); language books; childrens' books (Kinderbuchverhandlung); fiction, mainly world famous writers like Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, etc. Their oeuvres could be purchased very cheaply in the paperbound editions of the Inselbuchverlag; artistic publications (Michaelangelo - Capella Sistina; Holbein - Bildnisse), which were much much cheaper than the similar Hungarian publications, which could not compare with the German ones - the Hungarian print was much darker, the paper coarser, etc.

Calendars - in Hungary there were no colored calendars so the German ones which had about twenty-twenty-two colored pages were in extreme demand.

Russian books were not purchased by bookstores, they were sent by the thousands - for months and months they would sit on the shelf, bent under their burden, and then they were sent back. Only the classical writers were sold: Tolstoi, Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky, Pushkin; in much lesser degree, Csermicsevszky, Beck, Constantinov.

Hungarian writers were sold in the following order: Karinthy, ^a Jókai, Mikszóth, ¹ Moricz, ¹ ~~Móra~~ ^{Móra} Tamási, Déry Tibor, József Attila.