

NO. 563 "B-5" FACESHEET AND RATING

ML

p. 1

Paris
August 1957

1. FML-1
2. ---
3. Paris
4. 30
5. M
6. Hungarian
7. None
8. Jewish (converted to Unitarian)
9. M
10. 2
11. Ministry employee
12. Journalist (Szabad Nép)
13. ---
14. Middle class
15. None
16. 1949: Albania; 1950: Rumania, East Germany, peace
delegate: London, Prague, Warsaw; 1952: Vienna;
1954: Berlin
17. No
18. No
19. 4 semesters - history - Tudományegyetem - Budapest
20. Budapest University,
21. Budapest Budapest
22. Pest
23. None
24. January, 1957
25. Paris
26. No
27. ---
28. ---
29. ---
31. "10"
32. "10"
33. "10"
34. no flattery

Outline of Interview:

- 1) Personal background.
- 2) The captive mind; the captive mind liberated.
- 3) Szabad Nép.
 - a) Editors of Szabad Nép - seed of Revolt.
 - b) Style - imitation of Pravda.
- 4) The New Course and its aftermath. Imre Nagy's role in launching the New Course. Szabad Nép rebels support Imre Nagy.
- 5) The rebellion at Szabad Nép.
- 6) Révai and the New Course.
- 7) Imre Nagy's circle of friends and supporters. The Communist opposition. Imre Nagy's attempts to contact non-Communist political groups.
- 8) The rehabilitations. The Communist functionary. Rákosi and Mikoyan.
- 9) Exiled to Szeged.
- 10) Personal finances.
- 11) The Hungarian economy.
- 12) The Revolution and escape.

Personal Background

I was born in Budapest in 1926. ~~xxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~. Both my parents were doctors, and my father was also an intellectual leader of the Galilei Circle. My father who is still alive is a free thinker, and I grew up in a strongly progressive and anti-clerical atmosphere. From this environment it was a mere jump to socialism which I embraced when I was a student. After the war, ~~xxxxxx~~ when the Russians ~~xx~~ liberated Hungary, I ~~also~~ adopted the Communist ideology. At this point I broke my ties with my father's beliefs and for many years we were almost strangers to each other until about 1953 or 1954 when I reviewed my beliefs and returned to the ideals of my youth. For years my father and I didn't discuss politics together.

I attended the Mintagimnázium in Budapest and graduated from ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{gymnasium} in Szeged in 1945 where I went for family reasons. There I joined the Communist youth movement and upon my return to Budapest continued to work for it. I worked at Madisz headquarters as editor of its youth newspaper until 1947. In 1947 I became a staff member of Szabad Nép which ~~and~~ meant the end of my university studies. This action pushed my wife into a closed framework. ~~xxxxxx~~ I worked at Szabad Nép from March 1947 to December 1954.

The captive mind. The captive mind liberated.

Why did I become a Communist? The reasons can be found in the events of the 1940s. It was really quite simple. We were occupied by the Germans and liberated by the Russians. If I had lived in England or in the United States and had had the same family background and education I would not have become a Communist. The reason was partly the entire prewar political system and the orgy in which it ^{culminated} ~~commenced~~ with the Arrow Crossists. The war, and the brutality of the persecution of the Jews, contributed to my attitude. In someone who had grown up in the liberal spirit, and felt ^a sympathy for socialism, this system must necessarily awaken a feeling that these horrors, this apocalypse, must be followed by something fundamentally new. It was tempting to think that the Russians and the Communists could bring this new development.

As for the Russian atrocities in Budapest not only the Communists but also many moderate liberals excused the manner: Russians in the following ~~manner~~ ^{manner:} First of all, we said, that after Germany the Hungarians were the biggest enemy ^{regarded as} ~~by~~ ~~for~~ the Russians. Therefore their action was justified to some extent. And secondly, we said, that after a four year war an army had great hunger for everything including women. Therefore it was natural that when they got to a civilized country they overstepped the bounds. We also said that Russia apparently still had large backward

entire life
peasant masses. Our ~~attitude~~ was concentrated on the
arrival of the Russian troops. Every evening I listened
to BBC and the Hungarian language broadcast from Moscow.
But in the last few months of ^{fighting} ~~the fighting~~ we listened
mostly to the Russian broadcasts because it was they who
told us that Kőbánya had been liberated. When the arrival
of the Russian meant liberation from the Germans then these
disappointments ^{seemed} ~~were~~ fairly insignificant.
If one had to choose between having the Russians loot
one's watch, ^{or} ~~and between~~ going to the banks of the Danube
the week before in order to be shot by the Nazis, then the
choice was fairly easy. We lived through such horrors be-
fore the Russian occupation that the occupation was not
so horrible. It was more horrible to those who didn't
suffer before. There was a definite schism between
those who were persecuted before 1944, that is the Jews
and those who were not. The latter received their first
taste of personal danger after the Russians arrived and
therefore their attitude was naturally different from
ours.

We felt that there was need for a tremendous social
transformation which would ^{forever prevent} ~~prevent forever~~ the things
which we experienced during the war and under Fascism,
from happening again.
At the time it looked as though only the Communists
could bring about this social transformation. It was
the Communist Party which was the ^{most} ~~most~~ violently anti-Fascist.

For a young man who wanted to go into politics there were only two possibilities: the Communist Party and the Social-Democrats. The Peasant Party was not for our social stratum and the Smallholders were far too conservative. What they wanted to do was to keep as much from the old as possible. There was great need for a serious and respected Social-Democratic Party. At the time I felt that the Communists were too crude too maniacal; and I disliked the roughness and violence in Lenin's style.

In practice the country had fallen apart. On the one side there was reaction; ~~for instance, in Szeged~~ ^{In Szeged, for instance} I had some experience with the Catholic reactionary student groups. On the other side there was the progressive camp where, besides the small splinter groups, the Social-Democrats and the Communist Party were the only really strong forces. I thought the Social-Democrats more comical than inspiring of respect. The ~~it~~ ^{party} was made up of old people who lived ~~from~~ ⁱⁿ their nostalgic ~~A~~ ^{reminiscences of} ~~about~~ the great past of the party, and did little. There were many careerist elements in the Social-Democratic Party as well, who had had nothing to do with socialism before and chose the Social-Democrats because ~~it was argued~~ they provided a good sine cure.

On the other hand the Communist Party was active and dynamic and anyone who wanted activity would turn to it. In such situations it is very important for a party to be dynamic and not to allow itself to drift aimlessly here

and there. The Social-Democratic leadership was a shouting example of utter mediocrity. I don't want to insult poor Kethly. This was the third generation of Social-Democrats. It was the first which was the really talented set of leaders in the heroic era of Hungarian Social-Democracy. I mean people like Kúnyi, Garami, and Böhm. Of the second generation Mókus was the best intellectually. Around him was a politically fairly second-rate and not too attractive crowd. Peyer was a good tactician ~~among~~ Communists but the A ruined him quite unfairly by calling him an opportunist and saying that he compromised with the Horthy regime. Szakasits was a clown whose speeches were full of fancy baroque phrases and a phony pathos. I merely had to see him once and say that this man will never be my party leader. Bán and Szélig were not known too well. Public opinion knew ^{chiefly} Kethly, Peyer, and Szakasits. ~~nextly~~ Kethly had the greatest fame of them all. She ^{a marble} was a statue with a great past. She managed to turn ~~in~~ into stone in her own life-time. The leadership of the Social-Democratic Party was not for young and active people. On the other hand the leadership of the Communist Party was extremely impressive. Its behaviour was dynamic, objective, and creative. ^{the beginning} At ~~first~~ the Communist Party was the Party of reconstruction. Without empty phrases, objectively, and with puritan simplicity it talked about the tasks to be done. While others had no ideas or solutions to the

problems of postwar reconstruction, the Communist Party took the initiative.

When I was in secondary school I called myself a socialist. I knew the non-Marxist socialist literature; the French utopian socialists, the Fabians, ~~socialists~~ etc. Of the Marxists I ^{had} read only Kautsky. I didn't find Marxism convincing at the time. I didn't read the Hungarian populist writers. After the war the Communists gave a wide distribution to Marxist literature. I started to read Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. I found this Communist literature repellent at first. It was in contrast to my taste and personality even at that time. Lenin's brutal and ruthless style of debate was extremely unattractive. But in certain situations one overcomes one's distaste for the unattractive parts of the ideology. In spite of this disadvantage the Communist Party offered a hopeful field of action ~~thatxexxexxexx~~ where one could liquidate the past. This was one's basic attitude. I felt that the Communist Party was the only one which really wanted ^{to} ~~to~~ liquidate the past and that is why I became a Party member. I took this step with many inner reservations ^{to} ~~thinking~~ that it was not necessary for me ~~to~~ accept everything in the Communist ideology. At this time the Communist Party was a mass party and was not yet very demanding regarding ideology. That came later. I became a Party member in May 1945 through the youth organization.

Then it ~~was~~^{felt} like being thrown into a mill which would grind one up. Suddenly one came under great moral pressure; they demanded that one ^{should} become like everyone else, that one should accept the Communist ideology and take the old comrades as one's moral example. They demanded that the new member should adjust with regard to discipline, behaviour, and morality. This moral pressure was very strong in the youth circle in which I was active. I had new friends, a new community whose respect I wanted to acquire. This is a basic human characteristic. It meant that I had to adopt the Communist personality and reject my bourgeois past; that I had to be ashamed of my bourgeois past or else laugh at it. I felt it necessary to adopt what I thought was the ~~new spirit~~ true spirit of the proletariat.

At this time the Communist Party was not yet a very strict; one could be a Communist and believe in psychoanalysis at the same time. Then they forced us to abandon more and more of our spiritual heritage until only Marxism-Leninism remained. This process took years to complete. I was 17 years old when all this happened. This is an age when outside influences affect one most strongly. Within the next four years I was Communized. It was my aim, my ideal to become the best possible Communist. I tried furiously to annihilate what my Communist self considered a bourgeois remnant. This process manifested itself in ^a ~~the~~ variety of ways. It began with

the fact that I laughed at those writers who at one time were sacred idols to me, writers like H.G. Wells etc. ~~Then~~ I tried to adjust to what I felt was morally superior to me, to the standards and behaviour of the working class. I carried this to such an extent that I felt it was petty bourgeois of me to spend ^{my} Sundays with my parents in the family villa in Szentendre. I thought a Communist had to spend all his free time with the community. I was satisfied only when I went on hikes with the Communist youth group, or I spent my free time in similar fashion. Later when the process of disillusionment began one of the significant signs was that I again started going to Szentendre to visit the family. Although I didn't tell my father about the changes going on within me he was a very sharp observer and immediately realized the significance of this. At any rate the break with one's parents was one of the steps in becoming a Communist.

One of the important factors which led me to the Communist Party was that the Communist leaders at first commanded a great deal of respect. Some of them were imprisoned for 16 years but in spite of this they managed to rise above contemptible motives of revenge and forgetting their former sufferings guided the ship of state with wise moderation..

There was Gerö with his mysterious Comintern past, his ascetic personality, his puritanism, his tremendous

capacity for work, his technical ability or at least his organizing ability. Actually he was ignorant in economic questions but was a good organizer.

There was Zoltán Vas with his jovial and dynamic personality, his spontaneous and direct manner. He was an attractive personality in spite of the fact that he managed to ^{include} ~~put~~ in every speech of his that he had been imprisoned for 16 years. This was not in the best of taste I felt but I suppose it was justified since he really was imprisoned for 16 years.

And above all there was Révai. He appeared ~~to be~~ an intellectual colossus. His articles and speeches were overwhelming especially to the intelligentsia. His speaking and writing style was beautiful, following ~~on~~ the traditions of Kossuth and Ady. His tone was sincere and passionate. He was a man of instinctive action. Révai meant more to us than the rest of them put together; he was a very attractive political and intellectual personality.

Then György Lukács came home. I was there at his first university lecture. I felt and so did others, that finally there was someone who did not ^{exude} ~~sprinkle~~ the musty atmosphere of the Horthy ^{era} ~~era~~. He was not a Domanovszky or a Gyula Kornis or a Jusztin Baranyay. Suddenly he brought in something which was new: a European atmosphere. György Lukács was very influential among the young intelligentsia. His was a more sophisticated Marxism. Even old László Rudas

was quite influential. He was a good speaker and made Marxism as simple as a slap on the face. To some this was an advantage. He was not the highest type of Marxist ideologists but what he did was to give a positive if simplified answer to all one's questions. Thus he emphasized that part of Marxism which was so attractive to many people, the fact that like any religion Marxism gave an answer to the great questions of life.

It is good to have a Weltanschauung in which everything has its right place. Nobody is immune to the religious need and if one was educated in atheism as I was one is perhaps even more easily converted to Communism because one still has this spiritual need. Other political groups did not have such a spiritual attraction as Communism. The old radicals like Jászi and others were abroad or else they had no platform. As far as Jászi is concerned after I was converted from Communism he gave me a very strong impulse to understand the Hungarian present. I think I will dedicate the book I am now writing to him.

At Szabad Nép I was a ^{favored} "favourite" young talent". Within two years I was internal affairs editor and from the end of 1949 until I left Szabad Nép I was the foreign editor of the newspaper. I was abroad fairly often, the last time in June 1954 when I was a correspondent of ~~the~~ Szabad Nép and ~~the Hungarian radio~~ ^{Budapest} at the Berlin four-power conference.

In the early days I accounted as a Marxist theoretician. ^{held} I ~~xxx~~ lectures at the university and at seminars and I was a member and secretary of a theoretical council at Party headquarters whose head was Andor Berei, a notorious figure. This was the sole ground where I did not feel myself at home in this world. I couldn't accept the total uniformization of thought. I had troubles with my lectures which were often criticized on ideological grounds. Although this did not harm me at Szabad Nép they put ^{me} on the shelf as a propagandist because they didn't consider me a firm and reliable Marxist. At the time I was sad because I couldn't understand why they had to discover every original idea with seismograph sensitivity and destroy it, and why it was that only the ~~communistic~~ Stalinist jargon and framework was acceptable. I felt that this was the death of socialism although I didn't really think this through thoroughly or realize the implications.

The great turning point came in April 1953. It was a Sunday morning and my wife was just giving birth to our second child. I was listening to the radio and heard the news about the revision of the Jewish doctors' case. I am not exaggerating when I say that I suddenly felt that "everything was different" ("minden másképp van") as Karinthy ^{put} ~~xxx~~ it. Until then I believed everything on the whole.

I believed the Rajk case, the Party history written by ^{respondent said this with} Stalin (~~xx~~slight laughter). I loved the Soviet movies

and was unhappy when Stalin died. A month later though, when the Soviet doctors were freed it was as if a 20 filler piece had dropped down, a coin which was thrown in a long time ago but somehow slipped in the wrong place.

But something else preceded this. On the one ~~young~~ hand I was a favourite young Titan at Szabad Nép but on the other hand since 1955 I had been afraid of arrest, constantly, night and day, because this was a part of the Communist psychology. The fact is that I knew I was not a real Communist. One part of me realized this and had contempt for the other and was afraid of what would happen when the other would discover it. I was afraid. But this was not a conscious thing. A great many of my acquaintances were arrested and I accepted the fact that they were guilty. This strange mental projection took this form: "perhaps they will discover ~~it~~ that I, too, am an internal enemy of the Party". For instance, I didn't like the people I worked with. I found them primitive and didn't consider myself capable of the same complete devotion. When I was in a crowd where Stalin and Rákosi were receiving a mass ovation I felt slightly nauseated, and my Communist self said to my other self "you see you will never be a real Communist". (Yes, Orwell was a great revelation to me. I read him just before the Revolution when I was not a Communist anymore.)

There was an episode which seemed to indicate that my fear was justified. When I was in London in 1950 I agreed

to meet an old friend of mine who lives in London, at the Hungarian legation. We somehow didn't meet inside but had a talk on the street in the presence of the entire delegation. I could see that the head of our group disapproved that I was talking to a stranger. I was convinced that they would think I made some contacts with an intelligence agency. For years after this I was not sent abroad which increased my fear. I was convinced that this episode was the reason. People lived in such a fairy-tale world and believed the most impossible things about themselves.

When I heard that the Moscow doctors were ^{rehabilitated} ~~fixed~~ I thought that if I were arrested now, ^{neither} ~~the~~ world, ^{nor} ~~and~~ I myself, would not have to believe in my guilt. Until then, as a convinced Communist, I always believed in the guilt of the arrested.

As for the Rajk trial I believed the entire thing - ^{malaise} ~~malice~~. During the trial I had a sort of ~~malice~~. I asked myself why, ~~that~~ if he was the enemy, ~~then why~~ did he talk like a ^{shoved} ~~Marxist~~. But I believed it anyway. I ~~shooked~~ the unpleasant feelings down beneath my consciousness. I said it's true and that's that. After the Rajk trial there was a tremendous pressure on people; they were constantly ^{prying} ~~trying~~ searching and ~~trying~~. If one wanted to live one had to ^{of} ~~of~~ believe it. This was a ~~formal~~ ^{asked} self-defence. After it was all over I ~~told~~ ^{asked} my father: why didn't you prove it to me,

why didn't you tell me?" And he answered "I loved you and knew ~~said~~ that if you understood this disgusting comedy it would be your end." (Did I believe in the guilt of Losonczy? The Losonczy case was a mysterious one. I knew Losonczy well; I didn't like him because he was an arrogant, arrived journalist at the time when I was a beginner. Losonczy was arrested with a number of others who belonged to the same group, Donáth, Zöld, Kállai, and Kádár. Not even Party members were told of their arrest. I heard it semi-officially from Oszkár Bethlen who was the editor of Szabad Nép. He said that at the central committee meeting they exposed the crimes of Losonczy and the rest etc. - - - He seemed to be somewhat embarrassed about Kádár who was popular in the Party. Bethlen said that the Kádár case was not quite the same as that of the others. Kádár really stopped being a traitor a long time ago, Bethlen said, but he was not ^{truthful towards} ~~truthful towards~~ the Party ^{crimes} ~~crimes~~ regarding his old ~~misdeeds~~. It seems to me that Bethlen probably registering the embarrassment of Gerö or whoever reported the case at the central committee. For years we heard nothing about the case. The arrest of Szakasits was not announced either. In 1951 at the Party Congress I was very much surprised when the arrest of the Social- Democrats was not announced. I felt that their exposure should at least have been announced. A few days later the same notorious Bethlen said, laughing; "It's funny that nobody asked

about Szakasits." This was to ^{demonstrate} ~~show~~ what a zero Szakasits was. From this comment I understood that this was the correct behaviour about Szakasits, and that it was my bad bourgeois self which demanded that the case be made public. As for Losonczy I believed that he was a prewar police informer. The prewar Communist movement was a legend to me; I believed everything they told me about it. By then I didn't feel the need to prove the guilt of these people at a trial. People didn't even dare to think of such things anymore. There were so many spiritual, psychological problems. To stay in line one had to discipline one's self psychologically in order not to think of such things.

I had no one to talk to. I couldn't reveal to my father that I had any doubts. When I was with my father I felt it my duty to prove and to show that I was a firm ^{was} Communist. I felt that this our own problem and that it didn't ^{non-Communists, like my father.} ~~concern~~ concern outsiders. I felt this even later. This behaviour is very important and is a characteristic of the internal ~~Communist~~ Party opposition. This characteristic is misunderstood in the West. The rebelling Communists are even more passionately anti-imperialist than orthodox Communists, in order to protect themselves against the slander that they ^{are the} ~~were~~ class enemy, and also in order to reassure themselves.

Thus the revision of the doctors' case was a great

relief to me because I felt that now they could arrest me, and the thing would not be settled for posterity. I also felt that "everything is different" but I didn't think the consequences out logically. The ground slipped ^{out from} under my feet and began to revolve. I intuitively felt that I would have to review the basic things. I was perfectly aware of the significance of this for myself.

From then on I attributed greater significance to the lies of the imperialist press. It was my job at Szabad Nép to read it and to polemicize with it. Later on it became a joke in Budapest that every slander of the imperialist press was proved to have been true. The same week there was an article in Time or Newsweek about the Russian changes which implied that there was more behind it than one had realized. By then many of us ^{at Szabad Nép} felt the same way I did. ~~at Szabad Nép~~ One could say that the Hungarian Revolution began in the editorial offices of Szabad Nép because that is ^{where} the inner Party opposition was first crystallized and it was this which led to the Revolution.

The rehabilitations were a great personal experience to all of those who lost their faith in Communism, myself included. Of those who were rehabilitated I met Haraszti ^{the} and journalist Reismann who is now in Italy. The latter was involved in the Rajk case. As for Haraszti he was arrested in 1950 probably because he had been the Communist

Party's liaison with Szakasits ~~was~~ during the war. He was accused of having betrayed the Communist Party to Szakasits who on his side was accused ^{of} ~~for~~ being a Western intelligence agent. The arrest of Szakasits and the Social-Democrats indicated that a trial of Social-Democrats was being prepared in Hungary but apparently Moscow wouldn't allow this because it was concerned about the reaction of the Social-Democratic parties abroad. It was Rákosi's over-eagerness which led to the arrest of Szakasits. In prison they tried to force Kállai, Losonczy, Kádár, and Haraszti, who were leaders of the Party during the war to admit that they had betrayed the Party to the West. There was a good pretext for this accusation: The dissolution of the Communist Party in 1942. The reason for the dissolution was that the leaders of the Party were not in contact with Russia at the time and did not know what the Soviets wanted, hence they thought when the Comintern was dissolved, that the Hungarian Party had to be dissolved as well.

Haraszti told me horror stories about the treatment he received in prison. It was an awful experience for me. I can't reproduce it today. At the time I was naive and impressionable. Today I see the Communist movement without illusions and have ceased regarding the whole affair as a moral problem. One gets used to everything.

In 1953 and 1954 my friends and I lived in a constant

daze that such things could have happened without our having known about ^{them} it. We got the news about the rehabilitation piece meal, in dribblers and immediately rushed to tell each other about it. For a while we did nothing at Szabad Nép but talked about such matters. We would rush into an office and say "I had just met someone who had been at Kistarcsa - - -," or in 1954 we told each other ~~the details~~ details about the Kádár rehabilitation trial and what he said to the AVO's. Or else we told stories about Rajk. These stories circulated in Party circles and kept us in constant horror. Partly our mental shock was due to the fact that these people were underground for four years. For instance, Haraszti was for four years in the Conti Street jail just a few steps from Szabad Nép. ^{had been right} ^{hadn't} We ~~were~~ there and we ~~didn't~~ know it. It was a very strange feeling. Haraszti lived for a year and a half under death sentence, in fact until the very day that he left prison.

Part of the reason for the rebellion of the Party opposition was the feeling that against such crimes one was entitled to use any weapons. This feeling ~~helped~~ helped to swing us out of our Party loyalty. Another important factor in our disillusionment was that the regime which could commit such crimes had to be structurally bad. I would like to stress that these things were an unexpected surprise to the greatest part of the Communist

Party, and these revelations between 1953 and 1956 were an important factor in the demoralization of the Party.

Such revelations can effect people in different ways. They either impel people to some counter-action because of their own guilt feelings; then they try to attack the regime. Or else they become disinterested in everything, ^{Feeling} ~~they feel~~ that if such things can exist the best thing for them is to keep themselves completely apart from politics. The latter was the reaction of the mass, the little functionaries. But the result was the same because both groups stopped being the support of the regime.

I became interested in economics when from 1954 on I began to settle my accounts with the Marxist-Leninist ideology. In the course of our debates we naturally became interested in the Hungarian economy which so basically determined the total character of the entire Communist regime. Each question had an expert among us. Our economic expert was János Kornai who is still in Hungary today. Since then, in the spring of 1957, he published a book about economic over-centralization which received considerable attention. He was attacked ~~with~~ as revisionist but it did not hurt him. He is the only member of our circle of friends at Szabad Nép who is not in prison.

When I lived in Szeged in 1955, after I lost my job

at Szabad Nép, I occupied myself with economic questions in my loneliness. I wrote an ^{annihilating critique} ~~critique~~ of Marx's Das Kapital, for my desk. In the West this sort of criticism of Marx is done more competently; but we had to reconstruct it from our own minds. When ^{we} ~~they~~ started to criticize Marxism we had to build our counter-arguments ourselves in an amateur fashion since we had no access to the foreign literature of the subject. I remember what a revelation Trotsky's The Revolution Betrayed was. I borrowed it from somebody in 1954. The effect on me was so great that for a few months I gladly formulated things in Trotskyite terms and in Trotsky's language. Later other thoughts and experiences washed this away, too. Trotskyism was only a pale and vague station on the road out of Communism. But in order to accept Trotsky at all it was necessary ~~that I had already started on the road;~~ if I had read it three years before, it could not have had any effect on me.

In 1954 I bought some books from Berlin and took them home with me. By then I was doing this consciously, as an act of opposition, and didn't have to be afraid because I was a creature of the regime and therefore all right. Each new book was a delicacy to us. I remember a book - I can't remember who wrote it - entitled Die Soziologie des Kommunismus. It conceived of Communism as a religious movement and compared it to Islam, Christianity etc. I disliked this book

at the time, in January 1954. I found it extremely disagreeable. But later I accepted the fact that one of the effective factors in the character of Communism was this mystic, religious spirit.

A good book left us without effect if we were not yet open to it and a bad book could have its effect if we were ready to think about it. To someone trained in Marxism the very ^{pearls} ~~parables~~ of anti-Marxism were without effect until there was a special impulse. But this impulse had to be personal even if it was ^{only} ~~something~~ like the revision of the Moscow doctors' ^{plot} ~~extrial~~. This had a very personal effect on me and very effectively changed my own personal situation or rather the situation in which I saw myself. To most people ^{this} ~~this~~ impulse was some sort of injury. The Communist system helps its own enemies because sooner or later it injures everyone. There is no kader who at one time or another is not fired, injured, humiliated. There is one type of Communist, of course, who does not react to these injuries. I mean those Hungarian Communists who were imprisoned in Moscow and after the war returned to Hungary as convinced followers of the regime. These people are deformed in spirit; they are not normal people. They knew so much about the real character of the Communist regime and saw so many horrors that only the highest degree of compensation could make them overlook these things. This is abnormal. A man ~~who~~ who has been to Siberia and comes home and says: "Now I am a better Communist than

before" is not a normal human being. They told themselves that the injury must be disconnected from their attitude to the regime. These made the best ^{henchmen} ~~primitives~~ later; people like Kádár and Kállai. But aside from such people everyone sooner or later receives an injury or a series of injuries from which he can realize that this is not a coincidence but is a general characteristic of the regime. This helps him to abandon his fanaticism and makes him more flexible and impressionable with regard to other people's opinions. A Communist is incapable of understanding a non-Communist. The jumping-off point is when he becomes open to argument from the other side. Now at least he can understand even if he cannot agree with the other side's views. Then the development can begin, a development which follows its course with the strictness of natural laws. They all follow the same road although some get left behind sooner and some go farther along the road. There are five stages on this road, which can be summed up as follows.

The first step is the rejection of Stalin and a desperate clinging to Lenin. At this stage one can also accept the Trotskyite views; after all Trotsky was a Leninist and considered himself Lenin's true successor in emigration. This was a view of the freer spirits. Trotsky was a person whose name horrified faithful Communists but Trotsky's style and method of debate was

close to the Communist mentality. The essence of this first step then was: Stalin no, but Lenin yes.

During the second step they began to discover with anxiety that after all Lenin wasn't right in everything either - - - after all it already began with Lenin.

The third step involved the moral rehabilitation of Kautsky and the other orthodox Social-Democrats. They discovered that in his Democracy and Dictatorship Kautsky brilliantly pointed out where this regime will lead. In the course of this step one ^{was} ~~is~~ interested in the entire prewar orthodox German Social-Democratic literature.

Then ^{came} ~~xxxxxx~~ the fourth step. At this point they discovered ^I that, after all, Kautsky was dogmatic also, and that ^{realized} the great deal began with Marx. They finally ~~xxx~~ that there is something wrong with Marxist economic views as well. Then Bernstein ^{was} ~~is~~ rehabilitated. Then various Marxist themes ^{swam} ~~xx~~ in their heads: Is there absolute impoverishment or not? Is large-scale agricultural production absolutely necessary or can there be a compromise with small-scale production? Is the concentration of capital really such a necessary process as Marx and Lenin pointed out or not? This development ^{took} ~~xxxxx~~ place entirely in Marxist terms.

One has left many concepts behind one. First of all the conception of a dictatorial socialism. At this point one tries to formulate a democratic socialism which

is theoretically connected with German socialism but politically it does not mean that it agrees with the opportunism and imperialism of the contemporary Social-Democratic Parties. It does not mean Guy Mollet. This is the point where the majority stops. These people will look for a new socialist orientation though it is not certain that they will find it. However, they will cling to the fiction that they are socialists.

The other group goes beyond this stage of development and rejects socialism, which cannot be good. They return to classical liberalism in its orthodox form thus becoming more conservative than modern socialists or those followers of modern economic trends who have never been infected by Marxism. It also depends on the individual personality; one becomes completely removed from politics, the other becomes an enthusiastic follower of capitalism but still in the Marxist terminology. The fourth, fifth, and twentieth becomes absorbed into various existing contemporary intellectual or political trends. On every station of the way he shows passionate opposition to all that is ahead and to all that he left behind. At the first step he won't accept Bernstein; he may not read him or else say: "I will never ^{sink} ~~think~~ this low". One could set up a school consisting of five ^{only} classes where the students would get ~~those~~ books which are suitable to their present stage of development.

The Communist Party's educational system ^{hammers} a school-way of ~~thinking~~ ^{way of thinking} boys ~~thinking into~~ those who are exposed to it; thus every intellectual change takes the form of a school exercise. It is necessary that it give an answer to the list of questions ready in the person. Is the proletariat dictatorship necessary or not? Does exploitation exist or not? Is an economic crisis ~~inevitable~~ ^{inevitable} or not? Is impoverishment in the capitalistic countries unavoidable or not? Are the Western countries moving toward socialism or not? At every change he substitutes new answers to the same list of questions and is reassured if he can give a theoretical answer to them all.

That is why the Yugoslav ideologists are trying to prove today that the Western countries are moving toward socialism. This is important to them because it justifies their middle-of-the-road way. That is why they are friendly with Norway and similar countries because they can say well, you see, they are building socialism in Norway, too, ^{although} ~~also~~ with different methods. They say that there are ~~their~~ elements of this socialistic trend in the United States, too; ^{they claim} in fact, the whole world is moving in that direction. And they, the Yugoslavs, will create the bridge between the two worlds. They cling to the word socialism as though it had some magic significance. In the same fashion former Communists who are moving away from Marxism occasionally reassure themselves that the

direction in which they are moving is also leading to socialism. With regard to the West they ignore the greater intellectual freedom which exists there and use a magnifying glass to find something about which they can say that this is more socialist than what they have at home. This serves them as a moral justification for their actions. The minority which leaves socialism is more furiously and dogmatically, and sometimes even more Marxistically ^{in its} anti-socialism than those who didn't leave socialism. I don't belong to either group because these changes in myself made me so sceptical that I am willing to admit that in a given ^{situation even} ~~xxx~~ socialism can be acceptable. I can't insist on socialism as a concept because to most people it has very little content; I discovered that most people are not convinced about ~~xxx~~ its correctness. But I am not dogmatically anti-socialist because it is undoubtedly true that socialism as an intellectual trend gave modern man a set of moral principles which must slowly be adopted by every decent person.

My attitude was always different from that of the others in this era of intellectual metamorphosis. I was always ahead a few stages and pulled many people with me. We used to say jokingly: "XY is behind one phase". In this era everyone had contempt for those who were ahead and for those who were behind. If someone was more reactionary we would defend him, saying: "Leave him alone,

he is only lagging behind six weeks". The fact that our disillusionment received new nourishment constantly contributed to the permanent nature of this development. The chief factors which contributed were the rehabilitations and the fact that we saw more and more that the regime was incapable of functioning economically or politically. We always received some new nourishment which helped us pass from phase to phase.

He who is ⁱⁿ the process of awakening notices an increasing number of things which he never noticed before. For instance, a man whom he considered a good comrade for five years is now seen as a stupid, limited, stubborn etc. person. And here is another example of this awakening. I wrote at least 50 articles about the German question as a matter of routine. I wrote them even in 1954 and separated this activity from my political Revolt. I said all right everything is bad but the Soviet Union's ~~their~~ foreign policy is correct. But at the 51st article I discovered that the German question could not be solved in the way that the Soviet Union was proposing. I realized that the Soviet policy was cynical and ~~could~~ ^{was} motivated ~~by the fact that the Soviets were afraid of~~ giving up East Germany.

The other important factors were the way people influenced each other in this process, and the few ^{rare} books which came in as delicacies. Trotsky's Stalin was

a fantastic experience for me. I read it in 1956 when I was not a Trotskyite anymore. But it was fantastic because we realized how ignorant we were about the Russian past and this was the revelation of an authentic eye witness. I read it before the 20th Party Congress. It is also fantastic how many times Khrushchev used Trotsky's book as a source in his speech. Another book which was very effective was Rosenberg's *Geschichte des Bolschewismus*. This is a very objective and moderate book by an independent socialist, not a rabidly anti-Communist work. It was useful to us because it mentions many historical facts which contradict Stalin's little catechism in a hairraising fashion. We read such books and told our friends about them, which always had a great effect on them. Dedijer's *Tito* was circulated, too. I think the Yugoslavs spread a few copies. ~~xxxxx~~ I borrowed it for two or three days. It didn't have a sensational effect but it was interesting especially the parts about the ^{with} ~~relationship~~ Dimitrov and Stalin. I read Orwell's 1984 in 1956. I think there was only one copy of it in Budapest. It had a tremendous effect on me. I think it's a work of genius.

The editors of Szabad Nép. Seeds of Revolt at Szabad Nép.

In 1945 Horvath and Révai were the editors of Szabad Nép. They ^{are} ~~xxxxx~~ both highly intellectual O'Bryans.

Révai has a razor sharp mind, ~~He~~ is a talented publicist and is well-read in the classics and world literature. He is unique among the Eastern Party leaders; a Togliatti type. Although he is a Communist leader he has his own personality.

There are several Communist leader types. The first is the Lenin type, highly intellectual, somewhat who sees exactly, from all points of the way what he is doing and where he is going. He sees even the cruelty, the brutality, the sin of his actions. He does it not from cynicism or cruelty but from a messianic obsession. This is one type of insanity. His motives are irreproachable and hence because they are not selfish motives he is to be respected. Révai was this type of Communist leader, an obsessed person. The second type of Communist leaders was Stalin who did what he did to obtain power.

With the first type one could discuss all problems frankly in all situations. One could discuss with Révai how terrible it was that the Communists were hated in the country. One couldn't say this to Rákosi or Gerö because a) they wouldn't have understood, b) they would have thought you felt the same way, and c) they would have denied it. But Révai said that this hatred ^{Hungarians felt for} ~~as~~ the Communists ~~in Hungary~~ ^{had} was quite natural because, we ~~were~~ ^{were} been forced to lower the standard of living. He was a completely sincere person. Révai's intellect influenced

the make-up of the Szabad Nép's staff. In spite of the fact that Révai was against Imre Nagy and supported Rákosi it is an undoubted fact that the 1953/54 rebellion at Szabad Nép was due to Révai. He hated the average standard Communist and chose people for his staff who were non-standardized. At the same time he remained true to the Party line; he gave birth in himself to the correct Party line. Révai had a child^Inaive good conscience. He was not cynical. After 1953 a friend talked to him about the Russian changes. Révai ~~He~~ was angry at the Russian leaders and said that the degrading of Stalin was a stupid thing. He said it was true that Stalin was not a Lenin but he was Stalin. He said that in the thirties he had doubts about the correctness of Stalin's methods but that he realized that "diese barbarischen Methoden" (he said it in German) were needed to preserve the regime in the Soviet Union and that ~~if~~ this justified Stalin. He didn't lie to himself as so many others; he didn't say that the Soviet Union was a perfect democracy.

In 1954 I wrote a study pointing out that the regime was not democratic, ^{and} asking why we could not give democracy. I wanted to publish it in Társadalmi Szemle. Révai was outraged and ^{accused me of wanting} ~~to return to bourgeois democracy~~ to return to bourgeois democracy. He said that democracy was not possible if the majority of the people was not with us.

He was not cynical, but messianic. In 1954 Révai said how awful it was that the Communist Party was so isolated. He said that difficult times were coming and added that he would be satisfied if the Party would ^{had} have 100,000 to 200,000 members left. He said that we ^{would} ~~will~~ struggle through somehow.

The other editor Márton Horváth was the most cynical ^{is} person in the world. He ~~was~~ comically cynical. He himself didn't know when he was being sincere. He ~~xxxxxx~~ knows that he is ^{for doing so,} himself, ~~xxxxxxx~~ acting, laughs at himself, and so on. He is not a good hypocrite, ^{hypocrite, since} ~~xxxxxxx~~ one can see on his face when he is lying. He believes those things most which he says casually, cynically. Horváth is an intelligent person. In appearance he looks like O'Brian; he is tall, ungainly fat, and has a baby face. He looks out from behind his glasses half distrustfully and half scared. But he is not cruel. He is the type who leaves the room when the inquisitors come. He is cynical and he is an aesthete. He is a liar who was caught in the act many times. He hated the standard Communists, too. He was careful to choose a good staff for Szabad Nép regardless of origin. Secretly he despised working class origin. He said that it was very important to have people of working class origin on the staff and, of course, he had a big plan for reorganizing the editorial staff accordingly but somehow he never got around to it. The Szabad

Nép staff was like myself in social origin. Horváth is a character out of a novel. He had contempt even for those whom he himself chose for the staff. Révai is more pleasant although he is more hot-tempered. Horváth has more inhibitions. He is not as cultivated as Révai, who is highly disciplined and reads a great deal. Horváth is lazier.

As a result of the initiative of these two the character of the staff of Szabad Nép ~~is that of~~ presents a striking contrast to the make-up of other Party organizations. We were potentially rebellious intellectuals who followed the Party line. In 1949 Révai left the paper and in 1950 Horváth followed him. At this time Oszkár Bethlen became the editor. The situation became less favourable because Rákosi and Gerö began to interfere more and more with the running of the paper.

Bethlen is a different type of Communist leader. He is a little Stalin, a convinced and faithful Communist. Bethlen is a born detective; he has the soul of a bulldog. He was in Auschwitz for seven years which explains and excuses a great deal. He was the leader of the illegal Communist organization in Auschwitz and as such did horrible things. For instance, they had people executed through the SS, etc. Bethlen suffered there and became extremely neurotic; he also became brutalized. He couldn't have stayed alive otherwise. He used to have fits of

rage when he broke and smashed whatever came in his hand. It was interesting to watch Bethlen and Révai when they were having a fight. Subsequently Bethlen began to regard himself as the "authentic" representative of the Party line. He thought that Horváth was ^a sloppy and irresponsible intellectual and felt that he, Bethlen, was needed to fight the enemy. He investigated constantly and was suspicious of everyone. Under him the Szabad Nép staff was almost completely replaced. At one of the Petöfi circle debates they cited the fact that only 90 percent of the original Szabad Nép staff remained by 1956. Of about 50 staff members only 5 remained. Of course, this was partly due to the 1954 purge at Szabad Nép.

Bethlen was a smaller version of Stalin. I refer you to the Khrushchev report: "Why are your eyes so confused?" Bethlen did this sort of thing with us. For instance, he called me in and started to talk to me about a friend of mine. First he praised him, ^{then he} and said that my friend reminded him of someone who was a Trotskyite and he went on in this way to see how I would react. In 1953 this sort of things scared me. I had to watch my own ^{expression} ~~words~~ and forced a gay, carefree laughter on my face. See Orwell about this. I think the complex that I could be a secret enemy came from this sort of inquisition to which Bethlen subjected me. I think it was due

to the fact that Bethlen constantly ^{sought} ~~thought~~ the enemy in all of us. He made a habit of unexpectedly walking ~~to~~ into an office and if he saw two people sitting and talking he asked with evident suspicion, what they were talking about. He was a psychopath. In 1950 I was quite friendly with him; we used to go rowing on the Danube together. He had a very suggestive personality; he created a definite atmosphere around him. He could be very pleasant in his good moments. In 1950 he was not yet obsessed with his detective mania but from 1952 on he became impossible. The fight between himself and the Party leadership of Szabad Nép dated from this period.

Bethlen was a mediocre journalist and an uncultivated boor. He knew less about Marxism than I did but tried to show off about his knowledge. His Stalinist methods of leadership allowed him to have the last word. He was a dictator type who did not tolerate any opposition. He told the staff that he wanted to hear their criticisms and then he revenged himself cruelly on those who dared to take him up on this. Weeks later he provoked the offending person into some mistake until he had an excuse to fire him. Then he told people "you might say that I fired this person because of that episode but, of course, you know that this is not so. I fired him because of his mistakes", etc. He was extremely childish this way. He was very vigilant and sent many people to the AVO. He

was not very popular in higher Party circles but he had friends and supporters. He was a more convinced Communist and Stalinist than the others in his vicinity. If a good Communist means a religious soldier, a Mohammedan believer, then he was a good Communist.

In 1953 after the death of Stalin we began to be liberated from a psychological pressure. This is not socialism, we realized; there were troubles and we were lying about the troubles. We were sitting in the midst of the heap of lies. Our first obstacle was Bethlen. Once in his life Bethlen's nose was right in smelling a plot against himself and the Party at Szabad Nép. He had
x Commission - see attached paper
x felt this since 1953. I held a half hour speech in which I said that Bethlen had a clique at Szabad Nép in imitation of Rákosi's clique, which ruined people and drove them to nervous break-down. (I wasn't exaggerating when I said this. Those who had managed to remain at Szabad Nép had to have strong nerves. We celebrated ourselves for living through this regime.) I continued by saying that they shouldn't dictate to us anymore. We needed greater freedom in the editorial office, we needed inner Party democracy, etc. I didn't say anything about needing more democracy in the country! Bethlen's mamelukes defended him against my accusations. Bethlen had not yet realized the fact that in this case his person was identical with the Party and that therefore he should defend it.

x At party membership meetings people complained about things, etc. It was at the end of June, 1953, when we had already heard about the C.C. resolution. I had the feeling that the time has come to express our opinions more freely, if only regarding local, internal matters. At a party membership meeting I held a half-hour speech.

He was confused by the June Central Committee resolution. He said that he didn't mind what I said in my speech and added that he was glad about my criticism, in order to show that he was a good guy. This was a big tactical mistake on his part because it encouraged others to revolt.

Bethlen began to feel that people didn't confess to him as they used to do before. At editorial meetings people were obviously in collusion because three people would say the same thing. Bethlen banged the table, with people looked away but they still did not agree ~~to~~ what he said. Bethlen told his own group that he suspected the existence of a fraction. This fraction had learned all the tricks of the trade. We were shrewd. We did not say that he was sectarian, etc. because we knew that the Party leaders would not agree. We proved that Bethlen was an untalented and bad editor and was incapable of carrying out the requirements of the New Course. He was stuck to the old, sectarian line, to the imitation of Pravda. We didn't say that he refused, ~~to~~ but said that he was unable to carry out the new policies. We spread among our friends in higher Party circles that Szabad Nép was a bad newspaper. As a result Horváth came back when he was fired from the top. Horváth profitted from the situation. He called in the ring leaders and said: " Bethlen was a bad and a aggressive editor,

1949 spirit
boys. I will follow the ~~1949 spirit~~ of Szabad Nép. I
you
wanted to have a good time and be able to talk freely
and allow you to express your own personalities in your
work." Horváth didn't know what was going on at Szabad
Nép. He ~~said~~ ^{sat} in his own room and had no idea what was
going on in the rest of the office. The headquarters
of Szabad Nép could have been used for the re-establish-
ment of the Social-Democratic Party and he would never
have known about it. He never walked around or knew
what the office looked like. Horváth cared only about
publishing a good paper. Under him we could work
differently. The paper was prepared on the basis of
routine and we could take the evenings off. I would
say that I am fond of Horváth if I didn't have such
contempt for him. As a human personality he was a dis-
gusting figure.

What began under Bethlen was realized during the
Horváth era. At Szabad Nép that part of the staff which
represented the New Course realized that Imre Nagy was
doing things alone and that he should have supporters
because he was not strong enough to fight the reaction-
ary elements by himself. Since we didn't see anyone else
who was willing or able to do the job we felt that it
was our historic ^{mission} ~~role~~ to start the reform movement.

Szabad Nép and the imitation of Pravda.

At one time between 1945 and 1947 Szabad Nép was not a bad paper. This was under the editorship of Révai and Horváth. At this time it had the advantages of a ~~half~~ Semi-government and ~~half~~ Semi-opposition paper. The advantage of being ~~half~~ semi-government paper was that it could use the ~~AVH's files~~ AVH's files in the campaign against the Smallholder and other party leaderships. At this time the AVH was not yet such a mysterious organization and still maintained a more normal relationship with human beings. It was still approachable by the press. Later it became an institution which had an entrance but no exit. Szabad Nép was an opposition paper in the sense that it did not have to be responsible for every step taken by the government and it could polemicize with the coalition parties. Révai's Sunday articles were nationally read, though, of course, for a variety of different reasons. ~~for each person.~~

Szabad Nép was quite a varied and colourful paper until 1948 and 1949 although it did some unpleasant things. There were some reports which were based on the fact that a reporter acted as an agent provocateur and then unmasked the ~~unfortunates~~ A who fell for the line. This sort of thing met with considerable disapproval among its readers. For instance, a reporter would call himself an American and incite people to anti-regime state-

ments. But the paper was not dull. As a newspaper man (and I was a fairly good foreign affairs reporter) I can say that it was a good, interesting, readable newspaper. But as the Communist Party became increasingly more powerful the newspaper became grayer and grayer. This was, first of all, because when the Communists took power it meant the end of all polemics. Ex cathedra sermons took the place of polemics. Secondly there were no longer any events in the political life of the country and they were replaced by data about production in the newspaper. And production data are not a suitable subject for a newspaper. Szabad Nép told the peasant when to harvest and this was something the peasant knew anyway. ^{There were} ~~their~~ articles about work in the factory and attempts to popularize the heroes of labour. Szabad Nép became so dull that it was unreadable. And there was a third reason why it became dull. Before this it was clear that Szabad Nép spoke to ^a ~~the~~ wide reading public. It had a circulation of 100,000 to 150,000 (the latter on Sundays), in 1946-48. In 1949 began a circulation campaign until the circulation was pushed up to 700,000 to 800,000 copies. This meant that every tenth inhabitant received Szabad Nép including babies. This did not mean that Szabad Nép became a colourful popular paper but on the contrary it became the newspaper of functionaries. The majority of the articles

were addressed to Party functionaries telling them how to organize campaigns and why the Party committee functioned well in Bihar and not in Győr. It told them how the factory activists raised production in the Ganz wagon factory. At the most, this interested the activist whose name was mentioned in the paper. Thus the paper was written for functionaries and Party propagandists who were about one tenth of the reading public. Nine tenth of the regular readers found almost nothing of interest in the paper except articles about foreign policy. These were the only readable things in Szabad Nép. There was a time when people read only the foreign policy articles in Szabad Nép but later they didn't even do this but simply listened to BBC.

Rákosi contributed to this deterioration of standards by his idée fixe that Szabad Nép should resemble Pravda. Bethlen was also fanatically devoted to this policy of Rákosi's and demanded the aping of Soviet methods in every way. He often said that we must follow in the footsteps of Pravda. Thus began the ridiculously exaggerated imitation of Pravda which included the style of the articles as well as the format. We imported special printing machines from Germany in order to print the large-sized papers. Hungary never had a large sized newspaper before. In fact today Népszabadság doesn't dare to appear in a large form; to this extent at least

it is attempting to be more national than Szabad Nép. We had to immitate Pravda in style as well. For instance, I might write an article on foreign policy which ended with a question such as: When will President Eisenhower give up his demands for a role in Hungary's internal affairs? Then Bethlen called me in and told me that it was bourgeois journalism to ask a question. He said that Pravda never ended an article with a question because it is necessary to give the reader clear answers.

Pravda used simple short sentences without even a connecting word between them which would have been bourgeois journalism. If I wrote an article with any stylistic sophistication I was criticized for ^{imitating} bourgeois journalism and told that I had to write simple, nobly, and ^{concisely} ~~in~~ ~~ex-pressed~~ ~~fashion~~ like Pravda. What they meant was as dully as Pravda. This was something I never, never, never accepted. Of this I am proud. But I was an enthusiastic Pravda follower in demanding more space for foreign policy. This was a professional thing. Almost everyone had a professional conflict with the regime because the aping of the Soviet Union in every line of life was stupid and senseless.

In format, Szabad Nép immitated the six-column system of Pravda as well as the block make-up of the paper. Szabad Nép had to stop the more interesting and colourful make-up of the past. If there was a large and

and loud headline on the first page Bethlen said:

"Have you ever seen such large letters in Pravda?" If Pravda hardly mentioned some ^{event} ~~event~~ Bethlen said: "Why did you write so much about it?" The terrifying vision of Pravda always floated before my eyes. I never knew what Pravda would write five days from now but had to know this by intuition in order to write correctly today. Sometimes we took over articles from Pravda verbatim through MTI. Such material included big Party articles ~~likewise~~ "let us constantly strengthen - -", a short story by a Soviet writer, the dispatch of Pravda's Budapest correspondent and an article with the headline "The Imperialists Are Constantly Deepening the Conflict in the Middle East, writes Pravda." Sometimes Szabad Nép looked like a review of Pravda. At such times Bethlen had a slightly bad feeling about the whole thing and said: "Leave out ^{'writes Pravda'} from the sub-headline!"

"writes Pravda". It is the irony of fate that the first Szabad Nép delegation to visit Pravda was invited in 1953. Until then few journalists got to the Soviet Union. It was a rather poor delegation, led by Bethlen. Those of us who really wrote Szabad Nép were not invited to the Soviet Union because we were never really considered reliable. The last stage of this Pravdaization was drowned in the political changes of 1953 which made us ask in the fall of 1953 whether it was correct to turn

our backs on the traditions of the Hungarian press in order to imitate Pravda. Later even Bethlen said that we should not imitate Pravda to such an extent. This ^{field} was the ~~point~~ where he went farthest in accepting the New Course. He made sarcastic comments about the Pravda imitation and accepted the seven column page, etc. The political changes therefore stopped the imitation of Pravda and Szabad Nép became increasingly less like Pravda. The journalists and Party leaders were always in conflict about this. The journalists wanted more colourful newspapers whereas the regime wanted to include a great deal of official material for the functionaries.

The New Course and Its Aftermaths. Imre Nagy's role in launching the New Course. Imre Nagy receives support of Szabad Nép rebels.

The truly significant turning point in Hungary and in the Hungarian Communist Party's public opinion came after the speech of Imre Nagy and after the introduction of his program in 1953. Imre Nagy's program was not his own personal program. Even Rákosi helped to cloud over this fact. Actually in the spring of 1953 after the death of Stalin the new Russian leaders decided to examine the situation in the people's democracies. They called some representative Hungarian Party leaders to

Moscow including Rákosi and Gerö as well as Imre Nagy, who was an outsider, and did not belong to the leading clan. The insignificant Dobi was also included in the delegation. In May 1953 they were received by the Russian presidium. Rákosi and his ~~critic~~ clique was reprimanded by the Russian leaders who called them adventurers, an irresponsible gang which ruined the future of socialism in Hungary, liars who gave false information to the Soviet leaders etc. Supposedly they were sharply criticized by Beria, Malenkov, and Mikoyan, the right wing of the Russian leaders. Khrushchev was not yet important at this time. The Russian leaders decided to make a radical change in Hungary and to make this change publicly. In June 1953 there was a central committee meeting ~~on~~ Russian demand. Rákosi made a speech of sharp self-criticism. Gerö, Révai, and Farkas also made painfully self-^{castigating} A speeches. This fact was almost generally known in Budapest Party circles. Imre Nagy was very high handed and accused the others. I saw the text of this speech because in 1953 it was circulated in writing among the Party opposition in Budapest. It was a very self-confident speech. He was apparently made the executor, the /agent of the new Russian policy. At Szabad Nép we were told officially about the central committee resolution one week before Imre Nagy's government was formed. The text of the resolution was read to us but was not distri-

buted. (Méray may have some notes of it). I burned my notes. It began like this: "Beginning with 1951 the central committee of the Hungarian workers' party with ^{its} comrade Mátyás Rákosi at ~~their~~ head followed a basically mistaken policy - - -". It was comic that the phrase with "Mátyás Rákosi at ^{its} ~~their~~ ^a head" was not a glorifying statement this time. The resolution showed that the regime's peasant policy was wrong, that the industrialization policy was wrong, that the living standards were too low and that the Party clique of four who were running the country stifled all criticism. There was one sentence, not read by Bethlen, which was inserted at the request of the Russians: "At the head of the Party there are people of foreign origin." This resolution destroyed the fiction of former years. There was not a single good word in it. Thus the negativism of the resolution and of the New Course was not inspired by Imre Nagy but by the Russians. It was they who destroyed the Communist regime in Hungary. The resolution was full of very serious accusations. It mentioned illegal arrests, police methods used even within the Party, although it did not mention the names of Rajk, Kádár, etc.

Few of us at Szabad Nép expected this but we greeted it with a feeling of liberation, not with consternation. From various signs we had concluded that some change was

coming though we didn't realize that it would be so deep-seated. These signs were similar New Course measures in Germany, small indications of a change in ~~the~~ Soviet policy, internationally the Korean peace offer of the Russians, and the fact that English and American citizens ^{had been} ~~were~~ freed. At Szabad Nép our crowd, which included people like Gyimes and Lőcsei, who were both later in Imre Nagy's circle greeted the resolution with pleasure. By then we talked to each other about things. This was a liberating influence to us. The rebellion of each Communist begins when he discovers that he was right, that it was he who wanted a correct Communism which was true to socialist ideals. With us it began when we decided that it was shameful of us that we had ^{not} ~~been~~ ^{more decisive} ~~firmer~~ about our own doubts and bad feelings. We decided that ~~kkkkkk~~ ^{from now on} no one would tell us what to say and what to think. This was naive of us because it was ^{incombatible} ~~exampatzzkk~~ with staying within the Communist apparatus. But it was a decent thought. We found out about this changed Party line much sooner than the rest of the country.

We didn't know yet at this time that this changed line brought to an end the unity of the Communist Party. We were naive and believed in Rákosi's self-criticism ^{C.C.} and were glad about the united ~~A~~ resolution. But this was the beginning of the inner Party struggles. We were

able to accept
~~existing for us~~ the new policy since we had no
internal sins. We were not the Party leaders. Actually
Imre Nagy was the only leader who really accepted the
Politburo
resolution and the New Course. The ~~Politburo~~ and
the central committee were against it and were forced
to accept it by the Russians.

line

Imre Nagy is a strange border case of the Communist
leader. He lived in mental isolation for years. The
Russians didn't know how well they chose when they chose
Imre Nagy. They were too successful. They felt that he
was the only non-Jew among the leaders and looked like
a peasant. They didn't realize how different he really
was from the others. He was not a servile Comintern type,
not a
/Rakosi type. They didn't know that Imre Nagy was a black
sheep who would turn against them.

rank and file

The public including the Party ~~reconciled~~ only
heard about the changes when Imre Nagy announced the new
government program. This was the beginning of the twi-
light of the Communist regime. This was not Imre Nagy's
fault. He had the best of intentions about saving Com-
munism. There was consternation within the Party; ~~until~~
hitherto had been
~~now~~ the method ~~was~~ praised to the heavens and then one
day they said without humour that this was all bad. Only
the country felt the humour in this. Imre Nagy accepted
it with pathos and felt that he was the one chosen to
save Communism. This thought gave him great satisfaction.

We at Szabad Nép felt that from now on everything would be all right. Now, we felt, we would do it well. From now on we would follow a morally purer and politically more rational direction. But there were very few groups in the Party apparatus which felt the same way. The Communist Party apparatus leading the country greeted the June program with consternation. It was easy for a journalist to welcome it, for someone who did not compromise himself with dirty actions, who never arrested or deported anyone. The worst I did was to write some stupid articles about foreign policy. It was easy for me and for us. We adjusted to the regime irresponsibly; The Szabad Nép Communists were a fairly free thinking and open-minded crew. At first we were ecstatic with the joy. It was so much easier to be a journalist now that we were able to write what was bad in the country. Then we discovered that there was something wrong. Meanwhile there were no changes. We didn't know the reason yet and felt that it was probably because there had not been enough time, and because it was difficult to make the promised changes. Later we discovered that the New Course was sabotaged partly consciously and partly subconsciously, psychologically, through involuntary, "grey", sabotage. The conscious sabotage came from Rákosi and started in ~~June~~ ^{July} 1953 with Rákosi's speech at the Party activist meeting. This ^{is} the probable explanation of why

he dared to sabotage the New Course. Meanwhile ~~the~~
had been and
Beria ~~was~~ pushed out of the sheepfold, Since Beria had
been
~~was~~ Rákosi's strongest opponent among the Russian leaders,
Rákosi managed to explain the whole thing as though
had been
Beria's disgraceful intrigues ~~was~~ responsible for the
New Course. He said we didn't have to eat the soup as
hot as it was cooked in Moscow.

From June 1953 to December 1954 the political life
of Hungary consisted of something which resembled the
struggle between two parties, the struggle between the
reactionary and the reforming party. It is strange that
the innovating, the reforming party consisted of a single
man for an entire year. Imre Nagy was loyal to the Com-
munist Party and he was very cautious. (I met him once
or twice and I know him through my friends and also as
an outside observer). Loyalty is the basic character of
Imre Nagy's nature. He thought since the Soviet com-
rades (his own terminology) supported him he was represent-
ing the correct Hungarian Communist attitude. He felt
that he had to support and execute the correct Party
line against Rákosi. He did not want to organize a con-
spiracy or faction within the Party because, first of all
his own line was the ruling line at the time and there-
fore this was not needed, and secondly because he is a
cautious and worried person who would not have risked
such a thing. As a result Imre Nagy had no intimates and

was a totally lonely politician until the fall of 1954. And when the journalists at Szabad Nép discovered that it was their duty and vocation to carry through the new line they had to force themselves on Imre Nagy. On top of it all, he disowned us at the first turn.

In 1954 we decided to enter into the struggle between the progressive and reactionary camps within the Party. In the summer of 1954 Hungarian public opinion was strained to the point of explosion. The first strikes took place in the summer of 1954; this was kept secret. Two significant events revealed the degree of tension in the country. The first was the Budapest sports demonstration in the summer of 1954, which gave an advance glimpse of the elements which would most combatively stand on the side of the Revolution later on. Thus it was a demonstration of the tension existing in the country and in addition it showed that liberalisation created the desire for, and the possibility of a mass movement which had never been possible before. I was present at the demonstration which took place before Szabad Nép headquarters and I talked to the people, some of whom said that it was a disgrace that the police interfered in spite of the fact that the constitution guaranteed the freedom of assembly. This was amazing, this talk of constitution. It was only the Imre Nagy program which suddenly impelled people to take the constitution seriously.

But it was an episode during the summer of 1954 which revealed the public mood most powerfully. It concerned the eviction of a family, a proletarian or a semi-underworld family from a store where they were living as ~~quarters~~. Officially it was said that they were criminals but this is beside the point. It is the height of misery to live in a store! The authorities, the police, tried to evict them and the woman who was at home resisted the policemen who tried to put her out with force. In moments a crowd had collected before the store and started to threaten the policemen. A police detachment arrived by truck. ~~A riot was called out~~ Orczy Place ~~was completely filled with people and there was a mob fight between the police and the crowd. The crowd protested against the brutality the policemen had shown to the woman. It turned out that the police were not prepared to solve such problems. They were simply not trained to deal with~~ Meanwhile all the place was completely filled with people and there was a mob fight between the police and the crowd. The crowd protested against the brutality the policemen had shown to the woman. It turned out that the police were not prepared to solve such problems. They were simply not trained to deal with an angry mob. (In Szabad Nép we had written sarcastic articles about the fact that the capitalist police was trained to put down strikes. Later we realized that this training was very useful). The crowd milled around until the evening. The police shut off the street so that people couldn't leave. Incidentally during the sports demonstration the square was shut off so that people could go in but not out. In other words the police itself created the crowds.

A few days later István Kovács of the Budapest Party Committee said that Arrow Crossist elements incited a demonstration. These events were a projection in miniature of the passions which already lived in people at this time and of the fact that the regime in its liberalized form is impotent against a mass demonstration. The only outcome of this demonstration was that some people were arrested whom they later had to free.

This demonstration took place at the end of summer and like Poznan it ^{sharpened} ~~sharpened~~ the struggle between the two camps within the Party. Suddenly an active pro-Imre Nagy wing was called to life, a wing which was for the New Course, a wing which had not existed till then. The first manifestation of this was the Central Committee meeting in October 1954. It was here that Imre Nagy had his greatest success. The subject of the meeting was the country's economic policy and around this was crystallized the battle between the old and the new course. As a result of the New Course Hungary's economic life was threatened with financial ruin. The country had no financial basis to pay the increased wages, and the loss suffered through the lowered peasants' taxes was also a significant factor. The Imre Nagy regime's economic balance is a complex business. Rákosi's accusation is not baseless, his accusation that Imre Nagy raised the

disregarding the lack of living standard ~~without the sufficient~~ economic basis for it. In addition the relaxation caused by the decreased terror lowered the rate of production. During the summer of 1954 Rákosi, Szalai, and Gerö prepared an austerity program raising the peasant taxes and ~~lowering~~ ^{curtailing} the social security ^{program} Imre Nagy, looking at the political consequences, realized that such a program would be like pouring oil on fire.

During the two demonstrations Imre Nagy was in Moscow ~~Warsaw~~ on vacation. He liked frequent and long vacations. He was ~~ex~~very ~~selfish~~ ^{self-assured} when he returned from Russia; he obviously received encouragement from Malenkov, Molotov, and Khrushchev. When he returned the situation in Hungary was like the return of Bánk. The Petur bans, the grieving patriots, went to him and told him about the police action against the sport demonstration and about the economic plans which would have negated the New Course. Within the life of the Party there was a return to the pre-1953 conditions; one was not allowed to criticize, etc.

This was the situation when the October Central Committee meeting took place. The political report in the name of the ~~Polit Bureau~~ ^{Politburo} was in the spirit of Rákosi and Gerö. For the first and last time in their lives the Central Committee, this corporation of mamelukes and yes-men, revolted. The members stood up and critic-

ized the Party line, and agreed that the existing situation was bad. Among these critics were Márton Horváth, István Kovács, Rudolf Földvári, Károly Kis, and István Kósa; well-known people among the second line leaders. The majority of these were stirred up by the journalists who exerted a certain amount of pressure on them saying that the time has come, and so on.

Then Imre Nagy got up and held a very good speech in which he said in ^{effect} ~~axfamt~~ that all the troubles discussed before were due to the fact that there was resistance to the June policy and that in the interest of progress this resistance must be ~~annihilated~~ annihilated. His speech had a great effect on the Central Committee and turned the mood of that party ^{to} ~~on~~ his side. Rákosi held a stuttering, pitiful speech in which he said that "we agreed with comrade Imre Nagy and that although we didn't say it that way we really meant it that way".

Imre Nagy then suggested that both speeches be published in the press, thinking that this would ^{reveal him as} ~~show himself to~~ be the number one personality in the Party and would reveal Rákosi as a bowing and scraping shadow of himself.

^{Politburo}
The ~~Politburo~~ refused this suggestion of Nagy. Nagy ^{Politburo} was alone against the ten others of the ~~Politburo~~.

Of these Ács and Apró were more or less pro-Nagy but they were not solid allies. The others were the satellites of Rákosi and Gerő.

The official Party line treated this whole meeting as ~~below~~ a regrettable mistake of the Party which had to be hushed up. This was done in spite of the fact that there was a Central Committee resolution in the Imre Nagy spirit which was drafted by Andor Berei and corrected by us at Szabad Nép. By then the life of the Party was so disorganized that such a thing was possible. Berei was an opportunist who paid homage to the rising sun of Imre Nagy. He drafted a pro-Nagy Central Committee report and apparently sent it to Horváth to correct. At any rate Horváth gave it to us to read and we corrected it; I inserted a few sentences and cut some others. At the time the situation was such that Horváth ^{merely} ~~hardly~~ looked at it, said it was according to the Imre Nagy spirit, and without any further approval by the Party printed the resolution with our corrections. Hence the resolution was partly written by the zealous followers of Imre Nagy's party at Szabad Nép.

Imre Nagy's article appeared ^{in Szabad Nép} a day or two before or after the resolution. ~~in Szabad Nép~~ Imre Nagy was in despair because they didn't allow ^{him} to publish his speech. He felt that his speech would have increased his popularity. Therefore when he saw that there was no possibility of its being printed he re-wrote his speech in the form of an article saying that an important ^{meeting} Central Committee had taken place about which the country

didn't know and at which he had made a speech and pointed out this, that, and the other thing. Although the speech did not mention Gerö it was a very militant speech, and an obvious attack on Gerö. In it he called Gerö a Trotzkyite. At our advice he left this label out of the article ^{but in} and left the phrase the "adventurer policy" of certain people and everyone knew this referred to Gerö since he ^{connected it with,} ~~added~~ the phrase "the country of iron and steel". The article took up a page and a half in Szybad Nép. Horváth was very eager to join the Imre Nagy camp. He called Nagy and told him his article was excellent and said that they should be in closer contact with each other. Then he printed the article. The article went beyond the speech in two significant matters: ^{regarding} First of all ~~are~~ the rehabilitations; Imre Nagy mentioned "our comrades who had been thrown in prison innocently - - -". This is significant because it touched Farkas on the quick. Until now Farkas was ambivalent about Imre Nagy. After 1953 Farkas had tried to join the Imre Nagy camp but Nagy's mention of the rehabilitations upset Farkas and he went over to the Rákosi camp instead. This was very bad for Nagy because by then Rákosi was a wreck and Farkas was strongest in the Party. As a result of these events Gerö was in a sanatorium and became blind in one eye.

The second important point in Nagy's article was that the rank and file Party members must be given an opportunity to participate in the making of important Party decisions by allowing them to express their opinions and to debate these decisions.

Imre Nagy's article had a tremendous effect on public opinion and in the Party leadership. The Politburo ~~Bureau~~ held Nagy responsible for having written the article and Horváth for having printed it without permission. They dragged out some old Party rule according to which a Polit ~~Bureau~~ ^{buro} member could only print his article with the permission of the entire body. They told Imre Nagy that he was guilty of creating a faction and accused him of trying to ~~incorporate~~ ^{embody} the Party line in his own person. Meanwhile the Party resolution appeared which demanded the greater participation of Party members in a debate. It was a Trotskyite thing. Imre Nagy felt that the political basis of the regime must be widened by allowing, if not the entire country, but, at least Party members greater participation in political decisions.

The Rebellion at Szabad Nép.

This was our idea, too, when, in October 1954 we organized a three day Party membership meeting at Szabad Nép which was the first open rebellion against the

Party. We had been told about the October Central Committee meeting and decided that now that the open battle began on top, the time has come for the followers of the New Course to ^{swing} ~~standing~~ over into attack. And we thought that with our membership meeting at Szabad Nép we will give a sign to other Party organizations to follow our ^{example} ~~example~~, and thus this movement would give a basis to Imre Nagy's fairly lonely fight. We knew, of course, that ~~the~~ ^{the} Central Committee members who were ~~now~~ ^{now} supporting Imre Nagy were political weathervanes who believed that Imre Nagy had come back from Moscow with promises of support from the Russian leaders.

The Szabad Nép rebels were the following: Four of the six members of the editorial committee. The four rebels of the committee were Méray, Novobáczky, Sándor Fekete, who is now in Hungary and jobless, and Lajos Fehér, now a Kádárist. The editorial committee had two other members, Márton Horvath and his deputy, Komor, who, of course, were not among the rebels. The other staff members who participated in the rebellion were Gábor Lénárt, who was ~~hazkaxkaxkax~~ ^{editor} agricultural ~~column~~, Pál Löcsel, who is at present under arrest, and Peter Kende. On the whole we all belonged to the same circle of friends; another member of our group was Miklós Gyimes, who was in Paris at the time, as a correspondent.

The chief subjects of the membership meeting were

the following: 1) The inner opposition against the New Course must be ended. We named those whom we considered the people in opposition to the New Course. We mentioned Gerö, Szalai, István Friss, who stood for a reactionary economic policy; Mihály Farkas, whom we accused with the introduction of an internal terror system and who, we pointed out, tried to suppress debate and criticism within the Party. We didn't attack Rákosi because it would have been unrealistic at the moment. As a matter of fact it turned out to be unrealistic this way, too. At any rate it appeared incorrect tactically to attack Rákosi at this time. Thus the question of resistance was one ~~the~~ of the ^{ideas} ~~thoughts~~ of the Party membership meeting. 2) The other great ^{topic} ~~thought~~ was that the time has come to introduce democracy within the Party. We insisted that the Party members should be allowed to ^{form} ~~xxxxxx~~ the policy of the Party and should be allowed to debate the decisions of the Party leaders and to oppose them if they wanted to. Later we were attacked most strongly on this point and called Trotskyites. In answer we quoted Lenin's ~~dicta~~ ^{edicts} about the right of Party members to express their opinions. 3) The third idea was the idea of renewal and reform. This was most beautifully expressed by Méray who said that there was need for ^a ~~the~~ storm of purification in order to sweep out the old and the bad. The Party leaders

were scared about this because they felt that this storm of purification would sweep them away, too. 4) The fourth guiding idea of the meeting was the necessity to tell the truth. I think I said it most sharply: "For weeks there has been a debate in the Party press asking how we could do it better. The answer is simple: We should not lie. The truth is that our whole propaganda in the past years has been full of lies and half-truths which are worse than lies." We demanded that they allow us to ^{tell} ~~say~~ the truth, the complete truth, regardless of whose interests it hurt. It was clear, of course, that they couldn't allow this; they couldn't allow the complete truth. Later this idea ^{was repeated} ~~came back~~ in the formulation of the writers; ^{Háy} ~~I~~ talked about it and it was mentioned at the press debate at which Méray quoted from these speeches.

The regime later accused us of being guilty of unfurling the flag of the internal Party opposition. They said that this was a demonstration where an opposition platform was set up against the Central Committee. This was more or less a slander since we were in a strong position of being able to say that the Central Committee was on the side of Imre Nagy. We could point out that we merely said the same as the Central Committee except more firmly. We pretended that our consciences as Party members were clear.

We decided to mimeograph the minutes of the meeting

and send them to the Central Committee members to show the cowardly rabbits that it was possible to talk like this. Many of the Party organizations especially the intellectual Party organizations followed our example and organized similar membership meetings. Such meetings took place at newspapers and at the Radio Station, at the universities, libraries, scholarly institutions, and the writers' association. The Party leadership blamed us for this and not without reason. We made sure that the texts of the speeches got around to the various organizations and as a result these ideas were repeated ~~on the whole~~ at the other meetings. When Imre Nagy received the minutes of our membership meeting he be-
sent
came very enthusiastic and ~~said~~ us his friendly regards. It looked then as though he had discovered that he had friends and supporters and would ally himself with them. But this lasted only a few days since meanwhile he had been attacked for his article.

I think something must have happened in Moscow at that time. Was it that they were preparing the Warsaw ^{there} pact, or were ~~there~~ changes in Moscow in the Malenkov line at the time? I don't know but some explanation ^{sort} ~~of~~ this is logical.

Anyway Horváth was ordered ^{to} prevent the distribution of the mimeographed minutes. We pointed out that he couldn't prevent this because he wasn't head of the

Party organization of the paper. I was the temporary secretary in these months. One could debate this very pleasantly with Horváth. To him the membership meeting was extremely humiliating. We called him cowardly, dishonest, hypocritical, etc. At the end of the meeting he said how great and courageous he thought our stand but at the same time he tried to defend the Szabad Nép line. With this he succeeded only in starting a new wave of attacks against him and in his final desperation he said: "I am not a coward, I will read you a letter which I ^{wrote} ~~had written~~ ^{the} to Gerö a day before yesterday asking him to resign". He had great trouble in reading the letter since he lost his self-control in ^{the effort} ~~order~~ to prove that he was not a dirty coward. In the letter Horváth had told Gerö that he watched with anxiety the fact that Gerö had not drawn the necessary conclusions from the wave of criticism which was directed against his economic policy. He also told Gerö what a bad impression he created when he talked about the sweeping out of the ^{resisters} ~~resisters~~ and thus implied that Gerö was the chief resister. He explicitly or implicitly asked Gerö to resign.

In subsequent talks with Horváth he asked us "you don't really think I am a coward?" He called in people and said "I am not a coward but I have to be careful ---", etc. I don't know how the paper came out these days; we had little time for work since we were constantly en-

gaged in political debates. Horváth talked like this for a few days until the winds changed, ^{at which point} ~~when~~ he started to put the emphasis on what he had condemned in his closing speech. ^{Now} ~~Then~~ he said: "I didn't judge the Party membership meeting correctly". At this point he fired the leading rebels from Szabad Nép. I am not as angry at Horváth as I should be, because he was so comic.

Horváth couldn't prevent us from sending out the minutes of the membership meeting; he merely asked that we wait two days until someone could talk to Imre Nagy. In other words the decision should depend on Imre Nagy. We agreed to this. This was clever tactics on Horváth's part since Imre Nagy was cornered. In addition to everything else he had been attacked and held responsible for this Szabad Nép Party membership meeting, too. When Lajos Fehér went to him as our representative we expected Imre Nagy to approve our intention to distribute the minutes of the meeting, however, he held a slightly indignant sermon about Party discipline, instead. He said that we should follow the leadership of Mihály Farkas who was the Politburo member in charge of Szabad Nép. About the minutes he barked: "That is out of the question - that would be factionalism." This conversation took place in his office in the Parliament Building. Perhaps Nagy thought that there was a microphone hidden in his room. I mean this seriously. It was in these days that

Nagy's chauffeur found a microphone hidden in Imre Nagy's car. At any rate the result was that Imre Nagy ^{disavowed} ~~disavowed~~ the Szabad Nép crew.

There was some wrangling after this; the editorial committee members of Szabad Nép where the rebels were in majority were cited to various meetings until at last they were fired. I was fired on the 17th of December and Méray lost his position on the editorial committee and was sent to Berlin as a correspondent. Two others were fired as well. The purge in journalist circles which began at Szabad Nép in December 1954 spread to the other papers and continued until April 1955 when Imre Nagy fell from power. After Imre Nagy's fall in April a new wave of dismissals was started and seven or eight people lost their jobs. With this the original Szabad Nép crew was on the whole replaced. Some of the journalists left Szabad Nép for different reasons, Gimes in order to work for Magyar Nemzet.

Révai and the New Course.

It is interesting that at the time of our Party membership meeting Révai sent us encouragement and regards. This was at the height of his inner crisis when he was extremely sick and it appeared as though he would turn against Rákosi. He probably would have done so if he had not hated Imre Nagy. There was a great personality con-

flict between them which originated in the Comintern. period when they were both in Moscow. It would have been extremely fortunate for Imre Nagy's cause if Révai had joined the Nagy's camp. Révai was far more ^{gifted} ~~talented~~ politically and was more influential in the Party. If Imre Nagy had possessed at least one supporter among the old leaders this would have made possible a Gomulka-type change in Hungary. Révai had great influence within the Party. His influence was probably smallest among the writers who hated him most because to them he meant the old cultural policies. Of the four old leaders Révai stood the closest to the principles of national Communism; he tried to make Marxism-Leninism a more Hungarian thing. One only has to look at his ^{writings} ~~works~~ to realize this. His later role might have been different if the 1953 resolution had not attacked him so strongly, and if in order to break with the old he would ^{not} ~~have~~ had to ally himself with Imre Nagy. In 1954 Révai was thinking about democratizing the regime's political apparatus. Although he had pronounced an annihilating opinion about my article he was thinking along the same lines, with the difference that he wanted to keep the dictatorship of the proletariat but with a greater inner democracy. This is essentially the Gomulka conception. Révai demanded that the facts about the Rajk trial be made public. He was so insistent about this that in March (?) 1955 when Imre Nagy had been con-

demned already, and Rákosi had started the Stalinist line again insisting that meanwhile the question of the rehabilitations should be suspended, Révai who was very sick, went to the Central Committee meeting and insisted that the question of the rehabilitations be kept on the agenda. He did this in spite of the fact that he was an opponent of Imre Nagy.

only Politburo
In 1949 two members of the ~~Politburo~~ were against the execution of Rajk; Révai and Kádár. Kádár, probably because he knew that Rajk was promised his life. Révai, possibly for this, too, but probably also because ~~Rajk was~~ a friend of his ~~friendly with Rajk~~. I think Révai's stomach was not strong enough to accept the Rajk case. Révai was a man who didn't ~~lie to~~ himself. He knew that this was a play, and being a fanatic he said that he must ~~act~~ in it for the cause; but he never believed that Rajk was an enemy.

In 1954/55 Révai had ~~severe~~ fits during which he supposedly shouted: "These murderers, Rákosi and the rest, made the Communist Party rot away and now it can't be built up again". I heard this from close friends of Révai's. The moral collapse of the Communist Party caused Révai to ~~undergo~~ a serious psychological crisis and illness. The Revolution was the logical result of this moral collapse. When he got well in 1956 he again entered ^{Revai} political life and when Rákosi fell from power ~~he~~ was re-

Politburo
elected into the ~~Politburo~~ a little with an anti-Rákosi
halo
~~halo~~. He had the renommé of a man who was half-dead.

From July 1956 on Révai was the representative of the deepest reaction within the Party. He and Gerö both believed in the policy of the iron hand against disintegration. He was especially indignant about the writers' revolt; he and the writers had been on bad terms for many years. The fact that the writers in 1956 were the ring-leaders of the internal opposition automatically forced over to Révai ~~xx~~ the other side. He was also angry at Tito and called the Yugoslavs Trotskyite-Bukharinite deviationists. After the Khrushchev visit to Tito, but before the 20th Party Congress, Révai protested that Tito was the chief danger and that the policy of reconciliation should not reduce the Soviet comrades' vigilance regarding Tito. I don't think he was inspired by Molotov to make this protest; he simply felt in his blood that Tito belonged to the other camp and hated him instinctively.

Imre Nagy's circle of friends and supporters. The Communist opposition. Imre Nagy's attempts to contact non-CP political groups.

Until 1954 Imre Nagy's circle of friends consisted of a pretty third-rate crowd. There was János, his son-of
in-law, Pongrácz who was the mayor ~~xx~~ of Budapest, that is
and people of similar cast.
the president of the City Council, ~~xxx~~. These people,

claimed that especially Pongrácz, ~~representing~~ Imre Nagy ~~that~~ was an anti-Semite for anti-Semitism. This was not true, Anti-Semitism is distant from Imre Nagy's nature, but these people were anti-Semitic. His other friends were various agrarian experts, professors at the agricultural university. In 1954 he commissioned them to do a big work for him on Hungarian agriculture. After he fell from grace in Moscow and was expelled from the Hungarian Communist Party he formed closer ties with the journalist-writer crowd. But on the whole his closer circle of friends consisted of those who took refuge with him in the Yugoslav embassy. Among ~~them~~ ^{his friends} were several former rehabilitated prisoners, such as Losonczy, ~~Haraszi,~~ Szilárd Ujhelyi, and Ferenc Donáth. Another friend was Zoltán Szántó who betrayed him in the spring of 1955 when it was the duty of the Central Committee to curse Imre Nagy. Szántó joined ~~to~~ the howling chorus, although he howled less than the others. Szántó was one of those ^{Muscovites} ~~Moscovites~~ like Imre Nagy himself, who was spiritually isolated in Moscow and had a disgust and fear of what he saw in there ^{1930's} ~~1930's~~ ~~was~~ in the ~~1930's~~. Szántó was one of the veterans ^{had been} of the Hungarian Communist movement; he ~~was~~ a commissar in 1919. In 1945 he had a fight with Rákosi about Rákosi's ^{cult} personal war. Rákosi then made sure that Szántó was sent far from the center of things; he was made Party secretary of Győr. Then he was kicked upstairs by being made

an ambassador first in Belgrade and then in Paris after
resigned
Károlyi. Since Hungary has no independent foreign policy
the position of ambassador is not one of honour or im-
portance as in the West. In 1954 Imre Nagy brought him
back into political life. Then Szántó was elected into
the Central Committee and Imre Nagy named him president
of the information office. The information office, ~~just~~
created in 1954, was a press and propaganda organ of the
Council of Ministers, which did not exist until then.
Before that a similar organization was under the Ministry
of People's Culture. Imre Nagy founded this office be-
cause he felt that it was through the press that he could
convey his policies to the people; that the press could
explain to the country what he was trying to do. Thus
the aim of the information office was to direct the press
according to the policies of Imre Nagy. Although Szántó
was its head it was Miklós Vásárhelyi, its vice president
and a member of our Szabad Nép crowd, who did all the work.
The information office was one of the few spots in the
government where the opposition movement could get a foot-
stirrings
hold. The ~~stories~~ in the press in the fall of 1954 were
partly due to the encouragement of the information office.
At the end of 1954 the information office wanted to turn
Magyar Nemzet into a newspaper of Imre Nagy's people's
front policy. Imre Nagy wanted to make the people's front
humane control
a somewhat ~~human-controlled~~ apparatus vis-a-vis the Party.

Vásárhelyi and his group wanted to make Magyar Nemzet ⁻ⁱⁿ⁻freer than the Party papers. Gimes and the editing chief Boldizsár, were attracted to this line. I take no stand as to whether Boldizsár was a spy or a counter-spy. He had a tendency to favour the liberal line since he was always on the verge of arrest; he was pro-Imre Nagy from the beginning and was a good publicist ^{for} ~~of~~ Imre Nagy, since, or in spite of the fact, that he was not a Party member.

It was through Vásárhelyi that the journalists' crowd joined Imre Nagy. In Vásárhelyi Imre Nagy saw a good and clever helper. The others entered the Imre Nagy circle from 1955 on. Among them were Gimes, Pál Lócsey, and others of the former Szabad Nép group. These formed the narrower Imre Nagy group.

Later others joined Imre Nagy, too, including many writers. Of the writers Déry had the most brains and talent. He had never been a Stalinist and was considered a suspicious element. The Communist Party tolerated him only because he had been a prewar member. He had trouble with the second volume of his book Answer (Felelet) and was attacked by Révai. Déry never gave in. It was therefore natural that Déry should become the leader of the writers' ^{sectarian} rebellion. Hay was a ~~secondary~~ Communist, a Stalinist for a long time, but he was a cosmopolitan, had seen the world, and was not part of the Muscovite clan. Méray was

also among the writers who joined the Imre Nagy circle.

The Imre Nagy circle spent much of its time in long and fruitless debates and it also tried to get in contact with non-Communist political elements. His followers tried to make Imre Nagy a political center, focus, and ^{attempted} ~~attempted~~ also ~~attempted~~ to break out of the narrower Party circle. Later a variety of rehabilitated intellectual Social-Democrats also became a part of Imre Nagy's circle. Among them Zoltán Horváth and Sándor Szalai.

Imre Nagy met Béla Kovács several times and it was the Imre Nagy crowd which prevented Kovács from accepting the secretaryship of the people's front which Gerő offered him. Béla Kovács was far from intrasigent at the time; he was broken by his prison experiences and had been ^{persecuted} ~~murdered~~ by the AVH after his return. Thus it was the Imre Nagy group which prevented Kovács from compromising himself with the regime as Tildy had done. Nagy would have liked to make contact with Kéthly but he had no success there. The real Social-Democrats were stiffly opposed to any contact with the Communists, even opposition Communists. Kéthly waited a very long time until she went over to Imre Nagy's side. The decision was made by Kelemen and not by her, at the time she went out to the socialist international congress in Vienna after the beginning of the Revolution.

Imre Nagy had genuine influence in the intellectual

and artistic circles of Budapest. I know about this period mostly from my talks with Gimes, Vásárhelyi and Lócsey because I was in Szeged in 1955. One wing of the Imre Nagy camp, though not Imre Nagy himself, attempted to organize an illegal Party organization. But Losonczy, Donáth, and Ujhelyi opposed this and said that they would not join any such organization. Thus the organization remained somewhat casual, an organization based on friend-
grapevine
ships, with a very well developed ~~great time~~. When the newspaper man Peter Erdős was arrested early in 1956, before the 20th Party Congress, the only political arrest in these years, this was known the same day by every single one of the hundreds or few thousands who belonged to Imre Nagy's group. There was a chain linked together by close friendships, the first with the second, the second with the third, etc., which functioned very well at all times except during the Revolution. During such stormy events stronger organization was needed; then the Imre Nagy group fell apart into its component elements, each of which went his own way. This was because Imre Nagy's friends were intellectual anarchists and were unable to organize because there was not one organizer in the whole group. There were only publicists, orators, and national Welt-
artists
schmerzschmerz (világfájdalmár). They got along very well with Imre Nagy. Nagy likes to philosophize and these people liked to talk and talk. Imre Nagy was a good host

the idea type; he liked that these things boiled and bubbled in his house while he made juicy comments. One could have a fight with him and still remain his friend; he didn't demand that everyone should agree with him. He was the focus - his villa in Pasarét (Rózsadomb), where he was constantly receiving representatives of various strata of Hungarian society. Thus he spent a year and a half talking and memorandum-writing. His birthday in the summer of 1956 was a big event. There was a tremendous Party at his house. The guests ^{even} included a minister, the minister of coal and energy. This Party was a form of demonstration to show that Imre Nagy couldn't be excluded from the political life of the country.

But it was the Russians who decided that Imre Nagy ^{reactivated} must be ~~reactivated~~. After Rákosi fell from power Mikoyan participated in the Central Committee plenary meeting which elected Gerö. Mikoyan held a speech and said that he didn't want to interfere in Hungarian events but suggested that Imre Nagy ~~should~~ be rehabilitated because he was an old comrade-in-arms. Gerö named a two member committee, Nögrádi and somebody else. They called in Imre Nagy and ^{him} informed of the July 1956 phony-turn resolution. They asked him whether he found it satisfactory and whether he was willing to take up active Party life on the basis of this resolution. Imre Nagy agreed, and said that he was at least willing to negotiate. His friends disapproved of

conciliatory
this move. Then Gerö changed his mind and demanded public
self-criticism from Imre Nagy. ^{Nagy refused. Meanwhile,} the Imre Nagy case was
fermenting among the Party membership since, through his
friends, he had contacts everywhere. In the fall of 1956
when the rebellion within the Party began again and when
the Party members saw that the fall of Rákosi brought no
real change there was a demand in many places that Imre
Nagy be rehabilitated. This demand was made at the
writers' association congress among other places..

Imre Nagy's group was in contact with the leadership
of the Petöfi circle. The two groups were not identical
since the Petöfi circle leaders came from the former Nékosz,
and Imre Nagy's circle consisted mostly of journalists. By
fall there was a close contact between them, however, which
was especially evident in the fall debates of Petöfi
circle. The decision to hold a demonstration to cele-
brate the Poles was made together by the Mefesz leaders,
the Petöfi circle, and the Imre Nagy group.

Among the Communist intellectuals it was only the
Muskovite clan, tied together by common crimes and de-
gradation, which remained ^{on} ~~under~~ Rákosi's side. Even of
these only 90 percent supported Rákosi. It is interesting
that almost all of them were in prison during their Russian
stay. This was a revelation to us, young journalists, in
1954. Berei is one example of these. There were many
reasons why they didn't talk about this: self-interest,

shame, and because it was forbidden. They didn't talk about their Russian experiences even after 1953. There were only a few ^{who} ~~you~~ did so, one or two who ~~was~~ not quite in the clan and for whom the death of Stalin was a liberation. Some could break out of it, others couldn't. An exception was Béla Illés who did tell stories about this because he was very phoney; a larger-scale Aczél. Illés is a superficial but good story teller, a good stylist, and more talented than Aczél. He was a fishmonger in Moscow during his Russian years. This is something he doesn't ~~talk about~~ mention, however.

The rehabilitations. The Communist functionary. Rákosi and Mikoyan.

The rehabilitations or rather at first the non-re-
habilitations were ^{among} ~~among~~ the most important psychological
features ^{affecting} ~~of~~ the inside Party opposition. Our attitude to
the rehabilitations was not a dry and objective approval
of a good policy which we must back. On the contrary,
our attitude was a highly emotional one, ever since from
1953 on we began to realize that these trials, either
every word or else the substance, consisted of lies. In
the fall of 1953 many people left the internment camps in-
cluding Communists who were arrested because of the Rajk
case. Like ghosts, people started to turn up, people who
were supposedly our enemies. ^{subject of the} ~~The~~ ^{was} ~~rehabilitations were~~ one

of the themes of the Party membership meeting at Szabad Nép. We said that we ~~met~~ ^{were meeting} people like Kállai and Donáth and in the street. ~~xxx~~ demanded to know whether they were our enemies as we had been told. Most of us had some contacts with these people through our friends and therefore could find out what they had gone through. And those who didn't have contacts, asked with naive innocence, why these people had been arrested or if they were rightfully arrested, why ^{had been} they ~~xxxx~~ allowed to go free again. Some of these questions at Party membership meetings were not malicious. But the thing which was new was that they were asked at all. It ^{liberated} was a demonstration of the slacker, atmosphere of these years. Similar questions were asked elsewhere. This became a very oppressive problem for the Party leadership; they promised a circular letter to Party groups about it but it was never sent out.

We knew of the existence of a rehabilitation committee, which was established in 1954, to examine Gábor Péter's cases. Rákosi, Gerö, and Imre Nagy were the members of the committee but the sub-committee did all the work. Some of its members were József Köböl who has a leading role in the Kádár regime today, and Imre Mezö who died during the Revolution. As a result of the indiscretions of this committee we journalists were quite well-informed about the fact that a report has been prepared for the Party leadership pointing out that beginning with the Rajk case all the political

trials and arrests had been lies. It was not the fact of this which was important but that the Party had received a report about it. At this time some people who had been involved in the Rajk trial were still in prison. We knew that there was a report about the absurdity of the Rajk trial and that Rákosi didn't allow it to be brought before the Central Committee because it maintained that Gábor Péter was not the only one responsible for the trial. This report would have had an explosive effect in the Central Committee. Rákosi opposed Imre Nagy on this account; in Imre Nagy's book or in his Central Committee memorandum he claims that Rákosi's counter-attack against him was motivated by Nagy's demand for the rehabilitations. In March 1955 Imre Nagy wrote a circular to the Central Committee about this. In order to prevent the Central Committee from discussing the subject of rehabilitations the Central Committee meetings were postponed time after time because in October the Committee had decided to discuss the rehabilitations at its next meeting. There was a special meeting in December to discuss agriculture I believe, but then the Central Committee meetings were postponed monthly until in March Rákosi placed the case of Imre Nagy on the agenda which was an opportunity for dropping the question of rehabilitations for the time being. In order to ^{satisfy} ~~solve~~ the Köböl Committee and the Party, Politburo Parkas was expelled from the ~~Polit Bureau~~ at the same time

as Imre Nagy, although Farkas remained a member of the Central Committee. Then Kádár appeared and loyally became a district Party secretary but he insisted that he would not accept any higher position until he had to sit at the same table with Farkas. In using the adjective bloody-handed Kádár implicitly included Rákosi in his comment. This was Kádár's sole gesture of opposition. Then came April 1955 when a special Central Committee meeting dismissed Imre Nagy from all his Party functions. By then Rákosi had created such an atmosphere that nobody had dared to bring up the question of rehabilitations. At the next Central Committee meeting in 1955 Révai protested that it was disgraceful that the discussion of this question had been postponed for half a year.

For the wider strata of public opinion the ^{culmination} ~~common~~ ~~tion~~ of the rehabilitation question came in 1956 when the truth about the Rajk trial was made public. For us, the core of the Communist Party's public opinion this was a reprise, for us this had been the big problem in 1954. By 1955 we were complaining that it was not made public. The Rajk case became a boomerang for Rákosi because in order to save himself he reported to the members of the Party about it in August 1955. He said that the ^{claimed} parts about Yugoslavia, in the trials, were not true, and that the Beria-Rajk gang involved Yugoslavia in the trial in order to harm the international Communist movement. He

said that Rajk really had been a police informer from the thirties on and that he^{had} betrayed the Party. That is why he was not condemned to death in 1944 with Bajcsy-Zsilinszky. Rákosi finally condemned Rajk for having made^a false confession at his trial. This boomeranged for Rákosi because^a it was such^a manifestly vile and rotten thing to say. In 1954 Rákosi admitted to Kádár "I became so depraved that when your case came up^{the} again in summer of 1954 I told Gábor Péter to invent something against Kádár in order to keep him in prison". This shows how cynical Rákosi is. Others commit suicide at this stage; see the Bierut case. But not Rákosi.

During the tense summer of 1956 Mikoyan arrived un-^{to} expectedly at a meeting of the Hungarian ^{Politburo} ~~Politbureau~~. Rákosi was making his political report in a suffering voice complaining about attacks upon him at Party membership meetings, and saying that he was the target of attacks, etc. Mikoyan told him that if this^{was} so it would be better for the Party if he resigned. Rákosi exclaimed "What?!" He was nervous, ^{and} ~~that~~ flustered. He said he didn't understand why he should do so; he had been in Moscow recently and Comrade Khrushchev had said the opposite. He added that his resignation would mean the collapse of the Hungarian Communist Party. Mikoyan stated that he^{was transmitting} ~~represented~~ the "opinion of the comrades". He suggested that Rákosi call Moscow and ask Khrushchev. Rákosi went into the next room and did so. According to the grapevine, Khrushchev

told Rákosi to accept Mikoyan's suggestion etc. Of course, it is difficult to know what Khrushchev told Rákosi since there was no one present at the conversation. However, it is known then when Rákosi returned, he was completely pale and agreed to hand in his resignation. Rákosi's sidekicks, people like Szalai and Bata, were frightened and said that they would agree to Rákosi's not being the leader but they insisted that he should stay in the Politburo because he was needed. Then, Gerö stepped in like a dense machine. Gerö said that he would undertake the leadership of the Party only if Rákosi would retire from public life. This statement had a frenetic effect because Rákosi and Gerö had been very close before this. Gerö had visited Moscow shortly before this meeting and he probably informed the Soviet leaders about the conditions in Hungary.

The Communist functionary.

The Communist Party functionaries formed a large hierarchy. On the top there were a number of immoral Machiavellists to whom their career was everything. Some of them were maniacs like Bethlen. The lower we go in the hierarchy the more ignorance, indifference, and routine we find. A factory Party secretary is an example of this. This sort of position attracted young people who didn't like to work but who were intelligent enough to play a role sufficiently well to get a position in which they

needed no brains, and no technical knowledge. They had to learn certain routines, how to open and close a meeting, ^{how} or to say a few sentences about the political tasks of the moment etc. They had to know about 150 phrases such as "Good political work is not enough we need good organizational work as well". This made it ^{seem} as though ^{they} ~~he~~ had certain political principles. ^{They} ~~He~~ had to be able to make a report to the higher Party organs. ~~He~~ ^{They} needed a positive personality and aggressiveness; a Party secretary cannot be soft. In this ~~he~~ ^{the functionary} was like a Western manager but without the need to be a technical expert.

I think it's absurd to consider the ^{rise} ~~rise~~ of Khrushchev as the revolution of the new intelligentsia, as the sign of the managerial revolution. It is not the managerial intelligentsia which holds the Soviet Union in its hands. Khrushchev is the leader of the Party functionaries, of the ignorant apparatchiki. In Russia these attend three year courses to be trained to know nothing. In Russia it is ^{uncultivated} ~~uncultivated~~ this ~~uncultivated~~ and ignorant apparatus which is in power and which clings to its brutal methods of rule because it cannot rule in any other way. The mistake which both the Soviet and Hungarian regimes make is their counter-selection (kontraszelekció) of political talent. The ideal type of functionary is a mediocrity. The good functionary is fairly stupid and has no independent views in order that he should not think too much about his instruction, and

accept them as absolute truth. But he has to be intelligent enough not to make too crude a mistake in his work. The lower one goes in the hierarchy the greater is the deviation from the norm, that is in the lower echelons the intellectual capacities are even poorer.

The first set of CP leaders in 1945 was highly intelligent and of extremely high calibre. These were Rákosi, Gerő, Révai, Farkas, Zoltán Vác, and Imre Nagy, the majority of whom came from the former ^{underground} ~~illegal~~ Party membership. They were intelligent, sophisticated, although fanatic. In addition, throughout the country there was an automatic rise of talented people to the top of the CP apparatus, where they were needed to fight the Party's battles in the political struggles of the period. But when the regime became stabilized and the pressure of the rival parties was relaxed those who were too lively or independent in spirit and intellect were eliminated, both above and below. The entire Party apparatus became more hierarchical and the instructions had to be accepted without debate. This elimination of the more intelligent was only natural in such a Byzantine system. Since the upper Party leadership lost in quality, too, it is only natural that the lower and middle echelons were also of lower calibre. In other words while Gerő was organizing the Party a Szantó could be Party secretary but when a 20th rate functionary was organizing the

Party, the Party secretary was also a sub-standard creature because nobody likes to have a more intelligent person under him. By 1953 the Party functionaries were of a terribly low standard and they continued to deteriorate in quality.

In 1953 the Russians demanded not only the introduction of new policies but also that the Polit Bureau be refreshed with young, fresh, ^{folk} popular (népi) elements. That is they wanted to move against the old clan. Rákosi had the idea of forming a new ^{Politburo} ~~Révi~~ ~~Szalai~~ in 1953 full of his old personal secretaries like ^{ACS} ~~Ady~~ and Szalai. Thus he could tell the Russians ecce, there is a new Politburo ~~Szalai~~ with fresh new people in it. These new members were an insignificant, colorless, bad crew. They became the highest leadership of the country and felt uncomfortable in this position. They felt uncomfortable like the man who is invited to an elegant function and is wearing a tails ^{As against that,} ~~tailcoat~~ for the first time in his life. Imre Nagy was only one person. He insisted on one thing only, that at least two of the four members of the old clan be dismissed. Rákosi expelled Révai and Farkas, leaving himself and Gerö.

One of the stupidest of the new people was János Bata who was nicknamed János Bata (Bata means stupid in Hungarian). You have never talked to such a stupid person in your life. This was a very shrewd move on the part of Rákosi because

Politburo

he could now rule his new ~~RakitzRakau~~ members. This was the reason for the deterioration of the Party apparatus after 1953. As for the intellectuals within the Party, they were partly attracted by the New Course, but on the other hand this degeneration of the Party prevented them from approaching further. The conflict between the functionaries and the intellectuals within the Party was due partly to the low calibre of the functionaries. The writers and other intellectuals shuddered at the thought of the stupid, parroting functionaries.

The rehabilitations didn't touch these people. They were not sensitive and it was not a moral question to them. Also, they knew little about the world. When I was exiled to Szeged in 1955 I was very much ^{surprised} ~~afraid~~ when, upon telling a young and intelligent journalist about ~~the fact that~~ ^{who} a newly rehabilitated person had been in prison, the journalist asked me: "Why was he in prison, did he steal?" And he also asked me who Kádár was. This boy was 22 years old. I realized then that he couldn't be expected to ~~evidence~~ show any moral indignation because he belonged to a new generation which simply didn't know who these people were. Moral indignation touched only a certain Communist stratum which joined the Communist Party out of idealism and was shocked when it found out about the crimes for which the Party was responsible. In Hungary there must have been only a few tens of thousands like this, belonging especially to the

Budapest intelligentsia. These are not Communists anymore, and do not belong to the Communist Party.

Szeged.

In 1955 I was sent into exile to Szeged, to work on Délmagyarország, the local newspaper. I decided not to get involved in politics because I wanted to get back to Budapest and also wanted to leave the press. Therefore I decided on a "consciously opportunist" behaviour. In Szeged I found ^a the provincial manifestation of the single-party system, a mixture of stupidity and asiatic backwardness. I went to Szeged after I was fired from Szabad Nép, when I was already one-half or three-quarters of the way out of Communism. I took a sick leave of two months partly because I was sick, and partly because it was better not to go to Szeged. Thus I was home from the 17th of December to the middle of February. Then I went to Szeged, feeling injured and disillusioned; a person who didn't want to save the world either as a Communist or as an anti-Communist. I decided not to stick my ^{neck out} or work too hard. I didn't want the Party secretary to think that I wanted to bring the Szabad Nép rebellion to Szeged, nor did I want Pál Nagy, the paper's editor to think that I wanted his job. Southern Hungary (Délmagyarország) - see Ady's very true, unfortunately true, poem about it. In Szeged I met that part of the country's Party apparatus which was most untouched by the

political changes, behaved the same way in every situation, and acted as the petty tyrannical overlord of the city. These people were everywhere the masters of the Hungarian provinces.

The role of the Party is different in Budapest and in the provinces. In Budapest it is also oppressive, stupid, and interferes in the daily life of the people. But it is not the master over life and death, to the same extent as in the provinces. In the provinces the local Party secretary had the power, if he disliked someone, to humiliate that person publicly, send him to the AVO, have him dismissed from his job, or start a press campaign against him. All he had to do was to find the sufficient Party reasons for his actions. In Budapest the local Party organization was less important. In Budapest it was rather the office and factory Party organizations which supervised the population in their capacity of,

A workers. On the whole the influence of the Budapest Party organization stopped at the door of one's apartment. Though this was only partly so. But the office Party secretaries' sphere of interest extended chiefly to the office. In the provinces the Party secretary could ^{peer} ~~beat~~ into people's windows. The Party took advantage of the more intimate and nosy character of small-town life.

When I arrived in Szeged Imre Nagy had been dead for two months. In Szeged I was shocked to find that they didn't seem to know about this; they were still talking about the

New Course though they failed to give it any liberalizing content. They were still talking about "the necessity to strengthen our alliance with the entire working peasantry", instead of the campaign against the kulaks. ^{They} ~~These~~ were still mouthing Imre Nagy slogans. I didn't tell them that this was already over. Nor did they know why I was sent to Szeged. Then came the March resolution which caused visible joy among these 20th rate, limited, stupid people. The city Party committee and my newspaper were included in the same Party organization. At the meeting where the March resolution was discussed Ladányi, the city's Party secretary, said that he had always known that Imre Nagy's New Course was wrong and that he had never really carried it out. The fact is that he always did everything he was told, but that he didn't want to carry it out is certain. The March resolution impelled the Party committee to seek rightist deviationists locally because the Party organization always had to show upward that it was fighting a determined battle with the enemy. The Party committee was so stupid that it couldn't count to five. It had two intellectual advisers, a history college professor at the ~~szeksz~~ (főiskola) and a university adjunctus. They were two unprincipled careerists who picked ^{Vajtay,} on a poor, old, broken, helpless professor of literature at the college ~~the szeksz~~, Vajtay, who had written an article in the local literary periodical in 1953, during the Imre Nagy

Well, the literary debate took place; all the literary and press personalities of Szeged were present. Elöd Halász, a great tactician and excellent linguist, known for his German-Hungarian dictionary was asked to ~~hold~~^{make} a ~~speech~~^{report} on the case. He was unable to evade this task probably thinking that this was an era in which one had to follow orders. His report lasted over an hour, and in it he gave to Cesar what was Cesar's. Some people might have thought that

he was criticizing Vajtay but I could see that it was double-talk. For instance, he spent half an hour proving that rhythmic verse forms were preferable to rhymed verse forms in Hungarian. This was not really a big humiliation for Vajtay since it was a professional criticism of his article. It could not satisfy the Party committee, but it could not pick a fight with Halász who was after all a professor. There were other speakers, too, who called him harmful and dangerous and said that Vajtay was trying to destroy, to nip in the bud, the literary life of Szeged which had begun to bloom so nicely. Another speaker was Sándor Nagy, the head of the Szeged branch of ^{the} writers' association. After he had ~~accidentally~~ ^{accidentally} received the Stalin prize, Nagy bought a villa in Szeged, and being a lazy person, had written nothing henceforth. He spent his time with the ~~he had~~ ^{he had} ~~many~~ women ^{some} sent to his villa. He was a loath/ person. He said that Vajtay was a rightist deviationist and ~~was~~ an inveterate ally of the policy which was trying to lead the country into catastrophe. ^{Nagy} ~~He~~ probably wanted the Party to take care of his debts. In spite of my decision to keep my mouth shut I held a short but energetic speech in which I told Sándor Nagy that his moral life did not allow him to attack the good-natured Vajtay, etc. Ladányi criticized me saying that I had basely ~~attacked~~ ^{slabbed} the Party's policy in the back. Another speaker was Vajda, a professor of literature who defended Vajtay on a ^{scholarly} ~~professional~~ basis.

The Party committee with the result, that they took care of him until he ended up in a sanatorium. Vajtay was pensioned but was later rehabilitated.

The Party continued to look for further rightist deviation and found it in the theater. Huszka's rather weak operetta "Szép Juhászné" was revived. This operetta took place in the 1850^{'s} in the Szép Juhászné inn. It had a lot of revolutionary students in it who sang constantly and their singing was interlarded with humorous speech. The ^{plot} ~~park~~ concerned a patriot who was pursued by the Bach police and who was eventually saved by the charming and beautiful heroine. The scandal was caused by the fact that in one scene the national flag was brought in; since, naturally, it was not coupled with the red flag, this was considered a rightist deviation. The ^{theater} critic of Délmagyarország said that the operetta was all right but that the production showed a regrettable nationalist spirit, which was especially wrong at a time when the Party was waging such a desperate war against rightist deviation. There was an additional scandal when the Party secretary's deputy saw the play and demanded that the flag be taken away. The actors, however, refused to comply. I told this story simply to ^{demonstrate} show the primitiveness of the provinces. Such a thing would have been impossible in Budapest.

I got into trouble when I wrote a series of articles about the Szeged linen factory (Kenderfonó). It was a sociography about the life of the Hungarian worker, pointing out the bad living conditions, the low standard of

living, etc. I went out to the factory and talked to the workers, as well as to the Party committee, to get material for my articles. When the articles began to appear the factory Party secretary kept asking: "When are you going to publish your articles about the Party work in the factory?" I told ^{him} ~~them~~ that this would come later. Eventually it began to look rather ^{queer} ~~queer~~ that the articles mentioned only the negative things about the factory and the life of the factory workers. The strange thing was that no one noticed this. That is, neither the editor of Délmagyarország, nor the Szeged Party committee, complained about my articles. Apparently they simply didn't read the newspaper. Finally someone in Budapest must have noticed my articles and notified the Szeged Party committee. I was called in and severely warned that I couldn't get away with this sort of thing in Szeged. After this I did practically no work for the newspaper. In the morning I went in, helped with the foreign affairs column a little and then went home and worked on my economic studies. When the editor of the paper asked me why I didn't write more for the paper I told him that I didn't want to get him ^{into} ~~in~~ trouble again.

One of the most brutal experiences I had in Szeged was the peace loan subscription in September 1955. Here in the provinces I had a glimpse of the cynical and brutal pressure which was put on people in order to get them to subscribe to the peace loan, in spite of the fact that the

the existence of such official propaganda denied ~~Attila~~ pressure, and warned Party functionaries against applying it. People were told how much to subscribe before the meeting; they had to pre-subscribe secretly the day before the meeting. If anyone refused to do this he was fired from his job. I had to go to one of the factories to ~~hold~~^{make} a speech in honour of the occasion. I managed to arrive too late and gave as my excuse the fact that my bicycle tire had gone flat. In these days everyone tried to sabotage similar Party duties in such a fashion. I was very shocked at the brutal methods used during this peace loan subscription.

Ladányi, the Party secretary of Szeged, was about 35 years ~~old~~^{of age}, was a former tailor's apprentice. I knew him from ~~the~~^{the} Madisz, A youth movement where he was a weak insignificant member. He was sent to the high Party academy and worked at Party headquarters. He was stupid! When they wanted to get rid of him, they made him Party secretary of Szeged. Szeged is the biggest university town after Budapest and one of the biggest towns of Hungary. They should have ~~named~~^{chosen} a more intelligent Party secretary because he had much contact with the intelligentsia of the universities, schools, the theater, and so on. Before ~~this~~^{Ladányi} they tried to choose a better Party secretary; the unfortunate Sándor Zöld had the job at one time. He Ladányi was /small, stupid, and had an insignificant appearance. He wore a leather coat and cap in order to

give himself a more impressive appearance. He constantly looked at people with suspicion and was worried that they laughed at him or had contempt for him. He would say: "Perhaps you think that I am very stupid but I know what the Party wants". He constantly demonstrated a strong inferiority complex which he compensated with a mania for power. He was always involved in intrigues and avenged himself on people whom he suspected of having contempt for him. He hated the intelligentsia and said that they were too superior and couldn't bear the thought of seeing a simple tailor become the town's leader. He had a crippled wife who was the personnel manager of the ^{City Hall} town-house, a very malicious person. The two of them kept the town under terror. If someone slipped from the hand of one he was caught by the other. ^{He} ^{such} This was a thoroughly stupid, uneducated person ^{that he} who could hardly talk articulately; it is difficult to understand how he was able to find even stupider collaborators. But he succeeded.

Another interesting figure was Leó Dénes, the mayor of the town. He was a notorious character, quite intelligent, one of the few members of the Szeged bourgeoisie who sympathized with socialism. Eventually he was made the mayor of the town and held the same job from 1946 to 1956. It was rare to find anyone in the country who kept such a job for ten years during this period. He was able to do this partly out of amorality and careerism and partly out

of shrewdness. He had no other aim in life than to hold on to his job. He did this by doing local people in power favours. He helped those whom he suspected of becoming powerful in the future and was friendly with the young functionaries. In fact he was friendly with everyone in Szeged and although people disliked him because he was a careerist they did not dislike him enough. He was careful not to place himself above Ladányi. He was a phenomenon like Márton Horváth.

The Hungarian Economy.

In 1956 I left Szeged, and the press, in order to work at the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Throughout ~~the~~ that year I dealt with problems of the world economy and with ^{problem} ^{unprofitable} the ~~question~~ of the ~~uneconomic~~ nature of Hungary's foreign trade. It was horrible what I discovered here. I can't cite the exact statistics but I know that one of the important factors of our "patriotic sorrow" at the time was the discovery that the structure of the Hungarian economy helped to exhaust and pump out the country's economic treasures. It is a mistaken belief that the Soviet Union is importing goods from Hungary without payment. This was true until the Soviet Union was still receiving reparations from Hungary, but not in recent years. It is true that payments made to the Soviet Union for the former German ^a properties were ~~a~~ considerable financial burden but were only

an insignificant item in the Hungarian foreign trade balance.

The attempt, between 1950 and 1953, of Gerö and the rest to establish and foster Hungarian heavy industry whose raw material basis was missing in Hungary required a fantastic quantity of raw material imports. At first these imports could be paid for by ^{export} agricultural products ~~exported~~ but later Hungarian agriculture was ^{crippled} ~~destroyed~~ ~~to some extent~~ and furthermore the internal consumption of agricultural products ^{rose} ~~went up~~ because the city population increased. As a result agricultural exports decreased. In spite of this the export of machinery and other manufactured goods should have covered the necessary imports; after all the British also import raw materials and export machinery. The trouble was that Hungary needed imports in the most voluminous raw materials; coal, iron ore, and timber. In addition these materials could not be shipped by boat but had to be brought in on rail which is ^{transportation.} ~~a very expensive form of~~ ~~transportation.~~ Hungary for instance imports woods from Norway and Finland.

Furthermore a primitive steel and machine industry can't export profitably. The ^{cost of} ~~constant~~ production was often ^{high} ~~as much as~~ ten times as much as that of the similar German product, and Hungary received a lower price for it because the quality was poor. This is especially true of machinery which contained ^{an excess quantity of} ~~an excess quantity of~~ raw materials. For instance,

a Hungarian machine tool weighs a ton and a half and is cruder, bigger, and more primitive than the lighter Western product. Hungary had no money to import machine tools and wanted to export them, partly to Lebanon and the other Near Eastern countries in order to get English Pounds. This involved a tremendous waste of the country's wealth because at the most the transaction resulted in some foreign currency profit; but one ought not to forget how much imported raw material, bought with foreign currency, was included in such machinery. Thus, as a result of the huge sums of imported foreign currency poured into a product of Hungary's heavy industry in the form of raw material imports purchased with it, the currency profit from the sale of this product was so small, that it didn't even begin to pay for the amount of labor involved. The export sales price never covered the cost of production.

The same was true of the textile industry. The Hungarian textile exporters received orders that at least the foreign currency involved in the exported textiles should be paid for. Thus the economy worked for nothing and the Hungarian export industry was supported by the other branches of the economy. As a result the export industry was supported by the other branches of the economy. As a result the export industry was one of the biggest burdens of the economy. There was a certain amount of compulsion to continue with this senseless system because once the steel and machine industries were

established they could not be discontinued without causing serious ~~xxxxxx~~ unemployment. A bold policy was needed to put an end to this vicious cycle.

The financial effect of this system was that, since the

export agencies had to pay a fixed price for manufactured goods, a price which had to cover the cost of production, ^{usually} and since they ~~often~~ sold these goods abroad for less than they paid for them, the export agencies worked with a deficit. The state therefore issued subsidies to support the export agencies. In the last few years the state paid 12 ~~million~~ ^{billion} forints in subsidies to these agencies, which is more than ^{total} all the ~~capital~~ investments since 1953.

This is the reason for the poverty of the country and not Soviet exploitation. Of course, it was the Soviet Union which forced Hungary into this senseless industrialization, which is a Stalinist heritage. But the direct profits which the Soviet Union received from Hungary were insigni- ^{this} ficant compared to ~~the~~ sum.

Of course, Hungary will always have to import raw materials since she has only bauxite and brown coal, ^(lignite?) and no other raw materials needed for industry. But previously Hungary's agriculture paid for these necessary imports. That is why the regime was so foolish in destroying the country's agriculture and that is why Imre Nagy's policy of supporting agriculture was so vitally important. He ^{effect} pointed out in a ~~fact~~ that if the sun was allowed to lie ^{which was what happened when the country's vineyards} fallow, ~~by neglecting the country's vineyards it would be~~ were neglected, it was the same sort of waste ~~there as~~ as if the mines were not exploited.

Another factor which harmed the country's economy was the poor economic management.

The Hungarian precision instruments, radio and ^{and} electrical industry had had a European fame in the past. The Orion and Standard factories had the East European markets reserved for them through the cartell distribution of the old European markets system. But now their goods deteriorated and they produced chiefly radios at a time when the entire world was buying television sets and the market for radios ^{contracted} ~~became nonexistent~~. We produced steam locomotives although the entire world was adopting Diesel electric locomotives. As a result Hungary was unable to compete favourably in the world market. Furthermore Hungarian industry was not able, ^{or} ~~and~~ allowed, to become familiar with Western techniques ~~and~~ ^{and} was forced to ape the Soviet techniques. The result was that the Hungarian harvesting combined, for instance was too big and heavy as against the Western combined which is small, light, and can function on more sensitive soils. In spite of the fact that the Hungarian combined is not suitable for use in Hungary a factory was built to produce it.

Thus the problems of foreign trade, in addition to the technical weaknesses of socialist industry and the incompetence of the economic leadership, ^{contributed} ~~all~~ served to the destruction of the Hungarian economy. The goods which were produced for exports but were rejected by the buyer because they were sub-standard, were bought by the Hungarian consumer. It was comic that even these rejected export pro-

ducts were better in quality than the goods produced for domestic use. This was because the state paid a great premium to workers producing export goods.

Personal Finances. Special Correspondent in Berlin.

Rehabilitation at Szabad Nép.

It is difficult to imagine how badly even the privileged people of the regime lived. My family and I lived from month to month and the most I can say is that we had ^{few} ~~little~~ debts. It was only once that I could save a sufficient sum of money to buy furniture for our apartment. The worst period was the fall of 1952 when my daughter was born. There were times when my wife and I couldn't afford to eat supper; all we had was milk and some bad bread and possibly some coffee substitute. Of course we paid a high rent for our apartment which consisted of two rooms and a maid's room. My wife didn't work at the time or else she worked but didn't earn very much. My mother in law also lived with us. Later I was able to make some extra money by writing free-lance articles. We lived in definite poverty. Only the child got butter, and later when we had two children we only had meat once a week on Sunday.

Twice I earned some extra money ^{with} ~~for~~ which we wanted to buy furniture but somehow never got around ^{to it} ~~with~~. In 1952 I wrote a book about Tunis, and unfortunately got

an advance of 1,500 frts for it which was spent on fuel. When I received the second payment of 1,800 frts it was just before I was sent out to Vienna and I had to buy a suit and some other cloths to look decent. The second time I earned a considerable sum of money was in 1953 when, because of the New Course, the Agitprop department of Party headquarters had to be reorganized. At this time I wrote a Party brochure about war and peace. I was a stupid puritan at that time. I was paid 6,000 frts, 2,400 frts more than was due me. I sent back the 2,400, instead of keeping it. After paying the typists I only had 3,000 left. I had to go abroad again to the four power conference in the fall of 1953 and therefore had to buy myself some cloths etc. So this money disappeared, too. For years I earned 2,000 frts a month of which only about 1,700 was left after the various deductions. When I left Szabad Nép I was earning 2,800 frts a month and had received a monthly premium for the past year or so for outstanding work. Thus the total came to 3,000 or 3,200 frts monthly. In Szeged I started at a salary of 2,500 frts which was a very high salary for the provinces. I couldn't receive more, I was told, because then I would have been earning more than the editor of the newspaper. I got a subsidy of 800 frts monthly because my family had to live apart from me. My salary here was reduced first to 2,200 frts and finally to 2,000 monthly.

This was not enough for a family which had to live in two places.

This is how I finally got some money to buy furniture for our apartment. Novobáczky and I were sent out as the correspondents of Szabad Nép to the four power conference in Berlin at the beginning of 1954. We had to send dispatches to the radio, too, because the old ~~MSX~~ Muscovite female sent out by the radio was too stupid. The radio's reportage was far better than that of the Hungarian press because we copied the French news release for our radio dispatch and phoned it to Hungary from East Berlin. Thus the radio received an objective and truthful dispatch. We asked Szabad Nép to take over the radio material but they refused and waited for the TASS dispatches which were received later. Novobáczky and I did this quite ^{deliberately,} ~~conscientiously~~ aware of the implications of our actions. I think I never felt better in my life, than during this trip in January and February 1954. I received 3,100 frts from the radio, from which I could finally buy some furniture, after I had been working for Szabad Nép for seven years.

Thus it can be understood why we were not really bound to the regime. I simply didn't find it profitable although I was politically privileged. It would have been very important to pay the press well. In 1953 I felt the lowering of the standard of living together with the rest of the population. Some Party functionaries didn't do so.

In 1953 I had a discussion with someone like this and he asked me whether it was true that the living standard had dropped. He said that he believed it because the Party resolution said so but that he had not felt it himself. He was a bachelor, had the use of an official car, and was able to live very well. The people who worked for the Party apparatus had no financial problems. They had special various ~~special~~ privileges, received food which other people couldn't get, lemons, etc. The journalists were left out of such projects. Well, the regime paid for it. ~~this neglect! It served them right!~~
Aside from the political and moral aspects the fact that one felt the disadvantages of the regime on one's own skin added to one's awakening. It is true though that at Szabad Nép I was the only one who lived so badly because most people didn't have to support such large families. And the writers earned a great deal of money.

In 1956 I and a number of other journalist were rehabilitated. When Gerö came to power he and the Party leadership formed a committee to examine the cases of the dismissed journalists. The head of the committee was Mezö and the members included Márton Horváth, the editor in chief of Szabad Nép and a number of other functionaries. Mezö was the only member of the upper Party apparatus who was a victim of the Revolution although he was the only decent person among the higher Party leaders. Beginning in August 1956 the committee started calling in the dismissed journalists in ^{small} a number of groups. The first group

included the journalists around Imre Nagy; Vásárhelyi, Gimes, Haraszti, etc. The second group included Novobáczky and Méray. The third group included Kende, Lénart, Miklós Molnár, and one journalist who was not on the Szabad Nép staff. And the fourth group included Kornay, György Láng, etc. This committee held very amusing meetings. Márton Horváth held the same speech every time; "You have been victims of a grave injustice," he said, "I was wrong in not persisting in my first attitude that the Party membership meeting was correct. It is good that there were such courageous people at Szabad Nép." He finally promised to return everyone to his former position. This was not done until the Revolution. I refused the offer because I didn't think it would be any great joy to be a journalist in the Gerö era. I just couldn't lie any longer. But I insisted on my rehabilitation which Horváth refused because he had a special dislike for me. But when my friends insisted he finally ^{to} agreed on my rehabilitation. This proposal was first refused by the Gerö circle and the reparation money was sabotaged by the Party's economic organs. However, some of the journalists did get the reparation money. Finally I was rehabilitated.

The Revolution.

On the morning of October 23rd I was in the Radio Building writing a talk about the Polish events. I had

a radio series on international events at the time. My talk which was quite outspoken in tone was broadcast. Obviously there was no more censorship at the time, in fact they were glad about its sharp tone. After this I went to the journalists' association where I heard that the demonstration had been forbidden. Then I went to the Ministry of Foreign Trade where I worked at the time. By the time I arrived I was told that the number two street-car had been stopped because the demonstration was taking place after all. I went to the Petöfi statue and heard from some friends I met there that the ban on the demonstration had been lifted. Then I went to the Bem statue, to Kossuth Place, with the demonstrators.

All morning friends had been telling Imre Nagy to go and stand at the head of the demonstration. His answer was no. It was Gimes who told me about this. They said that the demonstration would slip out of his hands if he didn't do something. Imre Nagy was afraid that Gerö was trying to provoke him into some sort of action in order to annihilate him. It was only when the Politburo ~~Politburo~~ asked him that he went to Kossuth Place. Imre Nagy had some reason to be afraid of such a provocation. The Central Committee had a small opposition group which plotted for the return of Imre Nagy. This group included Márton Horváth, Imre Mezö, and Zoltán Vas. Of

these Horváth and Vas were shrewd careerists and Mezö was a decent chap. This group went to Imre Nagy in the middle of October and warned him that Gerö had a plan to provoke some sort of demonstration along the lines of Poznan ^{intended} and ^{to} get Imre Nagy involved in it in order to be able to accuse him of a counter-revolutionary action. Gerö wanted to stage this provocation because he was afraid of Imre Nagy's rising sun. Amusingly enough this small opposition group in the Central Committee was very proud of this action, of telling Imre Nagy about Gerö's plot and considered it the non plus ultra of conspiracy. Thus it was partly ^{for} this reason that Imre Nagy behaved so awkwardly on the 23rd of October. But in addition he was simply not capable of rising to such a situation. Thus on the morning of the 23rd I was carried to the Kossuth statue in the midst of a crowd, feeling very enthusiastic, and agreeing with the anti-Soviet slogans. I was carried away by ^{that} which had been the characteristic of every Hungarian revolution's first phase, its bloodlessness. I was exultant about the fact that the Revolution was bloodless. After all even our elementary school text talked about bloodless revolutions. On Kossuth Place I met György Litván who asked me, happy and worried at the same time: "What is this?" I said: "C'est une révolte? Non, c'est une révolution!" He asked, he was more of a Communist than I at this point, what the content of it was.

I said that it quite clearly was national and democratic. I added that we shall see what will come of it.

Imre Nagy's behaviour discouraged me. He behaved awkwardly and was unable to rise to the situation partly because he had been intimidated. Why did he say comrades in his speech at the Parliament? By 1956 this phrase was not used so much even within the Party. I think it was the decades of Party routine which made him address the crowd this way. ^{I believe:} ~~At the time~~ he did it automatically. He was ^{calm} ~~unable to come~~ down the excited crowd of 200,000 people. The amazing thing was that a part of the crowd did dis- ^{combatant core} ~~perse~~; the ~~competent core~~ went to the Radio Station. I took a bus and the crowd passed me on its way to the Radio. I thought it was the AVH which spread the rumour that tear gas bombs had been thrown among the crowd at the Radio Station. I thought the AVH spread this rumour in order to dissolve the crowd. I rushed to the editorial offices of Magyar Nemzet to look for my friends Losonczy and Vásárhelyi. It was around ten p.m. When I got off the bus before the New York Palace I saw young men in trucks going by and shouting that there was a battle going on at the Radio and calling on everyone to go there. These were the first detachments of the young factory workers who joined the Revolution. I believed that somebody had organized these young workers. I think that there was an illegal organization of students who organized the workers and in-

formed the factories. I met some members of this organization in Yugoslavia who said that they had received letters before the 23rd to meet on the 23rd of October at the Astoria Hotel, where they would receive further instructions. They came up to Budapest from various places in the provinces. Part of their job was to organize factory groups. Kádár called them counter-revolutionaries but he couldn't find any traces of this organization. This was an organization of the old Hungarian intelligentsia which got together on a friendly basis. That they chose October 23rd is interesting, because they appeared to know that this would be a great day. The organization appears to have had a good tactical instinct. Gerö was the other one who knew that October 23rd would be a great day since it was he who called in the Russian troops in advance, to be prepared. In fact everyone knew but Mefesz and Petöfi the ostensible organizers of circle ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ organized these events.

At Magyar Nemzet I met Losonczy, Vásárhelyi, Tardos, and Domokos Kosáry who was now a member of the Imre Nagy group. The group looked as though they were at ~~the~~ ^{the} wake. When I asked why, they told me about Gerö's speech and said that the situation has been spoiled by the ~~xxxx~~ ^{death} before the Radio Station. They sat there in total impotence. I mention this chiefly because Losonczy, Imre Nagy's second in command, was a member of this group. We debated what to do and decided to go to the Hungaria which was in

the same building. After all it is a journalist tradition to go to a restaurant in the evening. A man came, panting, and looked for Losonczy. He said that it was terrible, people were being shot ~~xx~~ before the Radio^{Station,} and some were dead. He said the journalists should see it and write about it. I said to Vászárhelyi: "Come, let's go". Vászárhelyi didn't feel like it; he was nicely dressed after all and was afraid to spoil his light suit. I said: "The ~~xxxx~~most they can do is shoot us". He finally agreed to come along and see what was going on. By then there was complete anarchy on Nagy Körút. For the first time the street had the face of a street ~~xxxx~~ revolution. It looked as though people had lost certain inhibitions which ~~and~~ kept their behaviour within the bounds of the existing order. They were completely led by passion and their behaviour changed with every change of mood. Just as a person can lose self-control, the entire society lost its self-control. The whole Revolution was characterized by an amorphous action, and not by behaviour which was deliberate and purposeful, ^{not by} behaviour directed towards definite aims. It was passionate and instinctive. Individuals were under the influence of mass psychology and a Judgment Day expression ~~xx~~ seen on people's faces. The Communists were scared and hid in the basement; the elite hid in the Academy Street headquarters and the middle and lower functionaries either escaped from their apartments

or else they hid there.

I liked this phase of the Revolution because I thought that this was the way a real revolution had to be without inhibitions and barriers. The crowd forgot everything, ran out and fought, shouted slogans about which it hadn't heard. ~~didn't know~~ a moment ago, overturned street-cars, etc.

This was a form of drunkenness like that of a genius in the act of creation. Thus the crowd in a revolution acts with inspiration, illumination. It is this illumination which explains why one cannot argue with such a crowd rationally; it can be influenced only through its emotions. At such a time the hatred and passion of decades break out. Why, if there was such strong anti-Semitism in Hungary, was the Revolution not anti-Semitic? Anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments exhausted the emotions of the masses so there was no ^{room left} space for anti-Semitism.

We went to the National Theater with Vásárhelyi where a police-car ^{truck} was surrounded by a crowd which climbed on the truck and disabled it by surrounding the police-men in a friendly fashion. One could see that the police-man didn't feel like making order. Police-men are always civilians in a revolution. The regime can only keep the special police on its own side. This was so in the past, too. In this Revolution the police was super-civilian because it didn't participate on the side of the Revolution either. In Rökk Szilárd Street there was shooting and Vásárhelyi

decided to go back to the New York Building. I was less eager to go on alone; bullets were crackling in the street. Therefore I also turned back and went back to the New York where the debate with Losonczy was still going on. It was strange that outside there was a revolution while in the New York the waiters served us with the utmost calm.

I told Losonczy to go to Party headquarters and have the shooting stopped. I thought that the regime should be transformed in answer to the peaceful mass pressure. I desperately tried to tell Losonczy that he who had some authority before the Party should insist that Party headquarters act. Vársárhelyi said the same thing. Losonczy was very reluctant to do what we suggested; he finally said he would go but at the end he didn't. This was late at night. I think Losonczy must have been afraid that he and his group ~~they~~ would be held responsible for this and would be arrested at Party headquarters. Thus began the atomization of the Imre Nagy group. Losonczy called Imre Nagy's apartment but couldn't find the old man, ("Breg"). He didn't know that Imre Nagy was already talking with the Party leaders. Losonczy didn't know what he should do now. (Losonczy behaved very decently after he left prison and his behaviour after the Revolution was also very intelligent and courageous.) When we left the New York Building the street was full of people and the crowd was trying to get into the building to ask the writers to

write about what was going on. Boldizsár was surrounded, people were trying to get him to write about the events of the day and he was quite clueless as to what to do. We went to the Szabad Nép building. Before the building a crowd was dancing a cancan and burning papers; we later heard that they burnt the extra edition of Szabad Nép, too. The newspaper men were ^{caught} ~~locked~~ in the building. At ^{Szabad} ~~the~~ Nép the right wing had taken over and issued a leaflet to the effect that they were on the side of the demonstration, but the crowd burnt this also, not knowing what it was. Gimes was the head of the right wing who went to Szabad Nép representing the Imre Nagy group, in order to counter-act the influence of Révai who was sent by the Party to censor the paper. When the crowd besieged the building a deathly pale Révai was helped by Gimes and the others to escape the back way. The AVO's who were guarding the building also managed to escape. The staff members of Szabad Nép tried in vain to persuade the crowd not to come in. The crowds penetrated the building. All the journalists escaped from the third floor of the building except Gimes and Lőcsei. They went to the press part of the building in order to help the printers defend the printing presses. When the crowd besieged the press the printers told them to go away and leave the machines alone because they meant their bread. I didn't know my friend Gimes was on the third floor. The building seemed empty,

the shop burned out, and the crowd had thrown the furniture from the first and second floors out of the window. But the editorial offices of Szabad Nép remained untouched because they were on the third floor which appeared to be too high for the revolutionary mob. We entered the building whose main floor, a big entrance hall, was thickly covered with pieces of glass and other rubble and with a milling crowd. We saw the corpses of those who were killed at the Radio Station. It was a special experience for me, since this was the first time that I had been to the Szabad Nép building within the last two years. The fact that I revisited the building in this apocalyptic situation gave me a special emotional jag. I felt that an entire world had submerged and that a new world must surely come. Seeing the building, where I had worked ^{for} so many years, under these conditions, was an additional experience.

I urged Boldizsár to write up the events in Hétféi Hírlap so that the press ^{should not} ~~can't~~ be held responsible for anything, but he was unwilling to do so.

Another great experience was, when going towards Oktogon, I saw a great truck ^{dragging} ~~juggling~~ the Stalin Statue behind it. It was surrounded by jubilant mob. His head was bouncing on the pavement like the head of Winnie-the-Pooh when he was dragged along the ground. Well, it wasn't quite as light-hearted as that. The crowd was

running along the sides of the truck. On Karl Marx Place I met the first group which appeared to have been organized; they were stopping cars. It was around 3.30 a.m. but people were still standing in doorways watching the events.

The next morning I woke up to heavy canon fire and heard over the radio that the government had called in the Russian troops. I felt that everything was lost. I felt that with this move the regime made a peaceful transformation impossible. I was very worried about the fact that Imre Nagy had been named Prime Minister; I felt that his acceptance of the job was an irreparable mistake, and a very stupid thing. I tried to call my friends, Gimes and others. I found only Vásárhelyi who felt the same way as I and who, like myself, couldn't find any contact with the events of the day. Vásárhelyi had tried to find the old man but couldn't. He couldn't find Losonczy either, who had been elected to the government in his absence. Vásárhelyi was upset that Imre Nagy accepted the Premiership with Russian intervention.

In the second part of the week until Saturday or Sunday I helped Kornay to prepare an economic program which was to be the basis of Imre Nagy's government program. The next few days completely destroyed the timeliness of such a program. It was a Gomulka type of thing and the Hungarian Revolution had gone beyond such a program. We felt this and debated how and what to put in it. Outside

the battles were going on and no one knew who was fighting whom. Sometimes the various groups of ^{insurgents} ~~Freedom~~ Fighters were fighting each other. We discontinued preparing this program because we felt the events had swept it away.

On Monday morning we decided to found a newspaper. We felt that there should be a decent newspaper, in which the opposition Communists could take a stand on the side of the Revolution and indicate a way out for Imre Nagy, too, who was still caught in the enchantment of Party headquarters. At this time Szabad Nép was the only paper which had appeared during the Revolution and that was burnt. And two copies of Obersovszky's Igazság had also appeared. We went to the journalists' headquarters at the New York Building and to the university revolutionary council to talk about this; about 50 journalists were willing to follow us. At first we thought that we might work with Igazság but decided against it because we represented a definite political attitude. Therefore we founded Hungarian Freedom (Magyar Szabadság) at the Szabad Nép headquarters, from where the Szabad Nép journalists with Horváth at their head, escaped to avoid the threatening crowd. We got together, ^{Fekete,} ~~Fekete,~~ Kende, Löcsei, Gimes, and Lénárt, and wrote the first issue of the paper which marked out a democratic, socialistic program, though without using the word "socialist". It was a Social-

Democratic program which intended to be the independent left wing of the Revolution. An open letter criticized Imre Nagy in a friendly fashion. As to the rest the paper stood unreservedly on the side of the Revolution. At night Munkacs, the minister of the interior tried to confiscate the paper but he couldn't get together a police detachment to do the job. Downstairs the building was full of ^{insurgents} ~~Evangelical Ministers~~ so the police were unable to come in. The paper was distributed by the university students throughout the town. Meanwhile Dudás had moved into the building and we made a gentlemen's agreement not to hurt each other. This was somewhat onesided ^{of hurting} since we had no intention ~~of hurting~~ him. He was quite Dudás was a revolutionary symptom while Maléter was a revolutionary willing to come to this agreement. We were occupying ^{had remained} only one wing of Szabad Nép which was completely intact. revolutionary career.

We worked with some of the Szabad Nép printers who knew us and were willing to print our newspaper because they were our friends. Our paper appeared three times, every second day. The last issue appeared on Saturday, the 3rd of November. By then Népszabadság was being published, by Haraszti and Lajos Fehér. They tried to get a few of us to join them but we refused. On Saturday we had other big plans. Gimes and I went to the office of the Prime Minister and asked for permission to publish a weekly, an independent leftist periodical, something like The New Statesman. We wondered on that day about the new political

make-up of Hungary. Kádár had disappeared by then. We thought that there were two possibilities. One, that he was murdered, and two, that the Russians took him away. We ^{hoped} thought that the first possibility was true because the latter was too dangerous. We thought that Kádár was dangerous because he represented the old Party, the Rákosi gang against Imre Nagy. We thought it was stupid and mistaken of Imre Nagy to cooperate with the old functionaries in the establishment of the new Party. We didn't want to enter the Party in spite of the fact that Imre Nagy was its leader. That is why we refused to work for Népszabadság, although Haraszti was one of our closest friends. We would have joined an Imre Nagy party if he had established a national, non-Communist, but socialist, revolutionary party as many suggested. Donath, Losonczy, the ^{left-wing} leftist intelligentsia, the university revolutionary committee, wanted such a new party. But we did not want to belong to the CP whose program declaration^{as} stated by Kádár, included Marxism-Leninism.

Ours was the socialist wing of the Revolution: The opposition Communists and the people around them.

This was a strange revolution because contrary to the other revolutions of the world this revolution had no parties or leaders. I don't say that the Revolution came forth out of nothing but it was ^a the vehicle going at full

no one speed, ~~without anyone~~ knowing where, ~~without anyone~~ at the wheel, and ~~without anyone~~ who would be able to stop it. In order to correct this situation Imre Nagy's friends, a small group of opposition Communists, tried to convince Imre Nagy to stand at the head of the Revolution in spite of the unfortunate beginning. It is a fairy-tale that Imre Nagy was a prisoner of the AVH. This is a gross over-simplification. During the first days of the Revolution Imre Nagy was not the prisoner of the AVH or of the Rákosi and Gerö group. He was a moral prisoner of his own loyalty which did not leave him even then in that extremely critical moment, and which demanded of him that he undertake the leadership of the country at a moment when the Communist Party was disintegrating. But one couldn't expect anything else of Imre Nagy. Ever since 1953 he had considered himself the saviour of the regime. He always felt that only his own policy could save the Communist movement. Thus when during the Revolution, he found himself facing the revolutionary crowds which were on the verge of overthrowing the regime, when he saw the anarchy which had engulfed the People's Democracy, it was only natural that he ^{should feel} felt that now his moment had come. It was only natural that he should say: "I am the only one who can save Communism, not in the image of Gerö, but in my own." When Imre Nagy accepted the premiership he insisted on certain things. At the Tuesday night meeting

of the Central Committee he maintained that, first of all, the Party leadership must be reorganized. This was done partially, but Gerö remained first secretary of the Party. In this revolution every action of the government happened ~~was~~ 24 hours later than it should have: The nomination of Imre Nagy, the resignation of Gerö, etc. The regime acted with the stupidity of the Bourbons ; every regime does this in a similar situation. Secondly Imre Nagy protested against the calling ^{in of the} ~~THE~~ Russians. ~~XXXXXXXX~~ As far as ~~XXXXXXXX~~ I know he didn't say anything about martial ~~XXXXXXXX~~ law. I know these things from friends of Imre Nagy, who heard it from the old man himself. The situation was extremely difficult; he stepped into Academy Street ~~and~~ a nobody, without any Party position, and they clung to him and used him as a shield against the enemy. The gathering was eminently anti-Nagy, since it consisted of the same Central Committee which had betrayed him. His situation was difficult because they felt uneasy with each other. Yet this was the party to which Imre Nagy was loyal. He must have thought that now he would be able to achieve the complete transformation of the Party since he now had ^{them} ~~back~~ in his hands. At least, this is my theory. I am far more certain of this, however: That he wanted to do a great service, that he wanted to save the sinking ship. It is strange that Imre Nagy almost completely broke with his friends during these days. On Wednesday or Thursday

Losonczy and Donath were so firmly opposed to Imre Nagy's policy that they refused to be elected into the PolitBuro ~~XXXXX~~ and Donath refused the secretaryship of the Central Committee. They said that they disapproved of armed action against the rebels, ~~that~~ they didn't think Gerő should have kept his place, and ~~that~~ they felt the Russians should leave Hungary. Imre Nagy was completely alone. Now the right and left wings of the Communist Party began their struggle to win Imre Nagy to their own side. His former friends especially Lőcsei and Gimes, the most right wing members of Imre Nagy's brain trust, went to him and tried to prevail upon him ~~and~~ to take a more independent and realistic stand. They tried to get him to leave Academy Street and to move to the Parliament as a Prime Minister should. Academy Street which was defended by Soviet tanks was full of various Party ^{eminences} ~~XXXXXX~~ and small fry, where the pressure of the whole frightened crowd, ^{officials} ~~XXXXXX~~ about its privileges, would have a bad effect on Imre Nagy. It was an absurd situation! The Central Committee was in constant session while on the outside there was fighting in the streets. Imre Nagy stopped this by asking the Central Committee to vote for its own dissolution. Instead, a six member Party presidium was chosen to carry on. The members were Imre Nagy, Zoltán Szántó, Kádár, Apró, Károly Kis, and a sixth who was Münnich I believe. This was published in that issue of Szabad Nép

which was burned. This organization never functioned. Imre Nagy had it established only in order to stop the constant Central Committee sessions which made all other activity impossible.

Thus his friends tried to convince Imre Nagy to establish his headquarters at the Parliament which he did on Saturday or Sunday. They also asked him to admit that the Revolution was a justified, national, and democratic, and to start negotiation with the ~~XXXXXX~~ palpable leaders of the Revolution. I think he was inclined towards this line and I believe his speech on Monday could be interpreted as a reflection of this policy. The Monday and Tuesday issues of Szabad Nép were also in this spirit. By then Szabad Nép ^{had slipped from the hands of} ~~XXXXXX~~ the Party leadership ^{into the hands of} those journalists who were willing to undertake the risk of going to the embattled building, across the embattled town, to write Szabad Nép according to their own views, with the tacit approval of Márton Horváth. Szabad Nép wrote that the struggle of the insurgents was not unjustified. On Monday Miklós Molnár polemicalized with Pravda about the "counter-revolution".

Imre Nagy was pulled ^{in two directions.} ~~XXXXXX~~ On the one side Kádár and the others were trying to pull him back. On the other side his friends were trying to push him ahead. The third important factor in Imre Nagy's behaviour was the presence of the Russian leaders with whom he was

negotiating and whom he didn't wish to oppose. I believe that Imre Nagy's sudden move regarding the Russians, his decision to announce Hungary's neutrality, can be explained. Here in Paris, Méray and I wondered a great deal about this and spent long evenings trying to figure it out. One possibility is that Mikoyan and the others left Hungary telling Nagy to do what he wished to do and washing their hands of the whole thing. The other possibility is that Mikoyan approved Nagy's introduction of the multi-party system and his neutrality announcement, and promised to go to Moscow to get final approval for this policy. I simply cannot believe that Imre Nagy told Mikoyan to go to hell.

On Monday, the 7th day ^{of} ~~XXX~~ the Revolution Imre Nagy's friends advised him to bring back the coalition system and to allow the other parties to organize in order to enable the Revolution to enter political channels instead of remaining a shooting match. Imre Nagy sharply opposed this suggestion and said that it would mean the giving up of the proletarian dictatorship; he insisted that he would never agree to it. It was Gimes who told me about this. I do not know what it was that impelled him to change his mind two days later. Méray doesn't know either. This is the only mystery in Imre Nagy's behaviour, during the Revolution. The rest is logical. I am not quite certain what role Tildy had in making Nagy change his mind. Tildy was Imre Nagy's alterego in Parliament at the time. Of

course, delegations from all over the country demanded that Nagy take this step but this does not explain his compliance. Furthermore there was no other way out; as Gimes ~~had~~ put it "if the Revolution ^{is} ~~was~~ not given a political channel the revolutionaries would go on shooting. My impression is that Tildy had a big role in ~~making~~ ^{persuading} ~~Nagy's mind~~ to take this step. This impression is based on the radio scene in which Imre Nagy, Tildy, and Kádár announced the introduction of the multi-party system and at which Tildy played the role of first violinist. Nagy was tired and ^{was giving} ~~gave~~ his 25th top proclamation since the beginning of the Revolution. Tildy was electrified as though he had suddenly become master of the situation. He ~~expanded~~ outlined ^{new} ~~on the new~~ situation in a speech which was longer than that of the others. My personal impression was that perhaps Tildy emerged victor of a debate within the inner, narrower cabinet.

The government's neutrality declaration has been widely misunderstood. It was Magyar Szabadszág as a matter of fact which first demanded neutrality in an editorial which I wrote, and which was widely reprinted in the world press. (Laughing) Thus I was the first to demand neutrality for Hungary. The neutrality declaration was a measure, forced on the government by necessity, on Thursday when the Russian troops had already started to enter Hungary. We received the news that Russian tanks had crossed Hungary at Záhony and were passing through Debrecen,

etc. We received this news directly over a ~~radio~~^K telephone in the Szabad Nép building over which somebody at Party headquarters kept reporting the latest news. At the same time, on November 1st, the Suez business began. I had a terrible, a conviction, that the consequences of the Suez events would be that the Russians would start bombing Hungary in the morning. I went home because I felt that if the end of the world was coming, one should at least be with one's family. I turned on the radio, and heard the declaration of neutrality. I thought that this was the only possible answer to the Russian move since one couldn't resist the Russians or declare war on them and one couldn't demand that they leave because of the Warsaw treaty. Thus this was a desperate attempt at defence against a military threat.

Imre Nagy's big mistake was that he didn't negotiate through diplomatic channels with the powers from whom he expected and asked support. It was fantastic that he asked their support over the radio. He had no diplomatic support abroad, because of the character of the Hungarian foreign service. Imre Nagy made a desperate effort to organize some sort of diplomatic force, he drafted diplomatic notes, etc. (See György Heltai about this.) Nagy was personally preparing to go abroad to represent the case of Hungary before the UN. I heard this from Gimes who told me that we would have to write

the speech which Imre Nagy would hold before the UN. I think it was naive to issue the neutrality declaration without diplomatic preparation. But then Nagy is a naive man.

After the intervention together with a number of other people, I edited an illegal newspaper the 23rd of October. Ten issues of this paper appeared. The ^{cause of} most immediate ~~reason~~ my departure from Hungary was that they had begun to arrest the distributor of the paper and some others involved in publishing it and I was obviously the next to go. I left Hungary in January, escaping across the Yugoslav border.

Yugoslavia was an unpleasant experience. The food was extremely bad and the canned goods and other food received from the West ^{were} ~~was~~ immediately diverted to the local warehouses. We never received any of it. I do not think that it was the central government which decided to hold back this food. I believe it must have been the local authorities who saw no reason to give excellent canned goods to these refugees when they could use it more profitably in the local hospitals and ^{so} ~~on~~ on. We were interrogated in rather primitive and stupid fashion; the secret police tried to urge us to return to Hungary and asked us why we wanted to go to the capitalist countries. They seemed to be rather hurt that people didn't want to stay in Yugoslavia but preferred

the Western countries. But when somebody did want to stay in Yugoslavia they became extremely suspicious and unpleasant and as a result even those people who had been willing to stay in Yugoslavia declared their intention to go to some Western country.

Interviewer's Comments on Respondent.

A brilliant, a remarkably articulate young man, with a disciplined, and scholarly mind, an analytical mind which must dissect every experience and mold it into an intellectual pattern. (One of his acquaintances called him a Talmudist because of this characteristic.) Some of his comments about the Revolution, however, are disappointingly naive and superficial. He has a malicious wit and an excellent sense of humour, although he takes himself extremely seriously. He is egocentric and not without vanity. All in all, however: a civilized creature.

Of course, it is necessary to ^{add} ~~say~~ that he must have been quite different in his "young titan" days at Szabad Nép. An acquaintance, malicious but reliable, told me that he had quite a different personality in Hungary. The problem in interviewing ex-Communists is that one can interview only their ^{real} ~~new~~, or new, personalities, and never their Communist personalities, which had ^{been} ~~are~~ fundamentally different in every case. How did they

behave in Hungary? This same person told me that the respondent wore a mask constantly in Hungary, like an actor of the Kabuki theater. He was supposedly a tyrannical boss at Szabad Nép, and had a relentless logic which hurt. I can easily believe this because the respondent once told me that when he was a Communist, he firmly believed that a Communist had to be hard, and that cruelty in the Communist course was often justified. Also, ^{one senses} ~~where~~ ^{under a top layer of charm,} ~~there~~ ^{is} a touch of austerity in his personality, which makes one suppose that the charge may not be unjustified. He would probably be extremely intolerant and contemptuous of people he considered intellectually inferior.

Another acquaintance, somewhat more maliciously, said that the respondent had been a blinkered and dogmatic follower of the Party line before his change, and that he pretended to be stupid, because the Party distrusted intelligent people. I considered ~~the~~ the latter claim unlikely. More to the point, however, is the comment that the respondent is somewhat like the self-important, good student in Karinthy's Tanár Úr Kérem. He supposedly went around in shabby, ^{bedraggled} ~~in~~ clothes in order to resemble ^a ~~the~~ a member of the working class. He once appeared at ~~the~~ ^a reception held at the opera, with unbrushed hair wearing an unpressed and shabby yellow suit and a dirty shirt open at the neck. He apparently had to make special efforts to prove that he was a good kader because his

father had been a leader of the bourgeois democratic party.

Socially he belongs to that highly sophisticated and cultivated Jewish middle class from which provided such a considerable percentage of the Communist intellectual elite. He is fastidious, complex, highly intellectually responsive. An opportunist?