

extra

Interviewer:
A. Reisch

May 10, 11, 13

I. PERSONAL INVENTORY

1. Name: M-46
2. Age: 48
3. Sex: Male
4. Marital Status: Single
5. Religion: Calvinist
6. Born: Was born in Hajdunanas, Hajdu County.
7. Respondent spent most of his life in Debrecen.
8. Respondent lived in Debrecen when the revolution broke out.
9. Respondent spent three years in the Soviet Union as a prisoner-of-war, from 1944-47.
10. Respondent served in the Hungarian Army since 1930 and was mobilized several times until 1940. He held the rank of a sergeant then. He fought in 1942 on the Russian front -- in Lithuania and Bielo Russia. He was wounded and evacuated to Hungary. He was taken prisoner by the Russians near Budapest in 1944.
11. Education: four years of elementary schooling; four years' gymnasium in Debrecen; three years' vocational commercial schooling in Debrecen. In 1956 he obtained the statistician's diploma in Budapest.
12. Respondent's occupation: respondent was first a tradesman then a city employee and a statistician.

From 1923-26, apprentice with the Association of Hungarian Public Functionaries; from 1927-1932, store manager in Hajduboszormeny, later in Budapest; was laid off during the economic crisis; from 1933-34, had his own store in Debrecen (it was a grocery store); from 1934-42, commercial agent in Debrecen; 1942 -- sent to the Russian front where he was wounded and sent back to Debrecen; 1942-50, functionary (public) and recorder with the Dept. of Social Affairs of the City of Debrecen; 1951-56, recorder and statistician with the Dept. of Planning and Statistics of the City Council of Debrecen.

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13. Respondent's mother, 69, lives in Debrecen.
14. Respondent has two brothers, ages 40 and 35, who live in New York City; two married sisters live in Debrecen.
15. Respondent has no children.
16. Respondent left Hungary on November 23, 1956.
17. Respondent arrived in the US on December 27, 1956.
18. Respondent has been at Camp Kilmer, N. J. and New York City.
19. Respondent's immediate plans:

He would like to work for the Statistical Bureau here, but he may well remain a tradesman since he is now working with a Hungarian export-import firm in this city.
20. Respondent was not interviewed by any Western organizations since leaving Hungary.
21. Respondent speaks Hungarian and German.
22. No.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Respondent was born in Hajdu County, in the Eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain. The inhabitants of that part of Hungary were always famous for their spirit of independence and freedom. For centuries, they have fought against the Turks and the Germans, and gave soldiers to Bocskay, Bethlen and Rakoczi. Under the Hapsburgs, the cities of Hajdu were able to maintain a certain degree of autonomy. At the same time, Hajdu is the center of the Calvinist Church in Hungary, and the majority of its inhabitants belong to that faith. Under Horthy, a Calvinist himself, Hajdu had another period of prosperity.

The county has no villages, but rural towns, flourishing in the course of history. The peasantry was gradually able to acquire wealth and culture, and it was in that country that a non-German and non-Jewish class of merchants and craftsmen developed. Respondent's father was a well-to-do butcher who wanted his son to continue his trade. But the latter wanted to be a merchant and successfully achieved his aim.

World War II upset his career and he wound up as a city functionary for the county-seat of Debrecen. Three years of captivity in the Soviet Union under very difficult circumstances broke him down to the point of committing suicide. His attempt failed and he resumed his struggle for existence as a city functionary, until last year's revolution.

Respondent's main characteristics are an inherited stubbornness, a keen common good sense and judgment, and a genuine desire to help others. He once owned a small store in Debrecen, and gave credit to all his poor customers, until he went bankrupt. During the war, he helped the poor and the Jews while working for the city's social service. In the Soviet Union, the misery and sufferings of the Russian people aroused his compassion. Under Communism he was on the people's side ("Nobody went to jail because of me...."), even though the peasants considered him a servant of the state.

II. MAJOR SALIENCE AND WARM-UP QUESTION

Respondent possesses a sound judgment and most of the time, his opinions make sense. His intelligence, based on the solid common good sense of the Hungarian peasant, is developed and deductive. He has changing moods, being successively very talkative, humorous, obstinate and decided, then depressed, worried and silent. But he never ceased to remain polite, calm and co-operative during the whole interview. His friendliness impressed this interviewer in whom respondent inspired the greatest confidence. The man's honesty is beyond doubt. He always explained clearly his motives, and never held back any information when probed by the interviewer.

Respondent attaches a great importance to religion, but rightly complains about the weakness of his church leaders. It is a fact that Bishop Peter is the Communists' puppet, and that Bishop Bereczky made many concessions to the regime. It should be perhaps mentioned that the Calvinists have generally put the nation before religion, but that their faith, in which Bible reading plays the most significant part, greatly influenced their political outlook. They are also very conscious of and attached to the popular roots. Besides their cultural ties with the West, they have preserved Hungary's Eastern mentality. This has nothing in common with communism, but is the fostering of the East-European peasant form of life and culture.

It can be said that the people of Hajdu, including the respondent, adjusted themselves to communism on the outside, but that inside, they consistently opposed it, and used every means at their disposal to outplay the regime. They were helped in this by their unity, their common good sense and their obstinate and even stubborn character. Respondent was probably one of the most Hungarian among the Hungarians this interviewer had a chance to meet. He is very missed by his colleagues in Debrecen, who all like and respect him, and who are glad to know that he can now live and work in freedom. Described in a few words, respondent is an honest and a good man, which is very much nowadays.

II. MAJOR SALIENCE AND WARM-UP QUESTION

I would tell the Americans that from October 23 till November 4, 1956 the Hungarian people who could not smile for 12 years, almost like in the Soviet Union, were happy and smiling. The whole country smiled and felt free and young again. Even the Communists felt this way. When the Soviets crushed the revolution, killed the sleeping Hungarian soldiers in Debrecen and demolished many buildings inhabited by civilians only, my boss, who was a Communist, said, "I would like to spit at my own face for being the member of such a party!"

III. CHRONOLOGY OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, ACTIONS, ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS DURING THE REVOLUTION.

[Debrecen is a city 120,000 inhabitants in Eastern Hungary and is the capital of the Hajdu-Bihar County. It is the center of the richest agricultural region in Hungary and the stronghold of the Calvinist Church in the country. It has two universities -- medical and natural sciences.]

October 23

At 10 a.m., 2,000 students held a meeting at the university. The Party leaders of the county just laughed and said, "Let them talk." Debrecen was filled with AVH members, Russian troops and civilians. Around noon I saw the students marching in the streets and shouting, "Out with the Russians! The uranium mines for Hungary!" They sent a delegation to the various secondary schools, asking them to also take part in the demonstrations. They accepted and were even followed by some elementary school students.

At 3 p.m. the students asked the workers of Debrecen to join them. They went to the wagon factory which employs 3,000 workers. They were refused entrance, but climbed over the fence. The workers ceased working and followed them. The workers of all the other factories joined them. Finally, the entire city went out on the street and all traffic stopped. At 5 p.m. I left my office and joined the demonstrators. In the evening people began to take off the red stars.

I thought that I was dreaming and could not believe what was happening. The AVH Party functionaries were there and they did not do anything. I saw the red star being taken off from the city council house and the office of the Hungarian State Railways. At 9 p.m. I went home to stay with my old mother.

The students had 16 demands. They obliged the Communist newspaper, Nepalp, to publish a special issue at 8 p.m. which contained these demands. It was only one page which sold for 30 fillers. The people fought wildly to get one copy and would even pay one or two forints for it.

The students went to the police quarters and took off the red star, but at the AVH quarters the secret policemen came out with loaded machine guns and told the crowd that they would shoot. The people kept moving forward and were fired at. Three persons were killed.

In the evening, we already knew that the same events were taking place in the whole country.

October 24

Everybody wore national cockades on the streets and in the offices. When the people heard that there were three dead, they put a black ribbon on the cockades. I kept this cockade with me when I came to Austria.

A. The Demonstration

I thought of reprisals but had no fear. It was an exuberant crowd and nobody worried about any possible danger.

Debrecen was the city where there were stationed the most Russians in Hungary. On October 23 the Russians did not do a thing against the Hungarians. On October 24 they evacuated their civilians from the city to the airport. The Russians are not bad people; they suffer and they cannot open their mouths. I worked with them in Russia and I know how bitter and sad they are.

The students held demonstrations in different cities at the same time and this must have been organized. However, the mass demonstrations which followed were completely spontaneous.

On October 24 - 25, revolutionary councils were established in the wagon factory and in the city council. They called upon the police and the army to side with the revolution. The police joined immediately and the army followed a few days later. The soldiers came out from their barracks with a few small tanks. The Russian soldiers kept walking in the city. The people were angry at them, but loudspeakers kept telling them to remain quiet and to avoid a massacre.

and

The AVH, the army's political officers began to flee. All of the Communist Party officials and their families went out on October 24 to the airport under the protection of the Russian troops. The three victims were buried. On October 24 the Communist administration ceased to exist in Debrecen. Work ceased everywhere and in all enterprises revolutionary councils were elected. Only the people who were on the workers' side were elected to these councils.

In our office all 50 of us were in the revolutionary council. My director stayed. He was a good Hungarian and we all liked him. We asked him to remain our director. We knew that he was a Communist Party member because of his children.

From October 24 until November 4 the administration passed from the Communists' hands into those of the representatives of the Hungarian people. Everything was re-organized...police, army, etc. The streets were patrolled by police, soldiers, and civilians who formed the national guards. The weapons taken from the AVH were given to the civilians.

The best wheat in Hungary is found in Hajbuboszormeny. Everyday, trucks loaded with foodstuffs went to Budapest. The peasants offered free flour, potatoes, and chickens, and money.

From October 24 on, the Russians began to pour new divisions into Hungary. We could not sleep because of the noise made by the tanks (T-45s) and many ammunition cars coming from Zahony and Nyiregyhaza. Seventy-five per cent of the Russian troops came from that direction. We sensed that some big trouble was ahead. The Russians moved only during the night. Many women began to move to relatives in fear of them.

I kept listening to the Western radio broadcasts -- RFE and VOA. I told some colleagues that we should wage a guerilla warfare against the Russians since I felt that the Russians would not leave and that we were lost. I hoped that the West would help us.

By November 4 new leaders and directors, managers, etc. were elected everywhere. In the biggest hotel in Debrecen

the revolutionary council was chosen from the ranks of the waiters. A revolutionary paper was published daily.

The Russian Re-invasion - November 4

The people suspected nothing on the previous evening. At 4 a.m. I was awakened by loud shooting. After half-an-hour, the shooting was followed by a silence of death. My brother-in-law and I waited until 7 a.m. to go out and to see what had happened. Russian tanks were guarding the streets. The County Council house was surrounded by T-34s. There was practically no one in the streets. Trucks loaded with wild-looking Mongolians arrived and blocked all the streets. We took refuge in an alley. The Russians arrested the national guards of the County Council house.

After lunch I went to see my director and we went to look around the city. Russian tanks were stationed before the post office and the bishop's residence. Both buildings were damaged. The people told me that the Russians forced them out on the streets at 4 a.m. and fired at the post office with guns while this building was held by national guard (6 to 8 men) armed with rifles. They shot at the department store only to be able to break into it and to loot it. They also stole the money from the post office.

One of my colleague's brother, a student, was in the army. His regiment sided with the revolution and held the barrack. I went to the barrack in the afternoon. Tanks were guarding it and some 50 civilians were watching them from the distance.

The Russian political officers had told the troops that they had to storm the barrack which was occupied by bourgeois gangsters because these gangsters would kill harmless workers and citizens on the next day. The 20-year old primitive Russian soldiers believed everything. The Hungarian guards surrendered when they saw the tanks. Those who still slept were shot at.

I went to the gate and was told by the Russians that they did not know where my friend was. A civilian told us that the soldiers had been taken away on trucks to the AVH barracks. On the next day, after questioning, the civilians were released by the Russians. Three days later the Russians released the soldiers.

The die-hard Communist mayor of Debrecen, Menes, came back on November 4 and inspected the city in an armed car. The other Communist Party officials came back also and during the night they began to pick up the leaders of the revolution. On the same day they took over the administration again.

The revolutionary councils kept functioning until November 21 and still had something to say in the affairs at that time. However, all authority was in the mayor's hands.

During the night many persons were arrested. The people looked with the greatest disgust at the Communists who went back under the protection of the Russian weapons. We were sorry that we had not caught them and hanged them on October 23.

I listened every night to the radio until November 21 -- sometimes until 3 or 4 a.m. We did the same thing at the office. We waited for the help promised by RFE when they told the Freedom Fighters to hold on in Budapest and in the Bakony mountains. But we saw that there was no help coming. After two or three days I decided to leave Hungary. I worked for three years for the Russians in Russia. Afterwards, I counted the produces and animals that we sent to the Soviet Union. A suit which cost 1,250 forints to the State was sold for 250 forints to the Soviet Union and 1,900 forints to the people in Hungary.

People had to queue from 8 p.m. to have one pound of meat for 8 a.m. the following day when the store opened. At Hajdunanas there 15,000 pigs on March 1, 1956, 18,000 in June and 20,000 in November 1956. The pig stock had increased but there still was no meat.

I had a comparatively good job in the statistical department. We worked behind closed doors in a beautiful office

with free medical care. My basic salary was 1,150 forints plus 200-300 forints for my monthly trips. Nobody supervised me and I was entitled to a pension. I left with my younger brother who was a good lawyer and who earned 8,000-10,000 forints a month. I left because I did not want to work any longer for the Soviets. We would have preferred the bombs to fall on Hungary and to die rather than to continue to live as slaves.

I asked for one week's vacation, killed a pig to pay for the trip and left with my brother, his wife, mother-in-law and two children. We took the train for Budapest. We reached our destination on November 21 at 8 p.m. There were thousands of travelers. Because of the curfew we had to stay in the railway station until 6 a.m. Then we saw the ruins of our beautiful capital. We also bought two bottles of liquor to bribe Russian soldiers with. At the eastern station a railway man led us to a train for Gyor and he did not even ask for any tickets. Ninety per cent of the people went to the West. At every station people climbed in through the windows but nobody said a word.

At Gyor we made a deal with someone to take us on a truck to the border. Just as we were waiting for the truck we were arrested by the AVH. The major who questioned me told me that the country needed statisticians. I denied that I was going to the West and said that I wanted to visit my brother-in-law who lived near the border. They finally released us under the condition that my brother and his family go back to Debrecen. The next day we took a bus for the border to meet my brother-in-law but we found out that he had left for the West two weeks earlier. A Hungarian border guard told us to cross the border during the night since the Russians did not dare to move out. They offered to guide us over the border.

I crossed first guided by three green AVH border guards with a dog. I was somewhat afraid that they might shoot me but at Mosonszentmiklos the border guards helped the people to cross. They embraced me and told me that they may see me later in Austria. The next day they took over my brother and his family.

IV. EXPECTATIONS OF HELP FROM THE WEST

I hoped both for soldiers and weapons, especially from the US. I listened to the debates of the UN General Assembly and heard all of the delegates speaking in our favor.

We never gave up hope until November 18-19. My hopes were based on the Western radio broadcasts. RFE was always very encouraging but only was the BBC objective.

V. SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE AND ATTITUDES

A. Respondent's Family Background

My father was a butcher who exported to Vienna and Prague the famous sausages of Debrecen. He had a retail store with several employees. He wanted me to be a butcher also but I could not stand the grease on my hands and I became a merchant. The store closed after World War II. My mother had 10 holds of land (14 acres) from her father. We sold this land. My father owned 27 holds which we rented and a house. In 1949 the State took away 20 holds for a collective and gave six holds that we rented. This left us with 13 holds. We rented them but the peasant was unable to pay his rent because of the heavy deliveries. Because of the heavy taxes we owed (some 7,000 forints) we had to sell the house for 20,000 forints and give the land to the State which took it with great difficulty.

I was considered a kulak, that is a class alien, because of the 27 holds we once owned. My father completed four years of secondary schooling and my mother had six years of elementary schooling.

B. The Social Classes in Hungary

The peasantry -- divided in those who were forced to work in the collectives and the individual farmers. There were also a few kulaks who had more than 25 holds of land (up to 40 - 50 holds). There were about 200 kulaks in each of the 19 counties of the country.

The individual farmers worked day and night. I met one who owned seven holds. He had three children and they lived on bacon and soup. He worked from 3 a.m. till 8 p.m. and couldn't even buy a new pair of pants. All of his produces went to the State practically free [the State would pay three forints for one pound of fat pork]. The State sent the produces to the Soviet Union.

The members of the collectives -- 60 per cent of them were those who did not like to work and tried to live off the work of others. As a result, the average production of the collectives was lower than that of the individual farmers.

Many fields were invaded by weeds. We controlled every collective and we went out to all of them. In 1954 I went to see a collective near Debrecen. The people in the city had bread but they had to queue for it. In the villages the council fixed individual rations [four ounces per person]. The people of the collectives had no bread for three days and they blamed the kolkhoz and the government for it. They said they were former servants who received their wheat, salami and a pair of boots every year. Their children were not hungry in those days. Now they were the servants of the State and they were starving.

Few peasants left the country because the Hungarian peasants are extremely attached to the land they inherited from their ancestors and they refuse to leave it. The Communists had to take it away by force from them.

The workers -- the majority consisted of the industrial workers. I knew some who worked in the wagon factory. With a few exceptions, the directors, engineers, etc. all lived very poorly because their average wage did not exceed 1,000 forints which was the living wage in Hungary. Seventy per cent of them were married and had families. After the second child they received an allowance 50 forints; after the third child an allowance of 80 forints. There was nothing for clothing and the food was poor. Ninety per cent of the workers lived miserably.

The intelligentsia -- it consisted of the public functionaries, teachers, professors, doctors, engineers, etc. -- that is, the educated class which did not perform manual work. They were represented in every factory but some factory managers were Communists with four years of elementary schooling who only supervised the work of the employees. For eighty per cent of them their salary was not higher than that of the workers and their situation was bad too. A good suit cost 1,200 forints (one month's salary). A young teacher would start with 800 forints a month; a doctory with 1,000 forints.

I feel that I belong to the intelligentsia since I was a statistician.

Because of my occupation I knew all classes especially the peasantry because I was an agricultural statistician. However, I also met industrial workers and worked among intellectuals.

Some land workers received 700-800 forints for very hard work which was better paid before Communism. The peasantry was in a worse situation under Communism than before. The average production of the land was higher but the collective system ruined the agriculture in Hungary.

The former landowners were put into internment camps until 1953. Barons and counts had to work without pay on State farms. The opinion of the former lower class was that at last they worked. However, nothing changed under Communism which said that the country, land, -- everything -- belonged to the workers. Instead of becoming better, their lives became worse. For this they blamed the Communists.

C. How the Different Classes Felt Toward Each Other

The peasants did not like the intellectuals too well and they said that the intellectuals lived from nothing. They disliked the functionaries especially [^]who pressed them with heavy deliveries and served the State. The peasants had a hard life while the intellectuals sat behind their desks. The workers were a little envious because they worked behind machines and they felt that the intellectuals earned their living wages more easily.

When there were no eggs in the stores in Debrecen, the workers and intellectuals had to buy them from the peasants. The peasants did not sell the eggs at the price of one egg for two forints as the State did. Instead, one egg would sometimes cost five forints. They had to deliver 30 eggs per hold which the State bought for 18 filliers apiece. They were right for selling them for more and the others were also right for being angry with them for it. The peasant had to pay his land tax with wheat [four metric quintals for 10 holds. The State paid 60 forints for one quintal and a two-pound loaf of bread cost three forints.] The peasant, therefore, had to sell for more since this was his only source of income.

As a city functionary I had to partake in seminars or I would have been fired. I had to read the newspapers. Communists made beggars out of everybody and in this respect,

all the classes were brought closer together.

When I worked in Russia in a kolkhoz we saw, one day, the director of the collective arriving in a coach. That was Communistic equality. After I came back from Russia, a general's wife came to Debrecen to deliver a speech. She was wearing a beautiful American garb. This woman was the department head in the Ministry of the Interior.

E. How an Individual Might Advance Himself in Communist Hungary

Before Communism, Debrecen with its territory of 176,000 holds, was one of the greatest cities in the world as far as superfluity goes. It was a big city of patricians with 200-300 rich farmers. They were the leaders of the city and after Communism they lost most of their land and houses and became poor people.

Collective farms were set up but the decent people did not join until they felt the rope around their necks. The new leaders were mostly scoundrels and loafers who bragged, flattered the Communists, and joined the Communist Party. In this way they could become managers and department heads. Since I was not a Party member I would always have remained a referent.

The exceptional talent was taken into consideration. For example, the former owner of an enterprise was made its director. This applied especially to the Jews. In Debrecen, a Jew lost his clothing store and although he was considered a capitalist, he became manager of a State store. The Jews held many directing and supervising positions and, as in the Soviet Union, they were not popular for that reason.

VI. FAMILY LIFE UNDER COMMUNISM

A. The Effect of Communism on Family Life

Communism had a loosening effect on family life. For example, in Debrecen gardener lived with his wife and three children. He worked on rented land. Communism came and he joined the Communist Party and became the cotton manager for the whole Hajdu County. His wife was a simple woman. He had his own car and being a director had many typists and secretaries. He had affairs with them and neglected his wife who was not good enough for him any more. Some Communists achieved high ranking positions in the army. A former sergeant and painter became a political major. He also left his wife for other women. Men and women worked together and there were many office romances and much free love.

There was no more religious instruction and people could not go to church as before. The evangelistic services in Debrecen were suppressed by the Communists. The good priests and ministers were sent away to remote villages. The Communists made lists of people who went to church, threatened them with dismissal or transfer and ~~talked~~ talked them out of going. Today 75 per cent less people than before dare to go to church.

Later, the Communists saw that free love and loose family life had harmful effects and they decided that a true and good Communist must lead a good family life. Some Communists who did not conform were fired. In Russia some people lived for years some 7,000 miles away from their families.

B. The Way Children Are Brought Up

The children obeyed their parents less and did not want to listen to them. At 18 everybody was an adult. The children almost beat their teachers who could not inflict physical punishment upon them. Before Communism, the wife of a city functionary did not work. Under Communism, the women were also asked to work and to produce. This was their so-called liberation. The children were more independent and talked to the parents in a tone they would not dare to use before.

The children, just as the adults, were not given any time to think under Communism. In public school, the Communists taught them subjects in the elementary grades that are taught here in the secondary schools. The parents had to do the childrens' homework.

C. Marriage, Courtship, and Sex Patterns

1. In my opinion, a change occurred. Before Communism, the rich married the rich and the poor married the poor. A rich girl could not marry a poor man or vice versa. Marriages based on love were more difficult. Under Communism, everybody could marry whoever she or he wanted to marry.

Before Communism, a middle-aged major would marry a girl of 20. Today it is the opposite. Once I saw a woman of 30 and a young man of 18 coming to the city hall to get married. In another instance, a 50-year old woman married a 20-year old man. On the average, the wife was five to six years older than the husband who, before Communism, was usually ten years older.

2. The Communists abolished the brothels in 1950 and sent the women to construction work camps and State farms. The morals were loosened since men and women had to attend seminars together in the evening. There were several secret meeting places in Debrecen.

Some friends of mine used to rent a room to one or two girl students, 13 or 14 years old. One of the girls reported that her teacher told them that sexual life was necessary and that it helped studying also.

3. The Communist press never mentioned these problems. It never published any news on crimes and robberies either. There were no such things in Hungary under Communism.

D. Friendship

1. The Communists abolished the former social barriers and there was no more class distinction. Today, anybody could go to a dance, etc. There was only the upper class which consisted of the 10,000 top Communists who lived far from the proletariat behind closed doors.

Our director was a friend of mine and, although he knew that I had a kulak background, we discussed the mistakes of Communism together. The Party secretary was also my friend and we used to meet and have dinner together. However, we left politics out of the friendship.

In theory, the slogan that no man should be exploited by another man was attractive. Once I was almost forced to marry a rich girl with 200 holds. In my opinion, the rich patricians and peasants of Debrecen were all hungry for land. They worked like horses, ate just enough not to starve only to be able to buy 10 more holds of land. I condemned this because sometimes, four or five children would be waiting for the death of their parents in order to receive their share of the lot. Some even killed their parents.

Communism abolished the fortunes but it was bad because it was nothing but State capitalism just as in the Soviet Union.

E. Crime and Alcoholism

1. Officially, there were no crimes in Hungary. The rate increased, especially the embezzlements, in the factories. The managers who handled much money began to take advantage of it and millions of forints were stolen by such people. Some directors had a State farm with 1,000 holds under their management. Some enterprise managers had 150 stores with a turnover of millions of forints in cash and goods per month. Their pay was 2,000-2,500 forints a month and seemed very small to them compared to their responsibilities.

The number of young criminals increased. The youngsters received no pocket money from their parents and they wanted to have some entertainment. Many liked liquor which was expensive. According to the Communist press, there was no juvenile delinquency in the country.

The police were rather inefficient. There were badly paid and did not care much about the criminals.

2. Alcoholism increased very much. People drank more because of their embitterment. Debrecen was filled with drunkards -- among them, young people and women.

3. There were only four or five jampecs in Debrecen. They were young workers of 17 - 18, who wanted to show off. They wore tight pants and danced American dances. The Communists condemned them.

VII. RELIGION

A. Effects of the Communist Rule on Religious Life in Hungary

A former mayor of Debrecen was first a tinner in a wagon factory. He was sent to a Communist school and became mayor of the city (the fourth largest in the country). He had two assistants, one of whom was a former priest who was a strong leftist. A year ago, the government appointed him the supervisor of the Hungarian Protestant Churches. He was the representative of the State above the churches and looked after all the executions of orders of the State toward the churches.

In my opinion, the Catholics were oppressed more than the Protestants. We had a bishop, Janos Peter, whom I did not like. He was not a Mindszenty. The Catholic Church took a stronger stand against the Communists, while Janos Peter worked with them and obtained certain concessions.

During a May 1st parade, the Communists forced the Catholics to carry the portraits of Stalin and Rakosi. In Debrecen, 90 per cent of the people were Protestants.

B. Religion plays an important role in my life. I think that it was God's will that I did not commit suicide on two occasions -- first, when I came back from the Soviet Union and second, when I arrived in the US last winter. Religion was an equal factor in my parents' lives. I think that I am more religious than the average person in Hungary. However, I had to attend church less often under Communism.

The people in Hungary attend church and give their children religious instructions secretly. The religious feeling is alive in 90 per cent of the Hungarian people. After October 24 all the churches were filled. Before Communism, I taught Sunday school, took part in the Boy Scout movement and in the activities of various Christian Youth associations.

C. The relationship between Church and State should be like it was before Communism. The churches should receive State support. Religion must be one of the main branches of education. The churches should have something to say in the affairs of the state since they embrace the entire nation. They should have some legislative and administrative role.

D. The Jewish Minority
religion

The Jewish was just as oppressed as the other religions. In Debrecen, the beautiful Jewish synagogue damaged during the war, was never repaired. Nobody attends services in this synagogue today.

I knew numerous Jews because they played, and still play, a big role in commerce and business. The Jews believe that they are God's chosen people and as such must receive a special treatment in this world. Their will and talent are aimed at that end and most of the time they are successful.

In the Soviet Union the people did not like them because they were the supervisors and did not work. It was the same in Hungary. The Jews were store and enterprise managers and none of them performed physical work.

I always tried to learn from them professionally. It was natural that they were better off than the other people since they spent less and did not throw away any money. They also helped each other much better than the Christians.

By nature, the Jews could ~~acclaminate~~ ^{acclaminate} themselves to any regime. As one says, "When thrown out through the door, they came back through the window." In 1944 every Hungarian condemned the ghettos and helped the Jews who were persecuted by the Nazis and the Germans. In 1945 I was told that some of the surviving Jews, who came back from Germany, avenged themselves individually. The Jews went back to work to their stores. In 1947 their stores and workshops were also nationalized. With heavy hearts they sided with the Communists. Almost 50 per cent of them joined the Communist Party. They got

good jobs and one can say that their situation was just as good as before 1945.

3. The attitude of the Jews during the revolution

During the revolution, the Jews put on national cockades twice as big as ours. Some, who were former store-owners, were glad because they hoped to get back their properties. In brief, they were more enthusiastic than most other people. After November 4, the Jews said that they knew the revolution would end in failure and sided again with the Kadar regime.

4. I think it is true that the Jews are afraid of an independent Hungary. They prefer to see the Russian troops in the country. For example, their behavior created many hostile feelings among the peasants of the county from whom a Jew, as head of the commissariat, had taken away their land.

VIII. THE HUNGARIAN YOUTH

A. The Hungarian youth includes all those from 10 to 24 years of age. The youth was brought up under Communism but, it hated the Russians because it heard from its parents what they did in 1945.

In the Soviet Union the youth is the same with the only exception that there are a few more Communists there than in Hungary. When the Russians came in 1945 a bum went to them claiming that he was a big Communist. However, a young Russian officer slapped him.

B. The youth made the revolution and this was only natural. Youth has always aims and dreams -- an inner idealistic fire which does not burn any more in a man of 40. A child of four can judge if the actions of an adult are right or wrong. The children saw how their older professors taught Marxism-Leninism in school and felt that it was all a lie. Youth dared to stand up and throw away the Communist yoke. The Communists underestimated all of these factors in October and they thought that the demands of the youth were nothing serious.

The young people were followed by their fathers, the workers. The whole country stood behind the youth and formed one soul and one body. The adults became young, too, and did not care any more about the danger represented by the Russian troops.

C. Schools and the Educational System in Hungary Under Communism

The Communist harrassed the students in the same way as they harrassed the adults, especially in 1947 when they took over the entire country. By giving them too much to study the Communists made the students' lives uncomfortable. Later, they realized themselves that even by working day and night the students could not learn everything. They introduced Marxist-Leninist doctrines, distorted Hungarian history by modelling it on the Communist ideology. The proletarians, like Dozsa,

were the only heroes while all of the youth complained about this.

I had to control the schools and universities in Debrecen and in Hajdu County -- that is, the number of students registered, their family origin and their ~~progress~~ progress. First, the children worker and peasant origin and of Communist Party members were admitted in unlimited numbers to the university, even if their marks were not good. These were followed by the non-Communists of worker origin and, finally, by the children of intellectuals -- but only those with excellent marks.

A few old professors -- famous scientists -- remained in the universities. Even the Communists respected them. They dismissed such people only if they openly turned against the regime. Otherwise, they kept them and paid them well. Only Communist Party members could become directors and their knowledge and capability were inferior to that of their subordinates. Following the same pattern, a former charwoman became director of the post office. Those, who had no knowledge, did everything to get into the Party in order to secure a good job and to get ahead.

E. The Communists' Indoctrination of the Youth

1. The Communists tried to win over the youth. There were many illegitimate children who were brought up by the State. Every week the students were given four to five hours of Marxism-Leninism.

2. The Communists failed because the youth saw the black future which awaited them. It was as simple as that. A young doctor would get 1,000 forints when he finished his studies and began to work. His wife would have to work also. That is why youth revolted. The youths saw no future and said, "We must die or live."

IX. MAJOR DISSATISFACTIONS AS FELT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

A. I received 300 forints more than the average salary of 1,000 forints in Hungary. It meant that I was able to buy one more poplin shirt than the other people. I had to support my sick mother. We lost most of our land under Communism. My living wage should have been 2,000 forints. I was bitter when it cost me one month's salary to buy a suit and when one egg cost two to three forints.

B. The people were not even able to buy for the little money they had. Oranges were not available for 12 years, except once or twice a year and they were too expensive for most people. There were no lemons except for the soccer players and there was no more trade. Only a year ago, people had to queue for meat.

X. THE ECONOMIC LIFE

A. The Standard of Living

1. I did not have to pay any rent but, my case was exceptional. My mother had the apartment rent-free for life after we sold our house.

I had breakfast and dinner at home and ate lunch for four forints at the canteen of the county council house. I always bought a chicken for Sunday and spent approximately 700 forints per month for food. The rest of my 1,300 forints' salary was spent for clothing and shoe repairs. I had to visit a lot of towns and villages and had to walk a lot.

Often, both food and clothing caused me great difficulty. Sometimes, I had to queue through a whole night after work in order to buy some meat.

In Budapest I saw womens' furs for 8,000-10,000 forints. Nobody could afford them and the workers were enraged when they saw these articles in the shop windows.

Before Communism, one could buy everything in Hungary. Debrecen's stores were always well supplied with meat. The standard of living was lowered under Communism. The Soviets took everything away from us and let us have just enough so that we could not die from hunger and be able to work the next day.

The standard of living was lowest in 1952-53 when bread was rationed at four ounces a day. The best years were 1947-48 when there were ~~xxxx~~ private stores and commerce. As soon as the Communists took over completely, the economic situation only became worse starting with the Five Year Plan.

2. I knew at Hajdunanas a very capable carpenter. He always had plenty of food and wine. He was able to keep his business under Communism and the peasants liked him because he worked well. He was able to buy land and vineyards although this was forbidden.

In Debrecen, I knew a former border guard commander who had three holds of vineyards. His son became an

the officer at Kossuth Military Academy. The father refused to work for the Communists and lived off the income of his vineyards. He looked after it himself and, in the fall, he sold his wine for 12 forints without the knowledge of the authorities.

3. First, it was the economic exploitation by the Soviet Union which accounted for the low Hungarian standard of living. Then, the meager salaries of the workers who, as a result, did not work well and did not produce what they could have ~~done~~ under other circumstances.

The majority of the production managers were not experts. For example, the manager of the greatest hotel and restaurant in Debrecen was a shoemaker and former AVH officer. These people did not know how to supervise their employees. The workers sabotaged wherever they could. The Communists paid them piece, and not hour, wages. The workers cheated and did not produce half of what they were paid for. The practice of cheating was general since nobody wanted to produce for the Soviets and since it was necessary to do it in order to earn the 1,000 forints.

B. Respondent's Income

My monthly was 1,300 forints with travel allowances.

Altogether, I have loaned 2,300 forints to the State. This was compulsory. In 1952-53, one had to give an entire month's salary. Now, 50 per cent of one month's pay is deducted in 10 months.

The following items were deducted from my salary: peace loan, 50 forints a month; income tax; 40 forints; trade union fee, 10 forints. This left me 950 forints.

4. I did additional census work under another name without the knowledge of the council and was able to earn an additional 1,000 forints a year.

5. In 1951, my starting salary as a referent was 600 forints a month. It rose to 820 forints in 1952 when all wages were re-organized throughout the country.

In 1954 my salary rose to 1,150 forints.

C. Retail prices in Hungary

1. The State stores sold their items cheaper since they paid nothing for the goods to the peasants. They sold only the bad produces and exported the good ones. The State stores regulated the prices. The workers were often angry at the peasants when they sold an egg for five forints (three hours' work) and they would break their eggs on the market. Both workers and peasants were right. However, the peasants were starving also and were selling their last eggs in order to buy shoes for their children.

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In the Soviet Union, in 1946, bread^arationed and two pounds cost one ruble in the State stores and 40 rubles from the peasants.

The differentials changed with the season. When eggs were plentiful, both prices were two forints and the people bought the fresh eggs from the peasants.

2. The quality of the goods sold changed. In 1948 the quality was better but the regime exported the good articles. There were two productions -- one for exporting and one for internal consumption. When an export article was faulty, it was sold on the home market. As the years went by, the quality decreased and the prices increased. The lard we bought was mixed with oil and one had to kill a pig in order to get pure lard.

3. After being away for 22 years from my business, I was offered the position of inspector of some 50 State stores. Despite the higher wages, I refused. Most managers are former merchants who worked well and knew their business. Some of the State stores handled millions of forints and a shoemaker could not manage them. The shortages were not their fault -- they simply did not receive any goods.

Spare parts were rare and there was always trouble with them. The State did not want to spend money

on them and did not buy them with the products it imported.

4. Meat, lard (a year ago) were in short supply. There were no colonial fruits for 12 years. Coffee, and tea sold for exorbitant prices. Two pounds of coffee cost 300 forints; four ounces of chocolate, 20 forints; a tin of sardines, 30 forints.

6. A store manager would get 100 lemons for 1000 customers. The manager would put the lemons under the counter and give them to his favorite customers or relatives.

The State sold motorcycles (Csepel) but the stores only got five or six chains and there were thousands of motorcycles sold. The store employees' salary was 800 forints and the store manager earned 1,000 a month. They would accept a 100 forints' commission and sell the chain to the customer.

Everybody could sell a product for the price he wanted. It was not black marketing and it was not dangerous.

In 1948-49 the Communists began to persecute the kulaks. They searched their homes because soap and lard became scarce. When they found such foodstuffs in a kulak's home they confiscated them. One could not store any food in Hungary under Communism.

D. Working Conditions

I worked 48 hours a week -- from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. and until 1 P.M. on Saturdays.

I liked my work. As an employee of the city's department of social affairs I was able to have the people and to give money to those who needed it. Under Communism, there was, supposedly, no more poor people. I was moved to the statistical department because I knew how to calculate. In 1951 the Ministry of Statistics was decentralized and every county and district were given statistical inspectors. This increased the staff from 3,000 to 4,000 persons. The districts re-

ported to the counties, the counties to the central office in Budapest which handed the reports to the top Party leaders and to the ministers.

I was able to help the people. I did not denounce all of the irregularities and countless false data I found in the declarations of all enterprises, although the supplying of false information was punishable by six months to five years' imprisonment. Nobody went to jail because of me.

Sometimes I worked in the office and, at other times, I worked in the country. Our district had 19 villages and four towns. I spent 40 per cent of my time in the office and 60 per cent in the country in order to control and inspect. We were 50 people in the statistical office for the entire county.

My relations with my co-workers were the best. They all liked me.

I was the oldest employee and all of my superiors were my friends. My direct supervisor also came to the US.

2. I was one of three employees with high school diplomas. Under Communism, it was necessary to have a statistician's diploma which I obtained in 1954.

3. The vacation program grew worse year after year. Many people took advantage of it before; now, only eight per cent of the personnel of any enterprise can go every year. In 1954 I spent two weeks on Lake Balaton for 102 forints. We were 50 employees and we could only send four employees on vacation each year. We sent those who were ill or those who worked a great deal. The Party secretary, the factory manager, and the president of the trade union committee were those who decided these matters. The Party controlled the trade unions which were just a tool in its hands.

The medical insurance was better than that of the US. The doctors of the national health insurance were excellent. The best doctors were there -- even those who also practiced privately. They could not always give expensive drugs but, if a Communist official asked for ~~them~~ such drugs, he would always receive them.

The Pensions

The government increased the pensions of the employees of the former regime up to 200 forints. For the new employees who worked under Communism the minimum pension was 500 forints a month after 65 years. On the average, such pensions amounted to 50 per cent of one's salary.

E. Respondent's Opinions on Country Life and Agriculture in Hungary

1. I would always prefer to live in my good town -- Debrecen -- which I like ~~xxx~~ more than any other town. I like its swimming pool and bath -- the best in Hungary. There are also beautiful woods in Debrecen and more trees than in New York.

The agricultural workers had better food and better clothing since they produced the foodstuffs and could kill pigs secretly. The peasant girls were more elegant than those of the cities.

The general standard of living was higher in the country. Politically, it was easier in the country where the Party organs were generally weaker. The peasants who were Communists were not as convinced and die-hard as the Communist of the cities and felt closer to the other peasants.

2. Respondent's Opinion About Collectivization

Everybody thought that this would be bad for the entire country. We saw the introduction of the communal kitchen system. As a result, only the bums, thieves, and beggars of the countryside joined the collectives. When the government saw it could not do much with these people who ruined the former estates, it began to hit the individual farmers with heavy taxes in order to force them to join the collectives. The State took the peasants' land and gave them other land located far away and with poor soil. Many farmers were forced to join the collectives in this way. The bums continued

to stay id and the peasants could not work the five hundred holds of the collective. The city employees were often ordered out on Sundays to pull the weeds in the fields.

All Hungarian peasants opposed the collectivization, except for the ~~many~~ tramps. When these tramps had to work, they also left the collectives. The Hungarian peasants want to own their own land and to produce for themselves and not for others.

Under Imre Nagy, some 40 to 50 collectives in Hajdu county were dissolved. The collective system disintegrated during the revolution. The peasants divided the land, the animals, the machinery and each farmer began to work on his own land. All of the collectives were set up by means of coercion. I knew more than half of the 220 collectives of the county. After the revolution, there were, perhaps, 25 collectives left in Debrecen. Maybe 60 collectives were dissolved in the county, but since we did not work we could not control this figure.

4. In an independent Hungary, I would like to see private farming. The State farms could remain with better wages and experts. The Communists mechanized the agriculture, but had no manure and used chemical fertilizers.

The tax on a horse was 500 forints and very few peasants had horses. The deliveries did not leave enough produces to feed the animals and the stock decreased. The farmer who formerly had 50 pigs was lucky now to keep ten.

XI. THE POLITICAL LIFE

A. The Situation Before 1948

1. I was a member, since 1936, of the Smallholders' Party because of my family origin. The peasants were my friends and my father belonged to that same party. I took no active part in politics.

2. I was embittered after my return from the Soviet Union in 1947 and I hanged myself. However, someone cut the rope. I had to clear snow in Sverdolski with poor Russian men and women dressed in rags, while a Russian woman, dressed in furs, stepped out of a luxurious car. This was the equality preached by the Communists.

B. The convinced die-hard Communists, who would have even killed their parents for the sake of their beliefs, were very rare. For example, Menes, the mayor of Debrecen, former wagon factory worker, with a Russian wife, took part in the pre-war Communist movement.

The majority of the members joined the Communist Party for money. There were the careerists and, unfortunately, most of them were Jews. They wanted to live well and it did not matter to them which regime they served. Also, 70 per cent of the Nazi leaders became the best Communists in Debrecen. There were some people who joined the Communist Party to keep their positions, not because they were convinced but because of consideration for their wives and children.

In my opinion, the convinced Communists made up 20 per cent of the membership, the careerists 60 per cent, and those who were forced to join the Party, 20 per cent.

2. I will explain these changes in the following way: when the misery reached an extreme hate, when the glass was filled to the rim, and fists were ready to strike, the Party had to calm the people and decided to make some changes. The Communists did terrible things to the kulaks. They were in rags and had to pay five times more taxes than the other peasants. The Communist council chairman beat them like dogs and threatened to hand them over to the AVH.

The differences within the Party were obvious. They were caused by human nature since there are not two men who are similar. Some Communists were envious or jealous of others. They renounced each other, wrote anonymous letters. The whole country saw how Rajk was condemned to death.

Every opinion was good for three months and changed continually as well as the instructions. My younger brother, a district judge, had to learn the new decrees every day. The Communists did not know the right direction -- they groped and acted haphazardly.

3. The Communist Party members condemned their leaders secretly among themselves but, in public they said that the Party was good and wanted to improve its work and make good its mistakes.

4. I think that the top leaders were not convinced Communists. They thought only of having a good life and lots of money. Rakosi, Gero, Vas, Hegedus --- were men without any conscience.

C. Opposition to the Communist Government

It was not possible to resist openly but, every Hungarian resisted in the way he could. The workers loafed or slowed down the production. All of them knew that their products left the country. Many workers were jailed for sabotage. In the wagon factory in Debrecen everybody loafed.

The kulaks who had no seeds would plow their fields without planting seeds. The Communists called this sabotage.

2. The terror was too widespread at all times. On Sundays we had seminars, we had to attend Party organizations, were given five or six houses each to go there and perform propaganda work or to get peace loans. We would usually speak about something else.

3. I did not know about the activities of the intellectuals until only recently. Before, the system of terror was too tight and the press did not tell us anything. I heard of the Petofi Circle just before the revolution.

Writers and artists must be free. When these people are put in frames their basic nature and talents are limited. Their artistic natures turned against Communism because it was like a jail to them. The intellectuals felt this imprisonment more than the workers behind machines. An artist wants to express and develop his ideas and cannot work under command. He is above the average person and sees and understands more things.

The true and real writers, like Petofi and Vorosmarty, always voiced the complaints of the Hungarian people. Last year, the writers could visit the peasants and the workers and feel everywhere the desire for freedom.

XII. THE APPARATUS OF POWER

A. The Secret Police

1. The majority of the secret policemen were gypsies, scoundrels and tramps. There were also the careerists among them and the Jews. A Jew commanded the AVH in Debrecen.

I hated the AVH and when I saw a member on the street I turned my face away.

The gypsies in Debrecen lived better than the workers and the functionaries. They stole without working. Once, the city decided to place 200 gypsies in a collective on the Hortobagy but none could be found. The gypsies, illiterate and cruel, with sadistic tendencies were the best men in the AVH.

I tried to avoid the AVH as much as possible. A friend of mine, a former officer under Horthy, was arrested by the AVH in connection with the Rajk affair and I still do not know what happened to him. One of my pre-war employees was arrested and tortured by the AVH. He remained unemployed for years and works as a manual laborer today.

8. When Hungary is independent the secret policemen should be put in an internment camp and put to work in mines as hard laborers.

9. Eighty per cent of the regular police were decent people who sided with the revolution. Only the commanders were convinced or careerist Communists.

The police could be bribed and also the AVH. In 1951, a worker and a 24-year old policeman helped me to census the kulaks. We had the right to search their homes. A certain kulak owed 20 quintals of corn in deliveries. We told him to send it within 24 hours to the council house. He told us that he had no corn but the policeman found some 20-25 quintals of it in the attics. We were supposed to confiscate it but I felt with the kulak and wanted to help him. The policeman asked the peasant if he had some pigs. Finally, he

agreed to take two quintals of corn and we asked the kulak to deliver six quintals the next day and to hide the rest in another place.

B. The Courts

My younger brother was a judge from 1942 till 1955. Before Communism, the judges in Hungary were extremely honest. They had a decent salary and could not be bribed. Under Communism, my brother earned only 1,550 forints a month. Finally, he became a lawyer and earned from 5,000-10,000 forints a month.

3. I do not know anything about the peoples' courts of 1945-47 since I was in Russia during that time.

5. I was a prisoner of war in Russia from 1945 to 1947. These three years were extremely difficult for me. I worked in kolkhozes, in mines, etc. I fell sick several times, starved to the point of eating burned horse bones or raw cabbage. When I came back to Hungary I weighed only 80 pounds.

C. The Hungarian Army

1. The Hungarian Army sided with the revolution a few days after October 23rd. However, the army in Debrecen had only rifles and no heavy artillery. The soldiers dismissed their former officers, elected revolutionary councils, and new commanders. They provided guards for the city council. These guards were composed of one policeman, one soldier, and one civilian.

I was not surprised by the army's behavior. The soldiers were people like us.

D. One cannot say that the Hungarian feelings about the Russian Army are due to the events of 1848. Before the Russians came into Hungary in 1944, the Germans made a huge propaganda campaign telling all about the horrors of Communism and those committed by the Russian troops. This made me even hate the color red. I only knew the Russians on the front near Budapest in 1945 when I was taken prisoner.

In Debrecen they raped and even killed some women. They looted and stole food. The gypsies led them to the houses of the rich people and they stole whatever they could.

3. The Hungarian people did not forget this and their opinion of the Russians did not change since 1945. They hate the Russians, especially the Russian women. The Russian soldiers received 6,000-7,000 forints and had canteens where they could get everything for half price. Their women were idle and dressed well.

Many Russians came to Debrecen from Vienna after the Austrian Peace Treaty. They had more culture and behaved better than the troops which came to Hungary after November 4. They had few contacts with the civilians; only with the prostitutes who were the scum of Debrecen. They lived near the airport in a separate district and paid twice the amount of rent for the apartments they used. Later, a five-story building was given to them by the city council. This building was located in the heart of the city. There were 2,000 Russian soldiers in Debrecen before the revolution and some 10,000 after ~~November~~ October 23.

Some Russians could speak Hungarian. One of them was speaking to the crowd on November 4 and stopped when two officers passed by. Some Russians asked where the British and the American troops were -- against whom the Hungarian people had asked them to come in.

In Russia, a Russian officer told me with arrogance that there was no culture in Hungary and he did not even have a handkerchief.

There was no resistance in Debrecen. Most of the Russian troops there were replaced by new ones. They occupied the city by surprise on Sunday, November 4, very early in the morning. The Russian city commander threatened the managers (factory and enterprise). He said that they would be held responsible if work was not resumed.

E. The Bureaucracy

1. The functionaries were good Hungarians but, in order to live, they had to serve the Communists. The Communists said that any work was worthwhile only if it was controlled. Thus, everybody controlled somebody else's work. Among themselves, the functionaries criticized the regime but only their close friends and neighbors knew this. The other people were angry at them since they only saw them working for the government.

F. Bribery was general. A friend of mine was the assistant to the director of the department of harvesting. He always had plenty of money, although his salary was low. There were 6,000 farmers in Debrecen without including the collectives. This man helped the peasants in setting up their delivery quotas.

The Hungarian peasants are clever like no one else. They knew how to elude any Communist regulation. Every time they came into the city they would play dumb in the offices.

G. The Communists who held power had intelligence. The peasants and workers who went ahead were above the average people taken out from the ranks of the proletariat by the Party. Rakosi was a cultured man who had knowledge. His speeches were excellent; Dobi was a laborer who rose from the ranks. These people could make individual decisions in certain cases but, they had to remain faithful to the Party since they always had one foot in jail. Usually, they waited for instructions from above. However, when urgent decisions were needed they made them.

XIII. ASSESSMENT OF FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR HUNGARY

A. Respondent's Hopes for the Future

If the present situation continues, the old dreadful regime under which so many Hungarians died during the revolution, will remain. My brother and I left good jobs because we did not want to work for the Russians. All 200,000 Hungarian refugees hope to go back as soon as the Russians leave. This cannot be achieved by the Hungarian people alone -- who will not revolt against the Soviets for at least 10-15 years. We refugees and those we left at home expect help from the West so that no more revolutions will be needed. Without Western assistance, the Hungarian problem cannot be solved.

I think that there will be a war between the US and Russia, sooner or later. I think it is unavoidable because of the Soviet aim to dominate and bolshevize the world. The West must stop them with weapons -- otherwise, Communism will only expand.

B. Respondent's Hope Before the Revolution

I hoped for a war. My brother often said, "I only wish the bombs would start to fall, as I prefer to die or take a chance to live freely." We knew that the Hungarian Army would never fight on Russia's side in a war.

XIV. SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY

A. The Economic System of an Independent Hungary

I would put the emphasis on agriculture, or rather, gardening. Hungary could be the fruit garden of Europe and export its excellent fruits for coal and iron.

The Communists only developed heavy industry and spent millions on it. However, half of the iron ore that we received from Russia was rusted. We had to accept it and give our pigs in exchange. The enterprises that have to import raw materials must be closed. Only light industry, such as aluminum, which has the raw material in the country should be maintained.

The State farms should remain. I would give back the land to the farmers -- up to 200-300 holds. The collectives would dissolve by themselves. The State should keep the nationalized factories but compensate the former owners. The smaller stores and factories should be given back to their former owners.

I would not approve of outlawing the Communist Party. An election would show how many members it still has. Less than one per cent of the country's population would vote for the Communists.

C. The International Position of an Independent Hungary

I would like to see a democratic republic with several political parties and free elections. Hungary should join the Western European Union. First of all, economically speaking, this is essential in order to raise the country's standard of living.

3. The neighbor countries should also belong to a Western European union which is better than a regional union. Hungary should have especially good relations with her neighbors.

I do not think that Hungary's present boundaries are acceptable. I suffer when I think of the Hungarians who live abroad and who were unjustly separated from their country. After Sub-Carpathia was re-attached to Hungary in 1940, the Ruthenians got a preferential treatment in the army and in the schools. I thought that this was an exaggeration. The Romanians and the Serbs mistreated our minorities, while we, in Hungary, treated the national minorities well.

The democratic solution to this problem would be to hold a plebiscite.

XV. THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

A. I did not hear about Khrushchev's secret speech to the 20th Party Congress. I knew only what Szabad Nep wrote about Stalin's mistakes.

2. I knew about Senator McCarthy.

3. I only heard rumors that Rakosi lived in sumptuous villas. After the revolution, we learned that his salary was 40,000 forints.

B. What Respondent Read Before and During Communism

I especially read Mor Jokai. However, under Communism, the good books and most of the foreign authors could not be read any more. I also read a few Russian books. To read one was enough to know all about the others. They were spiritless and atheistic. The same applied to the Russian movies. You would see one Russian movie and you did not want to see any more movies for two months.

I read less under Communism because I had less free time and there were less good books to read. After work we had to attend the seminars and to propaganda work.

The workers and the peasants also read more before Communism. The only change was regarding the workers of the collectives who had libraries where they could read during the winter.

It was compulsory to read the local official newspaper Neplap, the only paper of the county. We should have controlled the articles in the papers and corrected the mistakes but, we did not dare to do it.

3. In Szabad Nep ~~the~~ the statistics for the whole country were published; in Neplap only the statistics for the county were published. The statistical datas were "improved" a little for the protection of the county. The central office re-arranged the figures

once more and the Party papers published the final data. We never denounced anybody for furnishing us with false data.

We tried to read between the lines to find out some kind of truths. When the Communists said that things were going wrong in the US or in England, we analyzed this to be the description of the situation in Hungary.

I never read any Western press products.

4. Debrecen had a public library before 1945. The Communists moved it elsewhere. At least half of the books, among others works of the Western authors, were put on the index or destroyed. They were replaced by Russian and Communist literature. The other books which were available were passed on by the people in secret. There was a market where books were not sold but exchanged. For 12 years no works of modern foreign authors were published. After reading one Communist book, one did not want to read any more.

C. I got news by word of mouth from my friends, workers and intellectuals. In 1947 when the Communists began to seize the power, we said to each other that Communism would not last more than two years. These opinions were based on what the people had heard from the foreign broadcasts. I had been in the Soviet Union and had seen that 95 per cent of the people there did not want Communism. So, I agreed with these opinions. But inside, I did not completely believe in them because terror was reigning in Hungary. For this reason, the October revolution in Hungary surprised me.

F. Movies and Theatre

Twice a month I went to the movies or to the theatre. Usually, after seeing a Russian or a Hungarian Communist movie I did not go back for a long period of time. Before Communism, I went to the movies every

Under Communism, I did not go to the movies more than two or three times a year. To see an Italian or French film, we had to queue for half a day.

The movies I particularly liked were "Woman of Rome", and Italian movie, and "Three Good Friends", a French movie.

The operetta I liked best was "The Gypsy Love" by Franz Lehar.

XVI. EVENTS OUTSIDE HUNGARY

A. Russia

1. I think that the differences of views between Party leaders will cause a revolution which will bring a change in the Soviet Union. The stationing of Russian troops in Eastern Europe and their contamination by higher culture will also be a factor leading to a revolution, especially after the events in Hungary.

2. Free elections in Russia would bring the downfall of Communism. Twenty per cent of the votes, at the maximum, would go to the Communists.

3. Some of the Russian leaders are fanatics and friends of Stalin, the others are careerists. They are primarily interested in financial advantages. It is a clique in which people, picked up by Khrushchev, hold the high positions. Rakosi did the same thing in Hungary.

B. Eastern Europe

1. Poland is very popular in Hungary. It is like a sister country because of the historical Polish-Hungarian friendship. In 1939, thousands of Polish refugees were harbored in Hungary. In 1942-44, many Hungarian soldiers, going to the Russian front, passed through Poland and were hailed by the population in view of the Germans.

Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia are not very popular in Hungary -- especially Czechoslovakia, because it is a faithful servant of the Soviet Union. These countries took from us large territories and this was very painful to every Hungarian.

2. Free elections in the Eastern European countries would bring an end to the Communist power.

3. Czechoslovakia has the highest standard of living; Romania, the lowest.

C. Poland

1. Gomulka's government is a puppet government, just like Kadar's. The Polish nation is also heroic and freedom-loving. The government will have to be more and more independent from Moscow. Only one spark is needed and the entire Polish nation will revolt.

2. Poland set an example that the Hungarians followed. It increased the Hungarians' desire for freedom and their strength.

3. I do not approve of going only half-way like the Poles did. All Hungarians wanted complete independence and freedom from the Russians. They preferred to die rather than be half-free.

D. Yugoslavia

1. The Hungarians do not like the Serbs because they are cruel and bloodthirsty. In their opinion Tito was two-faced, a man without character, shifting between West and East. I do not think that he is very popular in Yugoslavia because he is a dictator.

E. Asia and the Middle East

1. China's people are very prolific and did not have much space to live. China had good ground for Communism since large masses of people were exploited by a few mandarins. Therefore, it was easy to spread the Communist slogans in China.

2. I think that China is more independent from Moscow because of the country's importance and weight. The Russians do not dare to command the Chinese like they did Rakosi. In my opinion, they even fear the Chinese.

5. Respondent had no opinion about England and India.

6. I did not approve of Nasser's nationalizing the Suez Canal and breaking an international treaty. I felt the Anglo-French intervention was legal.

This intervention had no influence on the Hungarian revolution. The people in Hungary did not pay much attention to it.

F. West Germany

1. The West German standard of living is the highest in Europe.

3. It is true that the Germans may start a new war.

4. West Germany's rearmament is reassuring for us because we do not like the Russians.

5. The Russians were more unpopular than the Germans. The German soldiers were more disciplined. They had more culture. The Russians were just the opposite. The Germans also committed a few abuses but not in the barbaric and large-scale manner in which the Russians did.

G. Respondent expressed no opinion about the British Labor Party.

3. West Germany has the highest standard of living; Egypt and Italy the lowest.

H. The United States

What surprised me most in the US was the fast rhythm of work and the race of the people after the money.

The US must prevent a further expansion of the Soviet Union. It should set up an economic blockade, boycott the Soviet Union, and leave it alone. It should also send people who experienced the evils of Communism to lecture to those people who are threatened by Communism.

The West must not remain idle and should use the same weapons the Soviets used and hit them back. The Russians do the same when they take from the West everything which is good and suitable to them.

3. The US government should not take notice of the Kadar government since it does not represent the Hungarian nation and does all of the dirty work for Khrushchev.

4. The people in Hungary would like to see more Western visitors and they would also like to receive Western books and periodicals. More than anything else, the Hungarian people expect help from the West.

7. The Marshall Plan was a program to rebuild Europe economically. The Communist propaganda said that it was bad so we believed that it was the opposite.

8. The Americans fought in Korea in order to stop an expansion of Communism.

J. The United Nations

1. The United Nations should have ~~said~~ sent a police force to Hungary and supervised free elections. Today, it should assure the holding of free elections at any price.

XVII. KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED PERSONALITIES

A. In my opinion, the greatest living Hungarian is Calvinist Bishop Laszlo Ravasz.

B. Imre Nagy: we held him to be a good Hungarian despite his being a Communist. He held the people, especially the peasantry.

Cardinal Mindszenty: he was loved by the Hungarian people.

Laszlo Rajk: unpopular because he was a Communist.

Gero and Kadar: the entire nation hates them.

2. President Eisenhower: he deceived the Hungarian people and more than one refugee felt that they were exploited in this country. Some worked for more than two or three months for 80 to 90 cents an hour, when leaflets dropped over Hungary promised \$3 to \$4 an hour.

Hammaraskjold: an incapable man.

Dulles: he did not help us and is afraid of the Soviets like 170, million Americans.

Eden: no opinion.

Truman: no opinion.

3. Mikoyan: a hated man.

Nehru: the leader of a new country which fought for its freedom. We felt that he would be on Hungary's side.

Chiang Kai-shek: we condemned him for losing China to the Communists.

Ferenc Nagy: he deserted the country.

Roosevelt: he permitted Hungary to be handed over to the Soviets after World War II.

Adenauer: a good politician who raised the standard of living in West Germany.

Stalin: the biggest scoundrel in the world.

Malenkov: somewhat better than Stalin; a moderate politician.

Franco: he belongs to the dictators and he cannot be popular.

Bevan: I do not know him.

Khrushchev: he is very much like Stalin. He found out that Communism can only use vile means to expand.

Tito: a turncoat and a dictator.

Peron: I do not know him.

Molotov: Stalin's right-hand man and servant.

Churchill: a strong leader and a good statesman led the Allies to victory in World War II.

XVIII. ATTITUDES TOWARD EXILES AND EXILE ACTIVITIES

A. Characterization of Escapees

1. The majority of the refugees were those who felt in danger and could be held responsible for taking part in the fighting. A second group included people like me who could have stayed but, preferred to leave because they did not want to work any more for the Russians in a Russian colony. Finally, a small percentage came out because of a desire for adventure.

Those who had strong ties remained in Hungary -- like the peasants who were attached to their land or, workers and intellectuals who owned a house or had a large family and did not want to take the risk of leaving everything behind.

I feel that those who stayed at home are better Hungarians than we and I am doing my best now to help them with parcels.

At home, they think we did well to get out since they feel we can have a better life in the US. We never believed the Soviet propaganda about the poverty in the US. The people at home know that we can help them by whatever means we have.

2. If everybody had a chance to come to the West, more people would come out. However, the peasants would remain.

B. Exile Organizations and Individuals

1. I heard of exile organizations. We felt that they were doing something for Hungary but, we expected more. We thought of them during the revolution and we felt that they could have obtained armed resistance for us, especially weapons and former Hungarian gendarmes from West Germany and Austria. I think that the organizations did not do enough.

C. I did not meet any Hungarians who escaped to the West after 1945 and who, later, returned to Hungary.

D. The people in Hungary want to know whether the refugees live well or not. Every refugee has many relatives at home.

3. The refugees should group in one united association to continue to fight effectively for Hungary and to go back when the country is free; to build it up with money and experience. They should go to the UN and to Eisenhower and ask them to help Hungary.

4. I will do everything to help the Hungarian people. I sent parcels to all of my needy friends and to my family.

5. I joined the Freedom Fighters Association.

E. Yes, I want to go back to a free Hungary.

XIX. AUDIENCE REACTIONS TO RADIO AND LEAFLETS

A. Radio

The whole country listened to the Western radio broadcasts. Before I owned a radio set I went to listen at some friends' house. I listened to RFE, VOA and BBC. RFE was the most jammed. Before the revolution, I listened once a week and during the revolution I listened every day. In the office, everybody listened to the Western radio broadcasts and used to say, "They talk a lot but, do nothing."

2. Before the revolution we bought a radio in the office and, behind closed doors, we listened to RFE and BBC when we did overtime work. Everybody was very careful while listening. The risk was the greatest around 1950.

3. Respondent's Reaction to the Broadcasts

The broadcasts said a lot and did not do anything to help us. However, we kept listening to the broadcasts since we were curious. We were also glad to know that the West was so well informed about what was going on in Hungary.

We considered BBC to be the most objective station followed by VOA and finally, RFE.

4. During the revolution, RFE gave us good encouragement. It often gave us self-confidence and electrified us. However, we were embittered when we saw that no help was coming and were more and more disappointed as the days went by.

5. I think it is true that Western broadcasts and RFE helped to incite the Hungarian people by holding out promises of Western help.

6. RFE should continue to broadcast into Hungary.

7. It should broadcast straight news, especially about what is going on behind the scenes in Hungary. It should play the forbidden songs and Hungarian plays and movies.

Programs about life in the West are very important. The radio, however, should not tell about salaries that run \$3 to \$4 an hour. It should tell the truth and tell what one can buy with the money.

B. I have never heard the initials, NEM, and I have never heard of the 12 Demands.

C. Free Europe Leaflets

1. I have never never seen a FEP leaflet.
2. I heard about leaflets from friends who had found them near the border.
3. It was dangerous to pick them up. Some were found near Debrecen.
4. The leaflets were useful just as everything that comes from the West.
5. FEP should continue to drop leaflets into Hungary.
6. They should always tell the truth and not deceive the Hungarian people. They should not tell about hourly wages in the US.

D. The aim of the Western groups was to inform the Hungarian people about life in the free world and also to fight against Communist expansion.

XX. CHILD REARING AND DISCIPLINE

1. A child should be taught to be religious and to serve God and his country; to obey and respect his parents and elders. Before the Soviet occupation and Communism, this was the pattern in Hungary.

2. I favor discipline with love. I would use physical punishment only when it was absolutely necessary. The parents should always show a good example to their children since the latter's mind is very receptive.

3. We were six children in my family. Both our parents punished us. I was very stubborn and sometimes, I opposed my parents. For example, I would hide in the attic and not come down to eat and I would receive a spanking for that. Until I was six, I was brought up in Hajdunanas by my grandfather. I would fight with the other children and my grandfather punished me with a rope. Once, I fell into a muddy pond with a clean shirt and I was severely punished for that.

4. In 80 per cent of the cases, the mother punished the children.

Workers and peasants beat their children more than intellectuals because they were more tired when they came home.

5. Physical punishment was abandoned at the age of 18 for the boys and 15 for the girls; earlier for the children of workers and peasants than of intellectuals. The Communists gave more freedom to the children and discipline deteriorated. The children argued with their parents and felt more independent. They refused to give their pay as they had previously and spent the money on cigarettes, drinks and girls.

6. Before Communism, physical punishment was used.

When I was in the gymnasium at the age of 14, I used to fight a lot and was punished by a teacher with a cane in front of the whole class.

Today the teachers' hands are tied. The Communists abolished physical punishment and the teacher would be fired if he punished the child. The children became insolent and even the Communist parents saw that this system was not satisfactory since they could not discipline their children at home. Some even asked the teacher to use physical punishment.

7. The characteristics I value most in a friend are honesty, willingness to help me when I am in need, and the ability to overlook my mistakes.