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ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGARY

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING (CLOSED)

Held at 1, Wallnerstrasse 6A, Vienna,
on Tuesday, 26 March 1957, at 3.15 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Alsing ANDERSEN

(Denmark)

- MM. Erdel at Unfra - Honved ineffective. H officers deported
F. Fighters took orders from Deak Ferenc Place not Parliament
NN Soviet occupied 94 or Radio at Baw
OO Kradan in Parl 10 Nov treated with disrespect by Soviet Offr
Fighting between Rumania at Somlatheh, Desertions
P P. Fighting Marica Zsipmond Sq 5 Nov.
Sympathy by Ukrainians for Student deportees

At the invitation of the Chairman, Witness MM took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: The meeting is called to order, and we are going to ask questions of the last witness who appeared before us this morning. I understand that he has a brief additional statement to make, which will perhaps save time for us, and so I ask him to make his extra statement now.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian : As I omitted this morning some important matters in connection with the deportations I would like to make this additional statement. We were taken away not only by train but also by car. Civilians and freedom fighters, bound together on trucks, were taken to Russia. Prisoners were also taken out of Hungary by aeroplane, among them on 3 November members of the Maleter mission who went to Toekoel to negotiate with the head of the Soviet mission. I met them at Ungvar-Uzhorod during the interrogations. I met these delegates at Ungvar-Uzhorod and they described the circumstances under which they were arrested on the evening of 3 November at Toekoel and next day taken to Russia by aeroplane. I should like to add that as we were taken further inside Russia we saw large tanks and large armoured equipment going towards Hungary. It often happened that our train was diverted on to a siding to allow the equipment to pass on its way to Hungary. I can mention several dozen people from Hungary who were with me at the Ungvar-Uzhorod and Stryj prisons. Among them were some high-ranking officers and other well-known civilians.

The CHAIRMAN: A list of the names can be given through the secretariat,

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I would like to give one or two of the more prominent names. Of those who were in the same cell as myself and whom I met there was Lajos Hersiczky, a colonel living at 5 Szasz Karoly Utca Street, who was a member of the Maleter negotiating mission; an aide-de-camp of General Maleter, Szabo Laszlo, who lives at 26 Benczur Utca, Kispest; there was a third member called Rudolf Huray who lives at Sajoszentpeter and who was a major in a armoured division; there was Erdei, a state minister; there was Istvan Csorba,

(Witness MM)

an engineer who was a member of the Revolutionary Council; a lieutenant-colonel, Albert Papp, who was chairman of the military council of Szekesfehervar; then Sandor Nemeth, a member of Parliament, who was the head of the railway station of Zahony; the others were also well-known people, among them Istvan Wagner, living at 22 Grassalkovich Utca, Budapest, who was used for provocation purposes in connexion with the transport of arms. I should also like to refer again to the background of the revolution. We could not but notice that the army, with the exception of several Budapest units, was held back from intervening. They were not allowed to have arms, and on the order of the central organ of the party they were sabotaging and playing for time, because they already knew on 28 October that a fully-equipped army was coming from Russia towards Hungary, not so much for the purpose of defeating the Hungarian revolution — they did not need so many tanks to deal with the 50,000 to 60,000 small arms in Hungary — but rather for the purpose of crushing Yugoslavia so that they could stop the flow of petrol towards the Western countries by seizing part of the Mediterranean. From what we learned from the officers and soldiers of the Russian army who came over to us, the Russian troops in Hungary were demoralized, as was proved by the fact that in Budapest they were not fighting hard enough. The party put their own people, the AVH and others, into the revolution to try to seize the leadership, and they were successful to the extent that when we tried to create a unified command in order to enforce law and order and to resist Russian intervention they purposely stopped this and would not allow our unified news service to be created. A colonel named Marton who seemingly was on the side of the revolution but was in fact an agent of the other side, did the underground work to prevent the creation of this unified command and unified news service.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. In my opinion this is a very valuable and important addition to your first statement. As I understood it, you said that the Minister of State, Erdei, and other high-ranking officers, all of whom participated in the negotiations at the Russian headquarters at Toekoel, may have been transported by plane to the Soviet Union on 4 November?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Not specifically on 4 November because the date is not certain. They only stated that on the morning of 3 November, in Parliament, with Nagy participating in the discussions, the method of withdrawal of Russian troops from Hungarian territory was discussed. Naturally, this was quite misleading and did not correspond with the facts because at the same time new units were appearing in the country. Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister, reproached them and asked why new units were coming into the country, and the answer was that these units would only secure the safe withdrawal of the Russian forces in Hungary. They said that they could not continue the discussions there because they did not have the necessary communication with Moscow. They therefore invited the Hungarian delegation to negotiate on the question of the technicalities of the withdrawal at the Russian Command's headquarters at Toekoel since there they were in short-wave communication with Moscow and any controversial subjects could therefore be clarified with Moscow. Their purpose was to nullify Malater's powers because they knew they had orders to start the same night for Budapest. This is what the members of the delegation told me. When they arrived at Toekoel, one of the members of the General Staff suggested that each technician should go into private conference with his Russian counterpart to prepare for the negotiations. Thus they achieved their aim, which was that the delegation should break up into small groups, and then these groups were faced with revolvers and made prisoners.

I am not quite sure what happened then because so many things occurred that I cannot remember exactly, but two or three days later they were put on 'planes and taken to Russia.

The CHAIRMAN: That is what you heard during your stay in the Soviet Union?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I not only heard it but had confirmation of it because during my imprisonment I came in contact with prisoners who were informed of this. The prison was divided into four parts and there was a courtyard where the prisoners walked and where I myself walked as long as I was permitted to do so. Although it was forbidden, we could look out of our cells and see if among the prisoners walking in the courtyard there were any whom we knew. When the prisoners were walking they could not speak to each other so it was only people in the same cell who could communicate with each other. When I looked from my window into the courtyard I saw a very tall man called Kovacs walking alone, which meant that he must be in solitary confinement. He was a member of the Revolutionary Council. Because of the hunger strike which we conducted in order to improve our conditions we were continually being put in different cells, so I was able to communicate with several different prisoners and could therefore get reliable information. One of my cell-mates was Vilmos Olah, a soldier and a close collaborator of Kiraly, and in the time we spent together we were able to clear up a lot of questions. I learnt from him how Prime Minister Nagy stayed in his office and was unable to follow events and therefore had to go to the Yugoslav Legation. This happened on the 7th.

The CHAIRMAN: That we know.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I have a number of questions and I would appeal to the witness to be as brief as he possibly can. Other members of the Committee have questions to ask and we have eight more witnesses this afternoon, so I would greatly appreciate it if he would answer briefly.

You suggested, I think, early in your statement that the revolution in Hungary may well have been inspired by the Communists themselves. How do you know this to be, as I think you claim, a fact?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We conducted enquiries in which Ferenc Vesely, who was one of the leading members of the university group, participated, and we found that weeks before a youth organization had had **instructions that groups should be formed of reliable elements who would** participate in mass demonstrations and who would receive instructions later on as to what they should do. This demonstration was, therefore, already prepared by the party two or three weeks before it occurred. We took verbatim records of what was said by the AVH officers made prisoners by us, and they confessed that they too had orders to organize this demonstration, to participate in it and give it a communist orientation, and to perform acts of provocation.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You suggest, therefore, that the demands of the students and writers and so on were inspired by the Communists themselves?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No, the demands were spontaneous and increased from hour to hour. It was only the demonstrations that were prepared in advance. The demands increased as the mood increased.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): The demonstrations took place because of the demands; you do not demonstrate about nothing. What were the demonstrations supposed to be about if you did not know what the demands were?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I will give you the exact reasons and I hope they will seem logical. The internal evolution in Hungary was such that the Hungarian masses and the party moved further and further from the Muscovite direction, and Russia lost its influence over the Hungarian masses. The Russians had to retrieve their position in one way or another and this was only possible by provoking an event that could be used as a basis, because of article 8 of the Warsaw Pact, for re-entering Hungary and exerting greater influence than they had previously.

This was the political purpose in the background. If there had been perfect order in Hungary they could not have started an offensive action, therefore they had to create an occasion for it, but of course where they miscalculated was that the result was bloodier than they thought it would be.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): If I may make a comment, in the first place there was no question on 23 October of the Russians re-entering Hungary; they were there anyway. Are you seriously suggesting that the Russians themselves -- the Communist Party in Hungary -- would welcome a demonstration, for whatever eventual purpose, amongst the demands of which were the withdrawal of Russian troops, the clearly expressed dissatisfaction of the population with the Communist system, which in itself admitted the possibility of an uprising against Communism in a Communist country, and which is very far from anything which the Russians had ever meditated before?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I will try to be brief. I am sure you will hear the same from other people. The Russians did not count on that demonstration being such an extended one. There were of course Russian forces in Hungary but not in such numbers that they could be used for any aggressive action, therefore an excuse was needed to bring in further Russian troops, and all this happened in order to make it lawful. You will probably find from the statements of other witnesses who will prove it to you that before 23 October there were already group movements and armed movements. This we knew from our guards at Ungvar-Uzhorod, and from the Russians who distributed food to us. That is where we heard of these troop movements, and of the transfer of arms to Hungary.

The revolution did not have an armed character during the early morning of the 24th. The masses of Russian tanks came towards Budapest as I saw for myself, because my apartment was close to the main road, and tanks were passing continually. They were building a bridge 8 kilometres from the city.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I think perhaps we had better get on to another part of your evidence. Did I hear you correctly when you appeared to say you had had some contact with United States intelligence or security officers? If so would you tell us when, and exactly what about?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I was misunderstood, I was not in contact with American intelligence officers. This is what they wanted to know in Russian when I was being interrogated. They tried to force me to admit that I was in contact with American army and intelligence officers asking them for directives for the revolution. The Russians thought this because I had an authorization in three languages stating that I could negotiate with full powers with internal and external authorities. As a matter of fact, I did not have any kind of contact with any foreign organization within the territory of Hungary or outside it.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): When you were in Russia did you actually see General Maleter?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I did not see Maleter, I only saw the members of his delegation whose names I have read, but they said Maleter was in the same party with them.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did the members of Maleter's party which was taken from Budapest by the Russians tell you anything of the circumstances surrounding that particular evening, that is, the evening of 3 November? Did they tell you for how long negotiations continued with the Russians and how they were broken off and exactly what happened to them and at what time?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, three or four officers talked to me of how they arrived at Toekoel for negotiations with the Russians, and mentioned that these negotiations were not carried out because they were made prisoner, and after one or two days they were taken to Russia. Therefore the negotiation was only an excuse to get them to Toekoel and withdraw them from leadership of the revolution, because in the early morning the action towards Budapest started. So there were no negotiations between Russians and Hungarians at Toekoel. They added that it was about 9 or 10 in the evening that they got to the Russian command at Toekoel.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Well, I suspect you must have been misinformed by the gentlemen you met in Russia, because we know there was contact between Parliament House and the delegation after they met the Russians, and the negotiations did in fact take place for some time.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): They never came back from Toekoel because they were arrested there. It may be supposed that some members of the delegation who were not at Ungvar-Uzhorod were able to maintain contact with the Russians, but the people whom I have enumerated were arrested on the night of the 3rd/4th.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): That is perfectly true, but they had been in touch by telephone with Parliament House in Budapest before that.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): That indeed is possible; there might have been telephonic communication, but as a matter of fact it might even be the case that they were forced to call up Parliament House and give false information as to the course of the negotiations. As a matter of fact the direction of the revolution was not from Parliament, but from the police headquarters building at Deak Ferenc Place. We as revolutionary groups did not accept instructions from anywhere but from the committee which sat at Deak Ferenc Place. As to the military side, they did not participate actively as a group in the revolution, therefore it is quite possible they received instructions from Parliament, but on the other hand they were not revolutionaries.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): I should like to come back to the last question, and to complete the question asked by the delegate of Australia. Did you receive any information later on on the subject of General Maleter?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): My information, after I had returned from Russia, was that General Maleter was under special guard at the prison at Foe Street. Whether this is true or not I do not know, because I was in prison myself, but I can only give the information that was given to me.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Therefore later on you did not receive any information about the process of condemnation that was started against General Maleter?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I can only say that all the interrogatories of myself and the others all contained questions which showed they were trying to obtain proof of Maleter's guilt.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You were arrested on 4 November; by whom?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): By the Russian soldiers, armoured units, that were encircling Budapest.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You had in your possession a paper which gave you authority to negotiate with internal or external authorities. What is meant by external authorities?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The revolution was not unified but consisted of separately working groups. One such group was the Corvin group, and it was that group that gave me these papers so that I should try to co-ordinate and bring under one leadership the different revolutionary groups. I suggested that we should immediately establish a separate news organization so as to be well informed of the Russian troop movements towards Hungary and thus be able to take counter measures. At the same time I also proposed that a kind of central organization should be established to make effective the fruits of the revolution, and that one man should be in charge of that. This is what the authorization entailed, and it also gave me authority to go, if I could, to foreign countries and explain to them how the Hungarian people was being oppressed and to ask for their help.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): So "external negotiations" meant negotiating with groups other than with the Corvin Group in the country, and if necessary even in foreign countries?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): This referred to the fact that should we be pushed back, and should necessity arise, these groups would fight in an isolated way on foreign soil, and that I should try in the appropriate places to achieve some results.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Had you any idea at that time of any foreign countries who might be negotiating to that purpose?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): It was not military aid of which we were thinking. We hoped that some action on the part of the United Nations might alleviate the sufferings of our country. The AVH had shot down our youth with shrapnel and anti-personnel weapons and in hundreds of cases limbs had to be amputated; the misery was terrible. It was that suffering and misery which we wanted to bring to the attention of the United Nations — we were not trying to enlist foreign aid.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You will agree that any foreigner reading that document could misinterpret and misunderstand it.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, that might be so. However, we knew that the Hungarian people were really represented by a man called Peter Kos who was a Russian citizen and we therefore could not expect that he would represent our interests. Truly, we hoped that diplomatic and other pressure might be brought to bear on Russia to stop such an unequal fight, in which, for instance, fifty or sixty people armed only with small arms could be mown down by countless tanks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You must answer my questions briefly. We are all aware of the atrocities which were committed and by repeating them you do not add any weight to the evidence already in our possession. Please keep to the point. Where were you taken after the 4th?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): To the Petoefi barracks at Budaoers Street.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Who was in charge of the barracks?

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WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The barracks had been taken over by the Russians two hours previously. The Hungarians there had been dispersed and forced to lay down their arms; the Russians intended to enforce law and order there and they arrested the Hungarians whom they then took to the Kinizsi Barracks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): In other words, the Russians were in charge of the barracks; that is a very simple answer to give. Please be brief.
Were you questioned further?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were placed under guard in one of the central buildings of the barracks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Where were you taken from there?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): On 9 November we were taken in a truck, which was accompanied by tanks, to a train which was to take us to Vecses.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I am correct in assuming that from the 4th to the 9th you were in barracks?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, at the Petoefi barracks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Where were you taken on the 9th?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were taken by train to Vecses which is about twenty kilometres from Budapest. The train stopped on the outskirts of that town.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Just outside Budapest?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were you delayed for any length of time at the station?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We stopped for about three or four hours in a field outside the town while the train was being filled with other groups of people.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many people were with you on the train?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were in the first carriage and did not have an opportunity to count them, but I would say there were about 1,500 people, among whom were women, civilians and soldiers.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were you able to identify any of those 1,500 people?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): In my car there were some people I knew, some of whom had been arrested with me. I could not see the others properly as we were not allowed to stand up.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): About how many people were you able to identify personally?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): About thirty-five or forty.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You knew them before?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I had met them only during the revolution.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did you know them by name?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I gave you some of the names.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Are any of those people, whose names you gave, in Vienna or outside Hungary?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I do not know of anyone.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Do you know the whereabouts of any of the thirty-five people of whom you just spoke?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): According to my information very few of them were released from prison. On 23 December they stopped releasing people.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What was the next point to which you were taken after the railway station?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We went via Cegled-Szolnok-Debrecen-Nyiregyhaza to Zahony.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): They were only halts which you made en route. What was your destination?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The Russian border station of Csap.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Where were you taken at Csap?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were taken by truck to Ungvar-Uzhorod.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did the Russians question you in transit?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No, there was only an armed soldier guarding us.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did you talk among yourselves?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Only secretly because it was not permitted.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What happened at Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I must mention here that in our compartment, before we arrived at Ungvar-Uzhorod, there were two West German medical attendants who were also being taken to Russia. They had been arrested while attending to the wounded in Budapest.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How did you know they were West Germans?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): They had been working in a West German hospital in Budapest.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Had you known them previously?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No. I talked to them for a little while and they told me they lived near Bonn with their families. To corroborate this I visited the German Ambassador after my liberation and the reply, now in my possession, was that "these two people have also returned from Russia".

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How long were you at Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): After three days they took us from Ungvar-Uzhorod towards the interior of Russia and on 21 November they brought us back from Stryj again to Ungvar-Uzhorod for further hearings.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): During the three days at Ungvar-Uzhorod did anything happen?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): During that time the prisoners were registered, inoculated, given a bath and then prepared for a further journey.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): During those three days preparations were made for your journey. I should like you to enumerate the next points you were transferred to.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The next point was that we got to Stryj through the Verecke Pass and there a telephone communication stopped us from going on further. We were put in Stryj prison which had been emptied for this purpose.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): When you arrived at Stryj prison were there no other prisoners?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No. It could be seen also that Ungvar-Uzhorod itself had been prepared in advance because it is a large prison which could hold 2,500 people and it was empty.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): And Stryj prison was also empty?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): It was similarly empty.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How long were you at Stryj?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): For seven days.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): During those seven days did anything happen?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): During that time there was only a preparatory interrogation so that when we were taken back they would have a basis on which to interrogate us further. Otherwise, at Ungvar-Uzhorod, they set up a large organization of about 100 people who carried on the interrogations.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Interrogations did take place at Ungvar-Uzhorod then?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): There were interrogations, yes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You said a short while ago that the interrogations were for the purpose of finding out your details and your registration.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): In the first place they wanted to get information about the events in Hungary. In the second place they tried to write out charges which would justify their accusations.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were you called upon to sign any statements at Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Without exception every prisoner had to sign Russian statements of charges despite the fact that we could not read them and did not know what we were signing.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You did not know what was contained in them? You were questioned, your answers were recorded and you were asked to sign, is that so?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes. I made a request that since they were interrogating us without an interpreter they should draw up the charges in Hungarian so that we could understand them but they refused this request.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I am only concerned with your personal experiences. No charge was preferred against you at Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): At Ungvar-Uzhorod the Russian security units and the Moscow anti-espionage chief there informed us that they were not going to put the Hungarians on trial, they were only going to keep them captive because at that moment those people could not be placed in security in Hungarian prisons and the Kadar Government wished these several hundred thousand people to be held in Russia.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were any statements taken from you at Stryj?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No, not at Stryj, only at Ungvar-Uzhorod.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You were at Stryj for several days and no interrogations took place, you were just kept there?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): There were interrogations, they put questions to me, but I was not called upon to sign anything.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Where were you removed to from Stryj?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): From Stryj they took us back to Ungvar-Uzhorod on 21 November.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How long did you stay in Ungvar-Uzhorod the second time?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I was a captive there until 15 December.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Was the prison at Ungvar-Uzhorod a modern prison?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, it was a modern prison and it had central heating. However, in spite of the modernity of the prison we had to lie on open pallets without any covers and having to lie on these beds gave me great rheumatic pains.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Had you any complaints to make with regard to the food you got at Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The food was simply not sufficient for the maintenance of human life. Our portion was one decagram of fat, two and a half decagrams of sugar, five decagrams of cottage cheese, a kind of stew and a simple cabbage soup with a few decagrams of bread but we did not get the full ration because the personnel stole a good deal.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You were there until the 21st, is that so?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): When I went to negotiate with the commander of the prison on behalf of my fellow prisoners I was informed personally that we were not getting prison food but much improved army rations.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You were given army rations. No charges were brought against you there, were they?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): They tried to maintain the accusation that I had been in contact with foreign spies and foreign organizations but if I had confessed to this they would not have let me go back to Hungary, it would have been a Russian tribunal which would have judged me.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): But you signed no statement.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I was not willing to sign this.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You were not compelled to do so?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): They could not compel me because some years before I tried to learn Russian and when they wrote something down in Russian I could at least understand the gist of it and I asked them to strike out what was not true.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Where were you taken to from Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were taken from Ungvar-Uzhorod through Munkacs to Budapest. We reached Budapest after a sixteen-hour journey in trucks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Was it at Ungvar-Uzhorod that you were walking about the courtyard and you met various people?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were allowed to take our daily exercise one cell at a time. Each cell was segregated from the other even during our daily walks but through the cell windows, by signals and by calling

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across we were able to communicate with the other prisoners and that is how we organized our hunger-strike. Sometimes notes were hidden in cigarette butts which were thrown away so that they could be found by the next group when they were having exercise.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How long did these exercises take?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We were permitted half-an-hour daily.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were there no guards when you were walking about the courtyard?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Overlooking the place of exercise there was a guard tower and they could have given a signal to the guards had there been any sign of an outbreak.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): No guard was following you and you were able to converse freely?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Only with our own cell-mates. They could not have stopped that anyway. The other groups who were exercising were kept from us by a wall and we were not allowed to talk to them.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): So in point of fact you did not speak to any people outside your own group?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): No. On the other hand, as I organized hunger-strikes and other things I was transferred from one cell to another several times and I had an opportunity in this way not only to talk to my thirteen cell-mates but to talk to seven or eight groups and I had conversations with almost

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100 people. On one occasion in an attempt to suppress the excitement they took the prisoners to a film and during this film I had an opportunity to see more than 100 of my fellow captives.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): You said you saw members of the delegation who went to discuss with the Russians the withdrawal of their troops. You said there were six people, three technical and three political.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): This delegation was composed of about twenty people but six was the maximum number who got back.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Of this twenty who did you see in Ungvar-Uzhorod?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Lieutenant-Colonel Lajos Hersicky, Laszlo Szabo who was the aide-de-camp of General Maletier, Rudolf Huray, a captain, and a Lieutenant-Colonel Szuecs. I saw three or four other members of the delegation but we had no opportunity to exchange names.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): You have mentioned certain names. Were you able to speak to them?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes. I did speak to the people whose names I mentioned, that is how we learned each other's names and also we had the idea that any of us who returned home would inform the families of the others because the Russians tried to keep the families from knowing that we had been taken to Russia so that our families would think we had died in the revolution. They gave us no means of communicating with our families and there was no way of notifying our families at all.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): One day you were taken back to Budapest?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Nothing happened during these transfers from one prison to another. Can you give me some reason why you were transferred from one prison to another as nothing very eventful had taken place?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I am sorry, but I do not understand your question.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I am trying to find out what you think, whether there was some reason which the Russians had and if so what you thought that reason was. I am trying to obtain that information from you.

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): We heard reports, rumours, from railway workers who spoke to us, but I do not consider these statements to be definite because they only passed remarks to us that further deportations had been stopped because there were troubles around Kiev and they did not want to take us there to add to their troubles. These were only rumours and I cannot confirm them.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many cells were there in Budapest?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): According to my knowledge there are in Budapest at the disposal of the Communist régime four official and one semi-official prisons.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): About how many people, roughly, could those five prisons hold?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): About 30,000 or 35,000 if crowded.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): The political prisoners had been set free earlier, before the revolution?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): The political prisoners were liberated from the prisons by us the revolutionaries.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many political prisoners were liberated by you?

WITNESS MM (interpretation from Hungarian): I personally did not take part in the liberations because I had operational and organizational duties.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions. We thank you once more.

Witness MM withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman Witness NN took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome, and ask you to give us such particulars as are of importance to our work in connection with events of which you were an eye-witness or in which you participated.

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): On 26 October 1956 the National Council of Gyoer sent a delegation composed of eight students to the AVH headquarters in order to secure the release of the Hungarian political prisoners from the AVH. The delegation started on their journey at 10 a.m., and as they had not returned by 4 p.m. people began to gather in front of the building of the Council of Gyoer and asked for the students. At that time I was employed as a stenographer at the Gyoer Free Radio, and I received the news that came from Trans-Danubia. The crowd then went in front of the building and asked for these eight students. On the orders of the AVH commander the AVH fired on the crowd; eight persons were killed and many wounded. Finally, all eight students were released when the AVH surrendered, but they were beaten until half dead. As we lived in a hotel in Gyoer, in the middle of the town, I was also eye-witness of what happened when Red Cross cars reached the railway station in Gyoer from the west. The blood plasma that was being brought was clearly marked with the Red Cross emblem, but nevertheless many of the cars going to Budapest for new supplies were attacked by the AVH at Tata; and as they could not reach Budapest they brought back the employees of the rescue squad, and several died. I have definite knowledge that in November 1956 — I do not know the exact date but it was when the Russians had already surrounded Budapest — six Russian soldiers at Sashalom entered the house of a family called Izsak with the intention of removing by force the young girl who was there. She naturally called for help. Her father, her brother and her fiancé came to her aid; her father and brother were shot dead, her fiancé was badly wounded. Since then

(Witness NN)

this girl has been in the Netherlands. Those are the concrete events of which I was an eye-witness or from which I suffered. If you want to ask me questions I shall be glad to answer them.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Did I understand correctly that you were a speaker at the Gyoer Free Radio Station?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I was not a speaker; I was receiving the news arriving from Trans-Danubia; I took that down in shorthand, typed it and gave it to the radio studio. Occasionally I was a speaker because there was such great disorganization, three telephones were going all the time, and there were only five of us altogether.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Do you know of many events such as you have just described? Were there other acts committed by the political police of Hungary against women? Excuse me for asking this question for I respect women, and I ask the question because you have referred to events of this character.

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): I have described the events of which I have knowledge. Those which occurred at Sashalom are contained in my written deposition and I have nothing to add to that.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Can you tell me how long the radio station at Gyoer remained in the hands of the Free Hungarians?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): From 26 October to 4 November.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What happened on 4 November which led to the loss of control of the radio station?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): The Russians occupied Gyoer at dawn on that day.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): They took the radio station then?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes. That was the first building occupied.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Was it necessary to use any force to take the building?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): They did not need to use force because they went in at dawn and there was no one there during the night except guards at the door. The transmissions from Gyoer radio station ended at 8 p.m.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I think you said that the students asked for the release of the political prisoners and that the AVH fired. Was there a crowd outside the building?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): The crowd collected in front of the AVH building as the students had not returned by 4 p.m., and that is when the AVH fired at the crowd.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What was the crowd like? Were you there?

WITNESS NN (interpretation from Hungarian): I was not there at the time but my husband was in the crowd, and the crowd consisted of about 1,000 to 1,500 people.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions and I thank you for your statement.

Witness NN withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman Witness 00 took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: I bid you welcome and I note from the statement you have given to the secretariat that you were a member of the revolutionary committee of painters and artists, that on about 10 November you noted the presence of Soviet Army officers in the Parliament building where they seemed to be in full control, and that you saw Kadar on that occasion and noted his obedience to Soviet officers. Further, while at Szombathely on 16 November 1956 you learned of fighting lasting for two days between Soviet formations which had been there earlier and newly arrived troops composed mainly of Mongolians; that is to say, fighting between Russian troops. Finally, during your flight to Austria, you and one of your children were wounded on Austrian territory.

We would like you to give us further details of all this.

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): What questions do you wish me to answer, or do you want me to make a statement?

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to hear about how you saw Kadar in the Parliament building. How did you come to be a witness to these events -- in what capacity were you in the Parliament building?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): After the second battle many artists were arrested. We organized a delegation, of which I was a member, and we went to the Parliament building in order to discuss with the then Prime Minister, Kadar, the possibilities of freeing them. We were received not by Kadar but by a high-ranking Soviet officer. We had difficulty in gaining entrance to the Parliament building because we had to go through Russian tanks, then we were searched by Russians, then we were searched in the building by Hungarians and there was another Hungarian search in the ante-chamber. On the first floor of the Parliament building we saw a high-ranking Russian officer of the General Staff. He spoke perfect Hungarian and said that we could tell him what we wanted. We informed him that we wished to speak to Kadar, the Prime Minister. There was some discussion

(Witness 00)

as to whether or not we should speak to Kadar and finally he turned to the guard and said something in Russian. I do not speak Russian but he must have told the guard to call Kadar because the guard shouted some Russian words which apparently meant "Janos Kadar, come here!" He spoke as a Russian officer would speak to an ordinary soldier. That is how the Russian soldier called Kadar in.

Kadar came in and clicked his heels before the Russian officer, who told him in Hungarian that we wanted to speak to him. But we said "We do not deal with a dog" and the Russian asked us why we had come. We said that obviously there was complete Russian control and we therefore asked the Russians to release the Hungarian prisoners. The Russian officer shrugged his shoulders and said he would see what could be done. Three days later two of the five were set free.

My impression was that Kadar was an extremely frightened and shaken man because when I had seen him previously (I had no dealings with him but I was a member of a delegation of artists) he had spoken against the Communist Party and tried to put himself completely on the side of Nagy.

Do you want me to go on with this?

The CHAIRMAN: If you have further information about Kadar.

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): I should like to add that Kadar and the members of the Government at that time had their families on the territory of Parliament and lived there like prisoners. Firstly, they did not dare to go out, and secondly, they were not allowed out. All I can say about Kadar is that he was a coward who was completely in the hands of the Russians who gave him his instructions. That is not just my impression, it is how things were in the Parliament building. There was complete Russian dictatorship and complete Russian military control. The Hungarian employees of Parliament were not all AVH people. The doorman was known to me and he had previously been a higher official in Parliament who had been down-graded by the Russians. The Hungarian employees had mostly been down-graded.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): How did you come to be wounded on Austrian territory? Did somebody fire at you from Hungarian territory or were you fired at from Austrian territory?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): First they shot at us from Hungarian territory. I had already reached the Austrian flag when they fired at me from about forty paces and I was hit four times in the lower part of my body. I succeeded then in crossing the river, which is on Austrian territory, but when I came out on the other side the armed guard ran on to Austrian territory, where I had already been wounded, and continued shooting from there. It was then that my son was hit and I was wounded in my right hand, which still shows a scar. This was reported in the Austrian press afterwards and while I was in hospital it was proved by the Austrian authorities that the guards had entered Austrian territory. As my family went farther into Austrian territory I covered their advance because I was afraid the man would continue firing, but he did not dare to do so.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do you remember the date of this incident?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): It was 7 January, between 3 and 3.15 in the afternoon, in full daylight therefore. As a matter of fact, the sun was shining.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): It is also said that during November you learned -- that is the word, learned -- of fighting between Soviet troops already based in Hungary and newly arrived Soviet troops of Mongolian origin. I just want to ask one simple question. Did you in fact see fighting between Soviet troops?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I saw such fighting at Szombathely. The Russian troops stationed there were replaced by Russian infantry of Mongolian origin. The former Russian commander had called the attention of the inhabitants to this. He said, "Take care, because these men are not as careful as we are." He used a stronger expression; he said, "They are more savage than we are."

These new troops first occupied the railway station and the Hungarian railway workers who were there when they arrived were immediately shot. They then went on to the centre of the city where the Soviet unit had its barracks and as they reached the barracks there was an armed battle between them and the troops already there. This battle was still going on when I arrived in Szombathely. I first heard the shots from a friend's apartment and then we went out to watch the fight which lasted about a day and a half. The result of this was that the original units were imprisoned in the barracks under guard. Many of them escaped and one was later clothed by my painter friend and then disappeared. I do not know whether he came to the West or continued to hide in Hungary. As a matter of fact, many of the Russians imprisoned in the barracks escaped because it was impossible to guard them properly. I have heard that the commander was not killed in the fighting but managed to escape, but I did not see him although I saw the man of whom I have spoken.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I suppose it is unlikely that you or anyone else has seen or heard of any member of the Soviet Army who has come to the West and who is actually now on Austrian or other Western soil?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): I have not met any Soviet soldiers here, but in Hungary I met many who had deserted.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): One further question: it appears that there was a revolutionary committee of painters and artists. Normally the revolutionary committees appear to have related to districts of Hungary, and it was the Workers' Councils that related to groups of experts or tradesmen or workers of various sorts. How is it that the painters and artists set up a revolutionary committee, when normally, as I say, revolutionary committees were matters for towns or districts?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): I will try to describe to you the situation of Hungarian artists before the revolution. The artists were really nationalized, if I may use that term, because they were completely under official control. The highest organ was the Art Union. This was a nation-wide organization, whose financial side was the Art Foundation. The members were elected by so-called free and secret elections. I do not know whether you know what that means under communism: one man is nominated and he is elected. They named the leadership and whether you liked it or not that was the leadership, therefore he always received a majority of ninety-nine per cent or one hundred per cent. That is how the Union's leadership was elected from among the artists who were communist orientated.

The duty of the financial organ was to sell the paintings, and its leadership was elected in the same way, but in order to control this organ there were in addition designated functionaries appointed by the State. In other words they saw to it that if, for example, a jury would have accepted a painting that did not fit within the orientation of the State, then the leader could put a veto on the picture, so no picture could win if it did not please the State. For example, there was an exhibition four years ago where my pictures were pushed aside by the veto and

(Witness 00)

only communist pictures came in. It was in order to avoid this that we created this Revolutionary Council the duty of which was to take over the responsibility of the leaders of the former Art Union and give a new representation to artists to see that there should be no one orientation but free artistic expression. The so-called painters and classical painters were to flourish side by side and exist in separate groups and decide for themselves what their artistic orientation should be.

In order to reorganize art, which for so long had been under the orientation of the State, a new organ had to be created which in spite of the difficulties could liberate art. That was the duty of the Revolutionary Council of artists and the new groups which were started.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Thank you.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): I should like some more precise details from the witness, but would ask him to be brief because we have many to hear. He spoke to us of the episode of 10 November when he was in contact with Kadar. He spoke to a guard to whom a Russian officer said "Call Kadar". Did this guard who called in Kadar in such a tone as the witness described enter from another room, or was he in the same room as the witness? I should like to hear more details of this episode.

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): We were standing in a room somewhat smaller than this room, where as I mentioned previously, we were speaking with the Russian officer. On each side of the door, inside and out was an armed Russian guard with a machine gun. It was to the guard standing inside the door that the Russian officer spoke, and he shouted aloud through the corridor.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Kadar came back from another room at that point, did he?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Whether he came from the corridor or from another room I could not see because I was in the middle of the room. A number of small rooms went off the main corridor. I could not say whether when the guard called, the message was forwarded by a second guard, but it may be supposed that Kadar was in a room quite near because before we could even start a new conversation with the Russian officer (as a matter of fact we did not want to do so) the door opened and Kadar came in.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): When Kadar came into the room was the Russian sitting or standing?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Everybody was standing.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Was the Revolutionary Council of artists, about which you spoke, in communication with other sections of the revolution, for example, the writers' council?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, it was in communication with the writers, the intelligentsia and the central Revolutionary Council. As a result of elections we had a representation of 10 per cent in the executive committee; we had equal rights and voting powers and we divided among ourselves the various liaison duties in connexion with the other revolutionary groups and with the central committee. I was appointed to deal with propaganda, such as the preparation of leaflets and posters, and I also was in charge of trade union matters. I am ready to answer any questions on this subject.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Your trade union was, therefore, in communication with all the other trade unions in Budapest?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, and with the government.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Did you participate in the manifesto which was drafted, and later read, by the association of writers and professors? That manifesto expressed the essence of the ideals of the revolution, I understand. Did you agree with the opinions which it expressed concerning Imre Nagy?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): We took over the points which had previously been published by the writers and associated ourselves with them. Therefore it was unnecessary for us to publish further demands because we were in complete accord with those which had already been published by the writers' union.

We held a meeting at which the sixteen points were read and some modifications were suggested but, generally speaking, there was complete agreement among ourselves, the central workers' committee and the writers' union.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): I would like to ask you a question concerning your personal character as a painter. The fight for freedom in Hungary included a fight by the artists for free expression, and there was opposition towards any general direction or control of art by the authorities. Did such direction and control exist in Hungary with regard to the younger generation of painters?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Do you mean before the revolution?

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Yes, I am speaking of your fight for freedom of expression in the arts, especially with regard to the younger generation.

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Before the revolution those artists who opposed any control or direction of art were thrust on one side and denied the opportunity of selling their pictures freely. Pictures had to be bought by paying money into the central government organ; those who endeavoured to buy pictures in any other way were imprisoned. This may sound ridiculous but any opposition to the social political order was punished by imprisonment. In 1952 my salary was no longer paid to me because I opposed directed art. Although I do not belong to the modernist movement I nevertheless defended the principle that one should be permitted to paint in the modern way if one wished. Subsequently I was excluded from the organization, and was later put in prison.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): You do not believe in modern art?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I believe in modern art, but also in freedom for artists.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): I would like to thank you for the attentive way in which you have listened to my questions.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I have one or two questions which I want you to answer as briefly as possible. Were the restrictions regarding art relaxed since last autumn?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, because we adopted a resolution to the effect that such restrictions should be abolished.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Now let us return to the incidents that took place at Parliament building. Kadar was disrespectfully referred to by the Russian general even when he was not present.

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): He did not speak of him merely disrespectfully. Kadar was not held in high esteem by the Russians, they treated him as a small employee and as an underling.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You gained that impression from the manner in which the guard was asked to call him?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Of course, if you knew the mentality of those people, and if you had seen the incident for yourself, you would have formed the same opinion. I told Kadar this to his face and he did not contradict me but took it for granted that he should be treated as an underling.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): But Kadar came when called?

WITNESS 00 (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did you speak to him?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, naturally I told him I could not negotiate with an underling.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Kadar did not reply sharply when you said that? He did not resent it?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): No.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Nor did the Russian general resent the very uncereemonious way in which you conducted yourself in a public place?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): No, not at all. Neither he nor I had a very high regard for Kadar.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): On the contrary, the Russian general, to whom you spoke with regard to the release of the artists, promised to consider the matter?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, because he knew that Kadar was not in the right.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You said two were set free. How long afterwards did this happen?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): I think about one or two days later. I do not remember the exact dates because everything happened so quickly and we were working day and night.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Anyway, soon enough from your point of view?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, within one or two days.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Do you know what happened to the other three?

WITNESS OO (interpretation from Hungarian): No. I had left Budapest and was painting posters in the country.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your statement.

Witness OO withdrew.

At the request of the Chairman Witness PP took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. I understand you are a high-school student from Budapest and that as a representative of the students you participated in meetings with the Ministry of Education before the revolution. You were an assistant at the hospital during the fighting and you had several conversations with Russian soldiers after 4 November. We are interested in hearing a statement from you regarding incidents of which you have been an eye-witness.

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I am a student under eighteen years of age and during the Parliament I was a member of the five-member students' committee. I was an organizer of the secondary students in the demonstration on the 23rd and as to my experiences during the revolution I would like to tell you the following things.

I would like to testify that during the preparation of the demonstration on 23 October no intention of being armed or of using armed force was present in the mind of the students who organized it. We wanted to achieve our aims quite definitely but at the same time quite peacefully. We were very enthusiastic and we were careful to make sure that there were no excesses and no possible grounds for provocation. In spite of these aims that we had, the demonstration on the 23rd was drowned in blood by the AVH units and the Russian troops who came to help them.

I took part and was an eye-witness when the high school students and university students gathered in front of the radio building and I saw these and other unarmed demonstrators fired upon when their only wish was to have the sixteen points proclaimed over the radio. It was for this reason that the AVH unjustifiably opened fire on these people.

On 27 October I saw the AVH people trying to threaten the civilian population and throwing hand-grenades at them and the wounded were taken to hospital.

On 28 October at Petoefi barracks, which was the AVH barracks, they called me in to help to carry the wounded. In that barracks there were about fifty miners from Tatabanya who had been captured by the AVH. Apparently during the early morning 300 Tatabanya miners hurried to help the Budapest people and about fifty remained, they were either taken away by us as they were severely wounded or we had to leave them for dead on the spot.

On 5 November the Soviet troops suffered great losses in attacking the Moricz Zsigmond Square. The Russians wanted to revenge themselves and from the building across from number 53 Bela Bartok Street, with the excuse that the house was on fire, they had three men called out whom they shot dead on the spot and after that threw them into the fire.

On several occasions during the fighting in November I was an eye-witness of certain events. I saw two Russian armoured units taking up positions before first aid stations and hospitals with the obvious aim of firing freely on freedom fighters

who were not willing to retaliate because of the wounded and the sick people who were in the buildings behind the Soviet positions.

Apart from the things I have told you so far I know of countless incidents which I can recount in detail. I can tell you of events where the Russians and the AVH dragged away and captured young Hungarian people and treated them very badly.

After the general strike on the 27th they took very severe measures against university students. Several hundred students of Budapest University were put in trucks and taken to the prison in Marko Street. Here by various means and threats they tried to make them confess. However, when these attempts proved to be fruitless during a period of from ten days to six weeks they set them free.

I have personal knowledge also that university students were caught, transported to Vecses, taken from there to Ungvar-Uzhorod and then further into the interior of the Soviet Union. Among these deportees there was a friend of mine who is now living in Hungary. He told me that the civilian population received them everywhere with great friendship but because of the prevalent terrorism they were unable to help them. Certain Soviet inhabitants declared in the presence of the deportees that they hated the Soviet Union but because of the terrorism they could not even think yet of an uprising.

This friend whom I mentioned and the university group who were captured and taken away together with him got back to Hungary in the early part of January and at that time it became clear that until then no public account had been given about the deportations, they had been kept secret.

I have now finished my statement and I place myself at the disposal of the Committee in so far as they wish to put questions to me.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): As to what you have told us there are some things that are very important for our enquiry. You say that you took part in the fight with other university groups and you said you also took part in carrying the wounded as there were very many victims in the revolution. You also said that the Russians imprisoned students who were friends

of yours, can you tell me whether you know what was the fate which the Russians intended for the students they captured?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I took no part in the armed fighting. I helped to carry the wounded and acted as a stretcher-bearer in hospital. During this time I had the opportunity of meeting people who were wounded, they had been eye-witnesses and they told me about the circumstances of their being injured.

As one of the leaders of the high school council I took part in the organization of the demonstration. This was completely illegal because on the morning of the 23rd we got a definite order from the party that we were not permitted to take part in any demonstrations.

As I said before I took no part in the armed fighting but I was an eye-witness countless times of such fighting. Mostly the shooting I was was done by the AVH officers and men as the Russian soldiers many times treated the captives with mercy. The Hungarian AVH people were much more cruel. I repeat that I was an eye-witness of the attack that took place in Moricz Zsigmond Square and saw how Hungarian students were captured and taken away by AVH people. The Russians at that time did not help them although they were present in that square. The AVH officers hit the Hungarian students with rifle butts, kicked them and treated them in the most brutal manner. They were held captive for ten days and during that time they got food only three or four times and were held in very bad circumstances.

As to the fate of those who were taken to the Soviet Union I know only that the Russians themselves did not know the reason for this. They did not tell us why they were being taken away. There was no publication about it. They were treated fairly well, they were not harmed, and as a matter of fact even the Russian population and the Russian guards were fairly friendly. I know nothing in more detail about that.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): As to yourself, who told you that it was illegal to take part in the demonstration? Under whose authority was it declared to be illegal?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Generally, in Hungary, such orders were given out without any name or without any justification so that I do not know from whom this order came. I only know that there was an order which arrived from the Central Party Committee.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): What part did you play in this organization? Were you a representative of the student organization of your school, or of your class? Who were you representing?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I got into the central students committee through the fact that there had been an election. Three students were sent from every school in the country. The students answered questions put to them and added their own remarks to what the people who had spoken before them had said and in a constitutional and democratic way on the basis of who spoke best the five-member committee was elected.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): When did you leave Hungary?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I crossed the border on the night of 1 February. I would have preferred to stay at home but they were looking for me at my apartment and I could not stay at home and I could not keep any of my papers at home.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Did they follow you after the revolution?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): On 4 November, after the revolution, they started looking for me. They searched for me twice but since I was not at home further searches were evidently given up. Who was looking for me I do not know. They did not identify themselves as it was not the practice in Hungary to do so.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Where do you live in Austria -- in a camp for refugees or elsewhere?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I live in Vienna in a temporarily maintained Caritas camp.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Is that a religious or a lay institution?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): It is a Catholic organization. I live in a nunnery. They opened a camp to take care of Hungarians here.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Are many Hungarians living there with you?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): There are thirty of us altogether, women and children together.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Are you able to continue your studies now?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately, I have not yet had an opportunity to do so. I have made application to the school at Innsbruck but temporarily they have no room and cannot accept me. I wanted to gain my baccalaureat in Hungarian as I do not know the German language very well, certainly not well enough to achieve my baccalaureat this year. I have lost a year owing to illness and would therefore like to finish my studies as soon as I can.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): I would like to thank you very much for the kind attention you have given to my questions.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did I understand you to say that at some stage during the revolution you talked with wounded Russian soldiers?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I spoke to Russian soldiers, but there must be some mistake; I never spoke to wounded Russian soldiers, I spoke to Russian soldiers standing guard at their tanks, and I asked them questions; I asked them who sent them to Hungary, what orders they had been given, why they were there and shooting Hungarian civilians without the Hungarians having harmed them in any way.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Am I to take it that you are able to speak Russian quite fluently?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I speak Russian a little because for six years we were compelled to study no other language.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What sort of things did the Russians say in reply to your questions? What was their attitude towards the revolution in Hungary; how did they feel about the Hungarian people; did they enjoy the part they were playing in controlling affairs in Hungary; and, in general, what sort of replies did you get from the Russian soldiers?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I tried to speak to several Russian soldiers. One group did not even know where they were. One soldier said in my own hearing that he thought they were at the Suez Canal. Beyond that they did not know there was any question of a struggle for Hungarian independence, that we were not fighting against the Russian people or the Russian order; they saw only a Hungarian insurrection, that we were attacking them and that our aim was to attack Russia eventually as an ally of the Western Powers. Another group of soldiers, however, said that although they knew what was happening because Hungarians had already explained that they were firing on unarmed civilians, they

(Witness PP)

nevertheless could not do anything else because the terror system was so great, and if they did not shoot the soldiers behind would be ordered to shoot them.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Were they in general friendly towards the Hungarian people in the streets?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): The Russian soldiers were friendly enough; in fact, I should say that at first they were very much afraid of the Hungarians, but they were not harmed and they did not harm them; I think they had orders. Generally, they did not enter apartments, they did not take anything or loot anything from individuals, and they behaved in a much more friendly way than Hungarian soldiers.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Have you ever listened to Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I listened continually, as did many other people in Hungary. It was our only hope, and we tried to console ourselves with it.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did you get the impression, from listening to Radio Free Europe, that help for the revolution might be forthcoming? Did you feel that the revolution was encouraged, or encouraged even to begin, by Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I felt just as everyone in Hungary felt then, and as the news spread, that Radio Free Europe was continually promising help to the Hungarian freedom fighters, as opposed to the English or French radio which continually restricted themselves to bare facts.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What sort of help did you imagine that Radio Free Europe, which was not keeping to the facts, might bring to the revolution?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): We hoped for military assistance, although Radio Free Europe did not give any reason for this; but by its general tone it aroused hope in us that we would perhaps get help from the United Nations, at least moral support in so far as perhaps a small group of United Nations troops might come to Hungary.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What did you expect that a group of United Nations troops coming to Hungary would do? Would you have expected them to fight?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I did not expect them to fight. My own feeling was that the political situation of the Soviet Government was fairly unstable, so that if the West had intervened a little more decidedly, even if only with moral support, that could have helped us as the Soviet troops would have been obliged to allow even a small United Nations token force to come in to take care of the situation.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): You became mixed up in this fighting, and you have just said that you hoped for help from the United Nations. Why did you want help? What did you young people want? What did you really want the United Nations to do?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Generally we Hungarians hoped for a more decisive approach by the United Nations. Unfortunately, the United Nations did not take seriously enough the question of even moral support of the Hungarian revolution.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): My question has not been answered in the detail I should like. Speaking generally not of Hungary but of you, the young people, the youth of Hungary, why did you want the United Nations to help? Why were you dissatisfied? Were you not free to do what you wanted? What were the aims of the entire revolution?

(Witness PP)

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): We were not free, no one can say that we were free, and no one living in the West knows even partially what was happening in Hungary. Our opinion was that the West had the duty to give even armed help, though legally of course its inaction could be understood.

Mr. SLM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Have you ever been

outside Hungary?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I had never been outside

Hungary but I had long hoped to, as had many young people, but we never had the opportunity.

Mr. SLM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Then how were you in a

position to compare conditions in Hungary with those in the West, which you considered to be a region that was free? How could you make a comparison? How could you know that life in the West was as you pictured it?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): We listened occasionally to

foreign radio. My father has been in various countries and he talked a great deal about how different life was in those countries from life in Hungary. It was on this basis that I made comparisons and also on the basis of my inner feelings, because one does not have to go to the West to feel that one cannot be on living in the circumstances which exist in Hungary.

Mr. SLM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): How could you know that

the Western radio was telling the truth and the other radio was lying?

(Witness PP)

We wanted freedom not a good comfortable life. Even though we might lack bread and other necessities of life, we wanted freedom. We, the young people, were particularly hampered because we were brought up amidst lies. We continually had to lie. We could not have a sane idea because everything was choked in us. We wanted freedom of thought, and that is what the workers wanted. I have talked to many workers who have said: "If I were allowed to speak, if I could live freely and elect freely, then I would accept these conditions and this standard of life because I would at least have the feeling that I was free."

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Have you ever been outside Hungary before?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I had never been outside Hungary but I had long hoped to, as had many young people, but we never had the opportunity.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Then how were you in a position to compare conditions in Hungary with those in the West, which you considered to be a region that was free? How could you make a comparison? How could you know that life in the West was as you pictured it?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): We listened continually to foreign radio. My father has been in various countries and he talked a great deal about how different life was in those countries from life in Hungary. It was on this basis that I made comparisons and also on the basis of my inner feelings, because one does not have to go to the West to feel that one cannot go on living in the circumstances which exist in Hungary.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): How could you know that the Western radio was telling the truth and the other radio was lying?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I only knew about the West what was written to me by my friends who lived outside Hungary and from what I heard and read. I lived in the circumstances which exist in the East. I saw that this was not good and I therefore concluded that anything that was radically opposed to this had to be right.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I suppose you speak English? Do you understand English?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): No.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Have you read Western literature?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Shakespeare, for instance?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I have read a lot of Shakespeare and I have seen Shakespeare in the theatre. I like English literature, especially poetry, and I have read a certain amount of world literature -- German and French -- but only in Hungarian translations.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You have read geography and history too?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I know some history, but geography I know less well. I would have liked to learn geography by seeing for myself -- looking at maps is too dry.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Quite right, I agree. You have a constant desire for knowledge, young as you are?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I should very much like to study and now I hope that I shall have a chance to do so.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You listened to Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I listened to it.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): For what length of time have you been listening to it -- months or years -- can you say roughly?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): For about four years.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): And during that four years what general impression did you get from Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I felt its most positive contribution was its attempt to give a general picture of the situation in the West and the help it gave to Hungarian youth through its youth programmes, together with detailed information about the political situation, which unfortunately we could not get from our own newspapers.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did many students in high schools and universities listen to Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, many listened -- mostly boys, the girls less.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): During the period just prior to the revolution, what particularly struck you on Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): What had the most influence on me was the readiness to help expressed by Radio Free Europe. I do not consider it a bad thing that they were enthusiastically supporting us because after all they were Hungarians too and we expected help so it did not seem strange that the Hungarians who were in the West should also hope that the Western world would help us. We received continual encouragement in Hungary from them.

Mr. GUNEWARDENE (Ceylon): During the revolution, after 23 October, were you still able to listen to Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, even though there was a lot of deliberate interference with radio transmission. I really had no other occupation in the evening than to listen to the radio.

Mr. GUNEWARDENE (Ceylon): During the revolution did they consistently say "Resist, we will come to your aid soon!"?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, Radio Free Europe did say that.

Mr. GUNEWARDENE (Ceylon): Are you aware that your radio station said "Give us military aid now, we shall fall soon"?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, of course I knew that. Whenever possible I listened even to Gyöer radio and there were a few free broadcasts in which they did ask repeatedly for help from the West.

Mr. GUNEWARDENE (Ceylon): And did they reply "Yes, help will come soon, today or tomorrow"?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): No, so definite an answer was never given but Radio Free Europe was very encouraging and they continuously emphasized that we must hold out, which I do not consider bad at all because it is exactly what we were trying to do.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): I am not saying it was bad, I am merely asking for information. Did the young people like yourself really expect help from the West?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, we definitely did expect help from you.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): And when the help did not come, were you discouraged?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): I did not lose hope. Even now I have not lost hope because it seems to me that internal disintegration must start very soon in the Soviet Union since a system built on such unstable bases cannot be maintained. We were disappointed in the West; that I must say. It sounds a bit presumptuous coming from a girl of my age but I must say it because it is the opinion of the Hungarian youth.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): I do not think it is at all presumptuous. Did you hear anything about Nagy on Radio Free Europe?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Radio Free Europe did not speak for or against Imre Nagy until dawn on 4 November. From that time on, however, the role of Imre Nagy became clear to us and to them too.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): From 4 November, then, according to Radio Free Europe Imre Nagy was a hero, a great, good man who could save the country?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately no; we were not so idealistic by 4 November. One man cannot save a country.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): But Radio Free Europe from 4 November onwards presented Imre Nagy as the idol of the people?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Either I did not hear this or I do not recall it. I know nothing of Radio Free Europe ever having said any such thing.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I probably misunderstood you. You said the position was not clear until 4 November, that Radio Free Europe did not take up one position or another with regard to Imre Nagy until 4 November?

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, in Hungary the situation as far as Imre Nagy was concerned was not clarified. I do not recall that Radio Free Europe tried to glorify the role of Imre Nagy. At that time Imre Nagy had an indifferent role, and some of the people had lost confidence in him, saying he was a satellite of the Soviets.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any further questions? We thank you very much for your statement, and for your answers to our questions.

WITNESS PP (interpretation from Hungarian): Thank you very much. I am glad if I have been able to help those who are left at home.

Witness PP withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: I forgot to inform the members of the Committee that the name of the last witness was not on the list distributed this afternoon. She was one of those left over from this morning's meeting. The meeting stands adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.