

Interviewer:
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I. CHARACTER DESCRIPTION:

This young boy is still childish for his 12 years and is immature. But, he is an industrious lad. Back in Hungary he had two months' studies in the sixth grade and he continued his studies here, in the ~~sixth~~ US. He has overcome the language difficulties with success and has been accepted for junior high school in the fall.

He has beautiful manners and is a polite, courterous, quiet, well-mannered, rather taciturn child.

(I have learned from the parents that he is a diabetic and his mother gives him the necessary insulin shots everyday.)

The boy's father is a former career officer of the old Hungarian Army who, during the Communist regime in Hungary, worked as a manual laborer wherever and whenever he could. The mother applied in vain for any job but, being a "class alien" (daughter of a former county governor), wh was always rejected.

The family lived at Paks, County Tolna and this accounts for the fact that the boy received regular religious instruction at school. Also, he is the only one so far who could speak about the famous Hungarian historical personalities. His teachers must ~~have~~ have been good and very much against the regime. Also, in the provinces, somehow, it seems that the pressure of the Communist regime was not so strong as in the capital.

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II. PERSONAL INVENTORY

Age: 12 years.

Sex: Male

Religion: Roman Catholic

He comes from Paks, Tolna County.

He attended the sixth grade at Paks just before the outbreak of the revolution.

His parents are living. The mother, father, and a younger sister are here with him. His maternal grandmother remained at home in Paks, Hungary.

The family is presently living in Darien, Conn. The boy attended the sixth grade there and now has been admitted to junior high school, in Darien.

III. THE SCHOOL SITUATION.

A. "Can you tell me now something about your school back home? For instance, what subjects did you take?"

"We had geography, drawing, natural history, Hungarian grammar and literature. Also, we had singing lessons, calisthenics, mathematics, history and, of course, the Russian language."

I asked the boy how many hours of the Russian language they had per week. He told me he had four to five hours.

"Tell me now, what did you learn, for instance, in geography?"

"You see, this was our first year that we learned geography at all and we started with Europe. But, first of all, of course, with Russia. This was the first country we ~~studied~~ learned about and we were just through with it when I left Hungary. The next country that would have followed was Hungary in our geography textbook.

"What did you learn in your Hungarian grammar and literature classes?"

"Well, we first learned Hungarian spelling and we also had to write compositions. In literature, we learned about the famous poets and authors. We learned their life history and we also learned about what they had written.

"What sort of songs did you sing in your singing class?"

"We were taught all kind of folk songs -- mixed, Hungarian, Russian and also from other nations.

"What about history? What did you learn in those classes?"

"This was also the first year that we started to study history and we studied about the first man on earth. Our history book went as far as the age of St. Stephen.

"Oh, so you were taught something about St. Stephen?"

"Oh, yes, we learned everything about him!

"What about the Russian language?

"We learned again the Russian grammar. We were taught to read and write Russian. Also, we learned easy and simple little stories.

"Did you have anything that I could term as political classes, or so?

"Oh, yes, we had, once a week, a session called 'The Headmaster's Hour'.

"Well, tell me something about this lesson.

"I can tell you, miss, that this headmaster of ours ~~was~~ was the head of our class. He was a really decent man and we knew that he was supposed to teach us more about political doctrines than he really did. He only told us, 'Now, boys, ask me questions.' And, when we asked something, he just answered. He never tried to influence us politically and never praised the Russians, either.

"I must tell you something else. You know how decent all of our teachers were? Our Russian teacher, for instance, was the one who organized the demonstrations in Paks during the revolution. Isn't that amazing?

"Which of these subjects did you like the best? Tell me now.

"I preferred history to everything else.

"And, why did you like history best?

"Because, first of all, it is terribly interesting and also, because the teacher was extremely good and he could make us be interested in the subject. I disliked, on the other hand, the singing ~~lessons~~ lessons, immensely. First of all, I do

know how to sing. I have no ear for music. Also, this teacher who taught us was extremely rude. He was not only strict -- I wouldn't have minded that but, he was really always very rude. I think this was the only teacher I really did not like because I even liked the Russian teacher. He was a very decent man.

"Did all the teachers treat the children equally or, were any children getting special privileges?

"Yes, there was one of our teachers who coached this certain child and so he always treated him in a sort of a different way.

"Did you have any teachers who were Communists?

"I really cannot tell, miss. Of course, they never told us. But, I think that this teacher who taught us singing must have been a Communist because the manner in which he behaved during the revolution was a little bit suspicious. He was scared to death and immediately, he started to teach us how to sing our national song, 'The Szozat.' Also, it was quite ridiculous to see the difference between the others and this teachers. The other teachers were always very kind, good and considerate with us even if they were strict and this man was only nice to us, all of a sudden, during the revolution. Until then, he was only rude and beastly.

"Now tell me something about your classmates. Who were your best friends?

"I had three really good friends. Two of them were sons of two doctors and the third one was the son of a truckdriver.

"The parents of the two boys, the doctors' sons, usually came to see my parents or my parents went to see them. We visited with them. Of course, this was not the case with the son of the truckdriver. After all, you know, he was of a different social class. But, the four of us usually went together fishing, we played together. We also played soccer. We hiked in the forests and in the mountains and we played all kind of games.

"Did you talk freely with all of your friends?

"With the sons of the two doctors, yes, miss. But, somehow, with the son of the truck driver, we never talked about politics. He was another kind of a boy and also, we heard that his father was a Communist.

"Whom did you not like in class?

"We had a couple of Communist children. They were rude, brutal and very disgusting with us. They were always terrorizing the smaller and the frailer kids. We soon could find out who was a Communist among ourselves because they talked quite differently than we did. The father of one of these kids, those tough ones, was an officer in the customs house. Whenever we talked about something, he always ridiculed us and he always started preaching Communism. On the other hand, I must admit that even tho, he was decent in one way because he never went and he never told on us when ~~we~~ he heard us discussing and talking against Communism.

"How were the teachers with these boys you called Communists?

"I can tell you, miss, that the teachers were very decent with everybody and treated everybody equally. Besides, this Communist boy was at the top of the class. He was an extremely good student and he was very smart.

"Were there any children at school who were looked up to by the others, and for what reason?

"The sons of those two doctors, then, this Communist boy I was talking about and myself, we were at the top of the class and all the other classmates respected us. We were always able to enforce our authority upon the others in class.

"Did you have any religious instructions?

"Yes, we had religious instructions at the school. Of course, everybody knew that anybody who attended religious instructions is not very much liked by certain quarters. Nevertheless, we had three priests, a Protestant, Roman Catholic and one of the Lutherans who came twice a week to give religious instructions to the respective children. We knew that this might cause trouble but, nevertheless, about half of the class attended religious instructions. I was also prepared by the same priest for my First Holy Communion and I always received holy communion on the first Friday of the month.

"What about the Jewish children, for instance? Did they also have religious instructions?

"It was quite astonishing but, we did not have a single Jewish kid in our ~~seventh~~ class. I do not know whether in the other classes the Jewish kids had religious instructions, or not. I also have not heard of any of my classmates who attended religious instructions secretly."

B. "Did you always tell your parents what happened at school?"

"Yes, of course. I always discussed everything with my parents. But, I remember, when I was quite a small boy, my parents never talked about politics with me. I remember whenever I came home and I told them I learned this or that at school, my parents just said, politely, 'Really, isn't that so? I wonder.' But later on, when I grew up, my parents, quite honestly and frankly told me what Communism is and from then on, I believed them and not what I learned at school. Besides, I could see for myself what Communism was because my whole family was suffering under it. We were even expelled from our nice apartment where we lived before."

C. "Did you ever talk about what happened at home when you were in school?"

"Very seldom, miss. However, even then, only with those whom I could trust and with my very closest friends. We always knew with whom we could talk things over and with whom we could not."

"Had any one warned you not to talk about something?"

"Yes, my parents told me be to always be very cautious."

D. "What did you do after school hours?

"Well, first of all, I had to do my homework and when I was through with that I was allowed to go and play with my friends. We discussed all events at school or at home and then we went out playing. We mostly played soccer.

"Did you read anything, and if so, what books? Where did you get them?

"I ~~read~~ mostly read the books by Jules Verne and all of Cooper's Indian stories, 'The Last of the Mohicans', and so on. Also, I loved to read books that dealt with natural history. ~~These were the books~~ My parents usually got these books for me. They obtained them in a book shop where we lived and, usually, I got books for my birthday and for Christmas, etc.

"At ~~school~~ school, sometimes, we were told that we ought to read up on some article in the newspaper. You know, it was so funny, they never really forced us. They just told us, 'Well, you'd better read it.' But, they were not strict about that.

"What about other amusements -- movies, etc.?

"Yes, we sometimes went to the movies. Mostly, Russian movies were shown in our little city. They were always about war and how victorious the Russians were everywhere. I did not like them very much.

"But, the Russian opera and the fairy tales were very good. Also, we very much liked the films which were gay. I think you would call them comedies. Then, there was a picture where you had to queue for hours to get in to see -- that was 'Monte Christo'. When this was on, the movie was crowded at every performance. Sometimes, there were only 10 to 15 people when a Russian movie was shown.

"Did you participate in any sports?

"Yes, we played soccer mostly as I said. And, at school we had calisthenics. Our games with other children consisted of all kinds of parlor games and hide-and-seek. But, really and mainly, we always played soccer, if possible.

"What about the Pioneers? Did you participate?

"Yes, We really were not forced to take part in the Pioneer Movement but, we thought it to be better especially for a kid like me.

"What do you mean by that, sonny?

"Well, you know miss, my father was a career officer. My mother was the daughter of a county governor. So, my background was really very bad.

"What did you have to do as a Pioneer?

"Well, we had to pay 10 fillers for membership fees per month and we got a little membership book for that. Then, we sometimes had to take part at the Pioneer meetings. These mostly

consisted of talk. We really did not care much for that. Usually, the Communist children stood up and proclaimed something loudly and that was all. But, we usually went out for day excursions with one of the teachers. I liked to go with our teacher who taught natural history.

"What did you do when you went on such excursions?

"We usually played that game, you know, where you tie numbers on your head and you play warfare. There are two different armies and you have to ~~run~~ read the number from, sometimes, quite far away and then shout it out. The one you find (the soldier) is then dead. I expect you know that game, don't you miss?

"We had to cater for ourselves and took along our lunches."

IV. FAMILY LIFE

"Tell me something, now, about your family. What did your father do and what did your mother do?

"He was an officer in the Hungarian Army until 1944, when he became a prisoner-of-war and was in Russia. In 1955, he escaped somehow and came home. Then, he was working as a plain-working man, doing heavy manual labor. Altogether, he had 16 different jobs. You know, he also was also working at the construction of a secret AVH prison sometimes in Budapest. But, he told me that he could only push the wheelbarrow to the entrance and then, another trusted AVH man took the material from him. Mummy wanted also to go and get some work in order to supplement our income. But, wherever she went and whenever they looked at her cadre file, they just laughed and told her quite plainly, 'What do you think? The daughter of a county governor would never get employment with us.' We lived at Paks but, in 1948, when I was quite a small baby, my parents told me this, we were expelled from our apartment. We then moved to the village and had quite a good apartment there. We had two rooms and a kitchen. There was no water, however and we had to fetch the water from a well. My grandmother also lived with us and my father came to visit us, now and then on weekends because he always worked somewhere far away.

"The housework was done by my mother and we very often helped her. For instance, carrying water or shovelling snow in the winter. Grandma ~~crocheted~~ gloves. She made a few pennies by doing that.

"When we returned home from school, mother was always at home but, since she was busy with housework, it was usually grandmother who took care of us."

V. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

A. "Did you receive any rewards at school for good work and, what?

"We always received, at the end of the school year, books, if we studied hard and well. Good marks were always rewarded by those books."

B. "Were you ever punished at school? What is usually punishable and how have you been punished?

"Of course, we were punished. There were different sorts of punishments. For instance, if we behaved badly, during some classes, our marks were taken off from us in that subject. Then, the teacher sometimes gave us a good beating. We got a slap in the face or, sometimes, he slapped our palms with the ruler."

I asked ~~him~~ the little boy if this was customary that they were physically punished?

He said, "What do you imagine, miss? Of course, children were given physical punishment if they were naughty. Otherwise, they would not have ~~xxx~~ obeyed."

"If we were slack in our studies and the teacher found out that this was only because we were just naughty, then, the report cards were sent to our parents. If, for instance, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ we were lagging behind in our studies because, somehow, not for sheer naughtiness, but somehow, we could not study well or did not study well, then, our parents were called in and the teacher discussed the problem with the parents."

"Were you ever punished by your parents?

"Of course I was because, after all, I also was sometimes naughty. I remember once I went with my friends up into the forest and I came home very late at night, so, father gave me a good beating. Usually, I was punished by being deprived of something. For instance, I was not allowed to go out to a party or to an outing, or with my parents when the rest of the family went."

VI. "Now I am going to ask you a few questions about the revolution."

A. "Can you tell me why the Hungarians really started the revolution?"

"Well, you see, I believe it was like ~~this~~ this. People found that life was not good, only bad. Also, the older people had told those who hadn't seen the good old times and so everybody found out that life is just unbearable and it would be better to start a revolution so as to bring about a change. This is what I think. Nobody told me that."

B. "What impressed you most during the revolution, tell me that."

"I think it was extremely decent of the people of Paks that they sent a great deal of foodstuffs to Budapest for the Freedom Fighters and for the population of the city."

C. "Did you take part in the revolution?"

"Oh, no, miss, I did not. We were living in Paks and nothing much happened there. All we knew was that, I remember that it was a Monday, (we heard) that the revolution had started in Budapest. Then, a couple of AVH police came down and looked up all of those who were staging a demonstration in our village. These workers ~~came~~ came from Stalin City and they were locked up by the AVH. Upon this, my teacher who taught us Russian -- you remember I told you this already --

threatened the AVH saying that a huge demonstration would be organized if the workers were not released. So, what could the AVH do? All of these people were released. I also remember that somebody told us that during the demonstrations, an AVH man threw a handgrenade into the crowd and there were several casualties. We had about two or three demonstrations in our little village and the people marched up to the Russian memorial, which was on the banks of the river, and wanted to pull it down. Somebody told me that the captain of the ferry boat, who had been in a political prison for four years, wanted to help pull the memorial down with his boat and a big piece of rope. But, they did not succeed. It seems that it was too strong and too heavy. I had seen the demonstrations, but my mother did not allow me to participate. She said I was much too small and too young for this. From what I saw, there were many young people, mostly, who took part in the demonstration. However, I had seen quite a lot of older people, also. They marched up and down in the streets; they were singing Hungarian songs and reciting Petofi's 'Talpramagyar.' (This is a ~~fact~~ famous patriotic poem ~~about~~ by Petofi, which he wrote during the 1848 Revolution.)

"I also saw many police men who cut off their red star and other Soviet insignias and they became the national guard. All of our teachers took part in the national guard. As a matter of fact, the mathematics teacher was the commander of the national guard of Paks."

VII. "What would you like to be when you grow up?

"I want to be an engineer, an electrical engineer at that. (The little boy was very positive and very quick on answering this question, so, I asked him why.)

"Because ever since I can remember, I liked to busy myself with engines and ~~machinery~~ machines and I also liked to construct these things myself. Besides, here in America, you can always do what you want and you can ~~make~~ make a living how to want to. You know, miss, this is what I like best here and why... it is so good. You don't have to be frightened any more. There is no AVH here and you can talk freely. Even at school you can talk about everything with everybody."

VIII. THE SPECIAL SECTION

"I am now going to give you now a few names of famous Hungarians. Will you tell me something about each of them?

"What do you know about St. Stephen?

"He was the first Hungarian king and he was the one who ~~founded~~ really founded Hungary. He lived in the very beginning of the ~~first century~~ 1st century and he introduced Christianity to the Hungarians.

"Who was King Matyas?

"He was the most just Hungarian king and Hungary flourished in his time. He also formed the Hungarian Army. A very great and famous man, he was a born and very good leader.

~~What do you know about Francis Rakoczy?~~

"What do you know about Francis Rakoczy?

"He was imprisoned by the Austrian king in Vienna but he escaped and then, he started the freedom fight of the Kuruc nation against the Austrians. But, due to some treason he lost the battle.

"Who was Alexander Petofi?

"He was our greatest and most famous poet. He took part in the 1848 Revolution and he wrote the famous 'Talpramagyar' poem. He was killed in the battle of

"Who was Louis Kossuth?

"He was the governor of Hungary in 1848 and he was the one who was the greatest politician at that time.

"Do you know anything about Istvan Szethenyi?

"He did a great deal for the country. He had the big dams at the Disza River and also, the famous Chain Bridge in Budapest. He was a great Hungarian.

"Who was Francis Deak?

"He was the famous Hungarian politician who arranged an agreement with the Austrian court in 1850 or 1860 and who was able to achieve, that due to this agreement, Hungary became independent of the Austrian kings and the Austrian court.

"Who was Maria Theresa?

"She was a queen who came to Hungary to ask the Hungarians for assistance which the Hungarians gladly gave to her.

"Who was Gabor Bethlen?

"I'm afraid I do not know.

"What about Michael Tancsics?

"He was a poet who, during the 1848 Revolution, was imprisoned but Petofi and his comrades liberated him.

"Who was George Dozsa?

"He rose against the tyranny of King John and he started the revolution of the peasants, but he lost the battle.

"Who is Joseph Mindszenty?

"He is our cardinal. He is the cardinal of Hungary and he was put in prison by the AVH, ~~where~~ where he stayed for a very, very long time.

"Do you know anything about Nicholas Horthy?

"He was a very great Hungarian who, in 1919, fought against the Communists in Hungary and he expelled them. He ~~also expelled them~~ then marched into Budapest with a great triumph. He then became the governor of Hungary and he remained in power until 1943.

"Who is Imre Nagy?

"He was already prime minister during the Communist regime but, then they dismissed him because he was not strong enough. Later on, during the revolution, in Hungary, he again became prime minister. He declared the neutrality of Hungary. But, of course, this displeased the Russians and they attacked Hungary and also imprisoned Prime Minister Nagy."