

February 14, 1957

Interviewer: A. Reisch

*To personal evaluation*  
I. PERSONAL INVENTORY

1. Respondent's name: M-2
2. Age: 27
3. Sex: Male
4. Marital status: single
5. Religion: Protestant (Calvinist)
6. Where born: Szamosker, Szatmar county, Hungary
7. Respondent spent 14 years in Szamosker and nine years in Budapest.
8. Respondent lived in Budapest just before the revolution.
9. Yes, 1945-1947; prisoner of war in the USSR.
10. Respondent was a Private in the Hungarian Army for seven months under the Communist regime.  
He was taken by the Germans in 1944 to the Romanian front.
11. Education: eight years of public school at Szamosker.
12. Occupation: Studied barber's trade till 1949. From 1949 till 1951, worked at the Ganz Wagon Factory; from 1951 till 1953, at the Ganz Shipyard and Machine Repair Shop, as a welder and a locksmith; from 1953 till October 1956, was a small enterpriser in the private economic sector. He sold knitted wear and childrens' toys.
13. No, respondent's parents are not living.
14. Respondent has one elder brother, one older sister.
15. Respondent has no children.
16. Respondent left Hungary on November 21, 1956.

PERSONAL INVENTORY (cont.)

17. Respondent arrived in the US on December 4, 1956.
18. Camp Kilmer, N. J., New York City, New Brunswick, N. J.
19. Immediate plans: to get a job in his field.
20. Respondent has not been interviewed by any Western organization.
21. Respondent speaks some Russian.

II. MAJOR SALIENCE AND WARM-UP QUESTION

Americans should know the aims of the Hungarian revolution, its historical traditions of the past.

They must know of the fight for freedom of the Hungarian people, of their desire to get rid of Russian oppression.

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

October 22:

Respondent spent the evening in a small cafe, where he was accustomed to meet with his friends. He then heard for the first time of the 14 points. On his way home, he saw several groups of students talking on the streets.

October 23:

Respondent began the day as usual, occupied with his small business (he sold knit-wear and toys on the streets). Some time before noon he saw a poster listing the 14 points, on the front of the National Theatre. The poster listed the students' demands to the government. The students wanted Gero to read these demands over the radio. As respondent stood there, a girl student he knew gave him ten posters like that he was reading, and told him to put them up, which he did.

At 2:00 p.m. the demonstrations started, with the permission of Minister of the Interior Piros. Respondent walked toward Stalin's statue; he saw many cars carrying students while he was on his way there. Thousands of people gathered in Hero's Square. The crowd started to pull down Stalin's statue with ropes.

No one was afraid; the people were there in great numbers, and the police who were present did not dare to interfere. The people seemed to have only one will. They were of all ages; there were many children, women, and old people. The majority were students, and these were joined later by workers who came out of the plants in the afternoon. The demonstrations were not organized, their character was spontaneous.

Toward evening, the people heard that something was going wrong in front of the Radio Building. After Gero's speech, the AVO threw tear-gas bombs from the building into the crowd. The people threw the bombs back. The AVO fired blanks at first, then opened fire on the crowd, which was unarmed. By that time, respondent had reached the scene of action.

He saw a group of some 100 policemen, led by a police colonel. The crowd brought up the body of a young girl, one of the first persons killed by the AVO in front of the Radio Building. When the police colonel saw her, he recognized his own daughter. He told his men to do anything the people wanted, and asked the crowd to shoot him. The respondent then got his first weapon, a revolver, from the colonel. The other policemen also surrendered their weapons to the crowd; some ran toward the Radio Building. By that time fighting was very heavy. Many AVO cars were burning on the streets. People got arms from the so-called "Freedom Fighters' Clubs," where military training used to be given, or they went to get arms from barracks and plants.

Respondent wanted freedom, a government headed by Imre Nagy, and the departure of Soviet troops. He thinks the fighting could have been avoided if Gero had read the students' demands over the radio. The fighting started when the AVO fired into the unarmed crowd. Respondent heard the term "Freedom Fighter" on the second day of the revolution (October 24).

In respondent's opinion, only those who could not get arms did not fight. Everyone hated and feared the AVO; even a district CP secretary fought beside him, saying he didn't fight against the CP, but for freedom and for his children.

In respondent's opinion, the revolution had no direction, no head. Later, there were some local leaders, such as Maleter at the Kilian Barracks. Their common will was the only thing which united the people.

Though wounded once, respondent was never afraid. As for the over-all outcome, he was reserved, and his philosophy was: "Well, we'll see how all this will end." After November 4, he continued to fight in the same spirit. He knew it was Gero who had called in the Russian troops. The Hungarian people will never forgive him for this action.

After the departure of the Russian troops, there was tremendous joy in Budapest, even though some 10,000 were dead. Everyone was in the streets, many began to clear away the ruins.

During the few days of freedom, respondent made Kossuth crests on a small press, out of plastic. The small machine could

make six crests at a time. As it had a numbering device, respondent knows he made 136,000 crests before the machine broke down because of over-heating.

At first respondent distributed the crests free to people on the streets. Later, when he had no more material, he sold them for two forints apiece.

On Saturday November 3, respondent knew the Russians' retreat to be a tactical maneuver; he tried to go outside Budapest and saw Soviet guns entrenched on the outskirts of the city. He came back and told his friends: "I think that the Russians are going to blast us to pieces."

After the Russian attack on Sunday November 4, respondent entrenched himself with some 150 other freedom fighters in the Seventh District of Budapest, near CP district headquarters and the Palace Theatre. They held out until November 20, when a Jewish boy betrayed them by showing the Russians the house in which they were hiding. They were overwhelmed by Soviet tanks, and the remnants of the group, some 40 in all, dissolved.

Respondent decided at once to escape to the West, and left Budapest, afoot, walking toward the Austrian border. Later he got rides in cars and horse-drawn carriages. He was with a small group of people.

#### IV. EXPECTATIONS OF HELP FROM THE WEST DURING THE REVOLUTION

The Hungarian freedom fighters expected some kind of help from the West. They expected to get weapons, not soldiers. They also hoped that the United Nations would do something. Radio Free Europe told the people to hold out.

Respondent met several foreign correspondents (French, German, Austrian) during the fighting. They all told him that the West would assist Hungary. After November 4 the people were bitter, but nevertheless fought desperately.

V. SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE AND ATTITUDES

- A. My father was a peasant who owned 5 holds of land (7 acres). He died in 1937; after his death my mother worked, too. After her death, my elder brother cultivated the land. In 1951 he was forced to join the collective sector, though he could keep the house and a small house plot. In 1953, after Nagy became Premier, he left the kolkhoze. Both my parents had six years of public school.
- B. Changes occurred in Hungary after the Communists took over. Rich landowners, bank owners, and the aristocracy were wiped out. I classify myself in the low middle-class, that is, the workers. As to other classes, I can list the peasantry and the intelligentsia. The latter is composed of the more intelligent people, among them the so-called "class aliens" who were persecuted and earned very little.

All social classes hated Communism. They were exploited by the regime. Many innocent people from all social groups were imprisoned, tortured by the AVO. Only a small minority of people, who had or were nothing before, and obtained positions became good Communists.

Those hardest hit by Communism were the craftsmen and the peasants, because the Communists took away their plants, shops, and their land, and nationalized them.

People are strongly class-conscious. Since 1945, they lived in common fear of the regime which exploited them. Class-consciousness is more developed among the members of the peasantry than among the industrial workers. It is less developed among the members of the intelligentsia. In this respect, the state did not succeed in reclassifying the people, who continued to classify themselves socially. During the revolution, the peasants sent huge amounts of food to Budapest. In the city, nothing was stolen from the shops and stores. All social groups were united. Economic differences between them did not prevent their understanding.

- C. The most active group were the young workers, followed by the students, both equally dissatisfied with the regime. The peasants could not fight, though many came to Budapest. They sent food, gave blood. During the demonstrations the students and the intelligentsia were playing the first role, were joined later by the workers.
- D. In order to get ahead you had to be a good Communist. With the exception of a few cases, talent did not matter. In Hungary, there was not such a thing as "the right man at the



right place". The good Communist can be stupid, he can steal, it does not matter. He must follow the party line and be obedient. Then he will get all the material advantages. For example, an AVO-man could earn as much as 16,000 forints a month, while a worker earned 800.

Between 1953-1955, more people could go ahead, among them small artisans and technicians. But when Nagy left the situation became even worse than before.

The people who were the most shameless, those who did everything to please the Communists, could go ahead. They did this for material advantages, and in order to obtain high positions. They were the privileged ones.

A cousin of mine, a captain in the Army, was a CP member. When I was a private in the Army, he treated me rather badly, forcing me to give him respect even when I was on leave and met him at home. I got mad at him and beat him up. For this, he had me locked up for two weeks.

## VI. FAMILY LIFE UNDER COMMUNISM

A. Communism brought bad changes into family life in Hungary. Before 1945, high morals were the general thing. Now the morals are looser. The wife has to go to work. She meets other men at work. Many young men don't dare to get married, for fear of being divorced soon afterward. The unity of the family has been destroyed. These changes are similar in all social groups.

B. 1. Before Communism, children were brought in a pious, God-fearing way. By breaking up the family, the Communists have suppressed this. They also abolished religious teaching at school.

The parents have to put their children in creches, many are not able to educate them themselves. On the other hand, the regime tells them to lead a free life, to leave their family, to live by themselves in rented rooms. Many young girls become prostitutes because of this. Communism is solely responsible for this.

2. Children don't obey their parents as much as before. They more often leave the family. Some would refuse religious education by their parents. Some have political differences.

I knew a 15 year-old girl whose father was elected CP secretary in a factory. Since that day he has become another man, and made life hell for his daughter. Finally, she left him and went to live alone, saying that she still loved her father, but that he had told her to go away if she was not satisfied.

The changes have occurred because the children are brought up in a different spirit. The state takes them away from their parents and they are entirely under the influence of the school. The changes are the same for all social classes. The young peasants, for example, leave their villages for the towns.

In the family, the children were brought up in a God-fearing manner. In school, they are brought up in the Communist spirit. To this must be added the influence of the Communist youth organizations.

C. Communism affected marriage as well as courtship. In fact, there was no courtship -- or just until you would get the girl. Young people met in espresso, dance halls. Later the young man would very often go to the girl's flat.

People did not often marry in the church, for fear of being observed and losing their job. Only civil marriages were performed in most cases.

There were many illegitimate children. The Communists had a slogan: "To bear a child is a woman's duty, to bear a child is a girl's glory." The state provided a special clinic for unwed mothers, and their children were actually bought by the state. No contraceptives were available, and there was no birth control because the Communists did not want it.

There was secret prostitution. Free love was advocated as in the USSR. Nothing about sexual matters was written in the papers. The official attitude was that prostitution had been abolished, while in reality it was wide-spread. The Communists were setting the bad example and their teaching and behaviour caused the deterioration in morals.

- D.
1. People made friends with their own kind -- Communists with Communists, non-Communists with non-Communists. I never had any Communist friends.
  2. While some people would have continued the friendship, I would never have done it. I would have broken the friendship. In most cases, the non-Communist broke the friendship. I knew many such cases in the Army. I also knew of a young man who became a secretary in the DISZ and was left alone by his friends.
  3. Friendship with Communists was not possible, because nobody wanted to be a friend of a Communist.

- E:
1. There was a big increase [in crime]. The people did not earn enough and many of them stole from factories. I knew about this from other people, as nothing was mentioned in the newspapers. During the Revolution, many criminals were freed from the jails.

The increase occurred because of the general economic poverty brought by the Communist regime. The crime rate for women and young people went up, as many had no jobs and no money. There were many cases of venereal disease.

Very few criminals were caught. Very often, innocent people were arrested instead. One of my friends was accused of having stolen tools from the factory, and though he was completely innocent, he spent two years in jail. The police are not smart enough, despite many razzias. In my opinion, the government doesn't train the police well enough.

2. Drinking in Hungary has increased. Many people are bitter and desperate, and they drink up their money. On pay days, there are many people drunk. Drinks are very expensive, 1/2 dl. of rum cost 7 forints, i.e. two hours work. The Government increased the prices to discourage consumption. Wine was very bad, made many people sick. The good wines were taken away to the Soviet Union or exported abroad.

3. Here we must make a distinction. First, I must speak of the so-called "jampec" who was a target for the Communists. These were the young people who dressed in modern, Western style. They were called "imperialists", "agents of the West", etc. They liked dancing, especially American jazz music. There were many young people like this. They dressed with taste. Only the Communists did not like them. The young people wanted to do what they liked. Most of them were students and young workers, from 15 to 30 years of age. There was nothing criminal in what they did. Their parents made no objections, and said they should do what they pleased.

The criminal hooligans were the people who did not want to work, who were completely corrupted. They drank their pay, their dress was in poor condition. They were not necessarily young people, their average age was from 25 to 30. Their number was small, the Communists exaggerated the whole thing. Many of these people were unemployed, had no means of living. If they remained unemployed more than 6 months, and were caught, they were condemned because they kept away from work. In my opinion, it was not always their fault, but the fault of existing difficult economic conditions. As most of the young criminals lived far away from their parents or family, the families could not do very much about them.

## VII. RELIGION

- A. Under Communism, people were prevented from practicing their religion. It was not possible to go to church in complete freedom. There was always the fear of losing one's job, or of having some other kind of trouble. There was no religious instruction at school. Freedom of religion was only written on paper in the Constitution; in practice, there was none.

I knew a Protestant minister who was arrested because he preached freely and was not afraid to tell the truth to the people. The Communists did use religion for political purposes. They succeeded in getting some ministers, such as Protestant Bishop Albert Bereczky, who preached for the Communists, and this way they tried to win the people over to them.

The Roman Catholic Church was the hardest hit, because of Cardinal Mindszenty's attitude and resistance. Many priests were arrested and deported, and the people frightened away from the churches. The Jewish religion was persecuted, too.

- B. Religion played an important role in my life, because my family was always very religious. One of my uncles was a minister. I used to go to church every Sunday. I was not afraid, but always went to some church located far away from the place where I lived.

I think I was more religious than the average person in Hungary, in the respect that many other people were afraid to go to church. For example, the students were afraid to lose their scholarships, etc. Only the family could preserve religion versus the state.

- C. I would like to see complete agreement between the church and the state, complete liberty to practice one's religion. Church and state should be separate.

Morals would be higher with religious instruction in schools. The church has the right of setting moral codes in books and movies as many of them are immoral.

The churches should take no part in politics, but look after their own affairs, which is to teach God's word.

- D. 1. Many members of the Communist party were Jews. Jews always agree among themselves, help each other throughout the world. One cannot speak of persecution, as they were able to defend themselves better than others. Many would do anything when there is money in sight.

2. Before the war their [the Jews'] situation was good. It deteriorated when the war started. In 1944, the Nazis began to deport them in great numbers. After the war, they managed to get rich fast by joining the CP, and many were better off than the Hungarians in general. On the other hand, some lost their former properties and hated the regime.

3. They were treated better than others because Jews help each other better than others. They had a separate kitchen at Camp Kilmer.

4. Jews had everything under Communism. High positions in government, ministries, AVO, etc. In general they were satisfied. They joined the CP to get all the material advantages. If Communism would have been overthrown, they would have turned against it, too. While I worked in factories, I didn't see too many Jews working there. But one could see them sitting in every important office.

One Jewish boy betrayed our freedom fighters' group on November 20th. He waved to the Russians and showed them the house where we were hiding. We were able to shoot him and identify him thanks to his papers. I did not see many of them fighting; they remained in safety and did not do much. If Hungary were independent, they would not be able to make any more business on the black market, so I think they did not like the idea.

## VIII. HUNGARIAN YOUTH

A. Under Hungarian youth, I include the young people from 14 years (high school students) up to the age of 30, i.e., the university students, the young workers; in a word, the younger generation.

B. 1. They initiated the Revolution in Hungary because of their will to free their country.

Before the Revolution, they held debates on their situation, decided they were not well off, and criticized the regime. They were the leaders of the demonstrations, and were also very active during the fighting, including the very young children.

2. Because they were more courageous and more active. Because they decided and acted quickly. They had many reasons to be dissatisfied. They could not study in the schools as they wanted to. Students were forced to study branches they did not want to. I knew a girl who wanted to become a pharmacist, but she had to study botany instead. The youth also knew that if they were caught, they would be solely responsible. Older people, who had to support their families, could not take the chance of being arrested or deported.

The older people approved the action of the youth, joined them and helped them as much as they could. The young people were glad that the old ones did not let them down, and that they shared their demands, their cause.

C. I went to school under the Horthy regime. The teacher used physical punishment then, now there is less discipline and it is worse. The teachers do not know enough, and they want the young people to learn everything too fast.

To go to a university, one has to have a good personal file ("cadre card"). The family background was carefully examined from the political and social point of view. Children of kulaks, former politicians, etc. were excluded. In 1953, Imre Nagy said there were no kulaks, and their children should therefore go to universities too, and not be discriminated against.

The Communists did not care about talent, they selected the students like in a lottery. The old teachers, who were capable and liked by the students, were not reliable politically. They were thrown out and replaced by young teachers without proper training.

D. 1. The purpose was to educate the youth in the "democratic spirit", in the Marxist-Leninist spirit. The purpose was also to turn him away from the church. Meetings organized on Sundays so that they could not go to church. Also to give them military training, like in the "Freedom Fighters' Clubs". All students had to be members of the DISZ.

2. I knew DISZ members in the Army. The people were forced into the DISZ. The workers were frowned upon in the factories if they were not members. There were no social advantages in joining. The only advantage was in the field of sports.

Communists put much emphasis in organizing young children. The Pioneers replaced the Boy and Girl Scouts. Communists wanted to get the children while young. There were no differences made between boys and girls - both had the same importance. Morals often started to deteriorate in these organizations.

Boys would enter the Petöfi Military School at the age of 13-14. They were the first ones to leave the barracks during the Revolution.

The organization was considered as a meeting place; that's the way many young people could stand it. Nothing happened if a member did not attend, but he was expelled if he did not pay his membership fees.

Yes, there were criticisms among the members. Some complained about the education, others about the bad equipment. For the past year, DISZ practically ceased to exist. The attendance was very bad, the DISZ could not operate at all.

3. Sports continue to enjoy great popularity in Hungary. I boxed and played soccer. I did this for the pleasure I got out of it, and so did the others.

The Communists used sports for political purposes, in order to obtain material advantages. The top sportsmen were professionals whose profits were taken by the state. Through sports, the state was able to obtain for the country much needed currency and all kinds of articles.

Anti-Soviet feelings were expressed at sport meetings between the two countries. At a soccer game between the Soviet and Hungarian teams, the Russians were losing and started to play roughly. More than 100,000 people booed and whistled at them. The same thing happened at other meetings.



Sports are still important, though less now that many games and fights are "fixed". I knew personally Laszlo Papp, three times Olympic boxing champion, who "lost" only one fight, against a Russian...

- E. All young people hated Communism. There was the terrible work harrassment. Only CP members could get ahead. Talent, technical knowledge did not count. One man was given everything and praised exaggeratedly, and there was nothing left for the others. I do not remember of any time when youth accepted Communism -- youth rejected it at all times.

IX. MAJOR DISSATISFACTIONS AS FELT IN EVERY-DAY LIFE

- A. & Too much work, and much economic poverty. Little pay. One
- B. could not buy very much with a salary. The average monthly salary of 1000 forints was not enough to live on for a month. Food was scarce and expensive; one had to queue in order to get it. Garments were terribly expensive, and a pair of shoes cost 900 forints.
- C. The Communists suppressed traditional Hungarian holidays such as Christmas, which became "Pine-Tree Day", March 15, October 6, St. Stephen's Day. Instead we had May 1st and April 4. Stalin's birthday was also celebrated - with work! They changed the names of the streets, gave them Russian names. The Russian language was taught in all schools.

This was harmful to Hungary, but the national traditions were preserved in the family circle, most of the time by the head of the family.

## X. THE ECONOMIC LIFE

A. 1. For the past years, I lived as a small entrepreneur, and my situation was somewhat better than before. Under Nagy's premiership, I got a license which allowed me to manufacture knitted wear and toys.

a. Food. It was extremely difficult to buy food of good quality. In a restaurant, a cheap meal without meat cost 8 forints; a better one, with meat, 12 to 14 forints, and up. Sometimes there were shortages. It was impossible to get oranges, dates, figs, bananas. I solved the problem by having my meals cooked at home by an old lady who rented me one room. This way, I could eat better and more. I spent some 500 forints on food every month.

b. Clothing was very expensive. One suit, made on measure, cost 2,000 forints. Ready-to-wear, it cost 800 forints, i.e. one month's salary. There was no good woolen material - only the imported things were of good quality. There was enough material, but the prices were too high.

c. Housing was very bad. It was too expensive. I lived in one big rented room for which I paid 250 forints per month. Many young people had to live six in one room, and had to pay as much as 120 forints for a bed. It was almost impossible to find a room, unless through an intermediary.

d. I considered a car a "luxury", as there was none available. From the Communist point of view, to have a better suit, a leather jacket, and a motorcycle was already luxury.

To me, housing caused more difficulty than food.

e. We had everything we needed before 1945. Though life was not easy at home after my father died in 1937, we had our own house, produced our own food, and could eat better.

Today, people don't dare to dress well, to go out to have a good time, because they are observed and are not free. When I bought a new suit, I was asked if I had robbed somebody...

Our standard of living was lower, on every line. Prices were too high, there was too little money. Under Nagy's premiership, the workers got salary raises, but the prices were raised three times more.

2. I did not know such families. The only people who could live better were those who formerly had some trade or shop and were able to sell them in time and to keep the money in reserve. I knew a jeweller who worked and supplemented his income with some money out of his reserve. He was able, therefore, to support his wife and child. The situation of large families was very difficult.

3. The state took away everything from the farmers -- their wine, pigs, vegetables, etc. There was complete economic exploitation. In the Ganz Wagon Plant, all the trains we built were for the Soviets, and the same was true of the ships built at the Ganz Shipyard. Everything was produced for the Russians, nothing was left for the Hungarians. In an oxygen plant, machines were bought twice from Germany, and both times, the Russians took them away from the plant. The Soviets did not give anything in return, their own machines and tools were of bad quality.

B. In 1956, my average monthly earnings were 1,500 forints. One has to deduct 132 forints for the trade tax, 47 forints for income tax, and the cost of electricity and gas. After all deductions, my monthly income was 1100-1200 forints.

While I worked in factories (1949-1953), my average income was 950-1000 forints. One month's pay per year, i.e. 1000 forints, was taken away for the peace loan. This was compulsory. Other taxes, if no children, 4-1/2%; old age, 2-1/2%; trade union, 1%. A newspaper (Szabad Nep) cost 20 forints per month. There were no premiums, we had the norm system. At the end of the month, after all deductions, net income was 800-850 forints. If the norm was less than 100%, one got less pay; if more, more pay. But norms around 200% aroused suspicion, and were carefully checked.

Married men received family allowances if they had 2 children, none if they had only one. This was 14 forints per month for one child.

I used to supplement my income by unloading coal freight cars in the evening hours. I earned between 20 and 25 forints per evening and spent the money immediately on food.

As for my brother at Szamosker, he cultivated the land with the help of the other members of his family.

When wages increased, one spent more. When wages decreased, one ate less. There were no increases while I worked in factories.

- C. 1. In the KÖZERT shops (state stores) only what the Russians had rejected was sold. The producer's price was higher, but his articles were better and fresher.

For example, one liter of milk cost 3.60 in a Kőzert store (it was bought for 70 filler from the peasant, and cream was taken away for butter). The producer's price was 4 forints a liter. One tenth of a quart of sour cream, Kőzert price, was 1.70 forints; producers' price, 2.00 forints. One egg, 1.70 versus 1.80, but the latter was fresh.

In a state store, a suit cost 1,800 forints. Merchandise was of very bad quality in the commission stores. Only the very poor people went to buy there.

Prices changed with the seasons. Eggs were more expensive in autumn and winter, cheaper in the spring. In 1955, prices went up, especially for clothing and also food.

2. The quality of goods in retail stores was bad. Quality did not change. But often, some item would be sold under another name, and cost more than before, without any change in the quality. For example, 6 oz. of pick salami cost 7 forints, later it became Herz salami and cost 7.70.

3. There was definitely a black-market. Some people would come from the country to town with some products and would sell them without authorization.

Often stores were unable to supply consumers in abundance. For example, there was often not enough meat, and people had to queue hours for it. When there was no fat, for instance, it was replaced with margarine or cooking oil.

There was no spoilage of food. Only the top Communists had enough.

4. Meat, lard, eggs, butter, tea, pepper, paprika, flour, rice.

5. Colonial fruits (oranges, lemons, bananas, etc.)

We had oranges for Christmas 1953 or 1954 - 2 lbs. cost 22 forints.

6. Some store managers would give more food to some friends for more money. This practice was not wide-spread. I myself used to buy food from somebody I knew. One quart of milk cost

officially 7.70 forints, under-the-counter, 10 forints. Legal outlets did not dare to sell goods for a higher price because this was dangerous. The punishment was 3-4 years imprisonment. There were inspectors who checked the cash registers of the stores. If they found more or less money than the regular amount, they caught the manager. The manager had to take the daily income to the post-office every evening.

Certain articles were available only on the black market, through private intermediaries -- for example, nylon sweaters and stockings, and wrist watches.

- D. 1. From 1949 till 1953, I worked as a welder and a locksmith. I worked 8-1/2 hours a day, from 6 A.M. to 3 P.M. It took one hour to go to and to come back from my work. When I didn't work at night, I could sleep 6 to 7 hours.

I was taken to the Ganz Wagon Factory by an acquaintance. I would have preferred to work as a barber, but my hand had exema at that time.

Relations with co-workers depended on their mood. If they were in a bad mood, there were quarrels. We did not talk about politics. The workers did not like the word "comrade". They didn't like the CP members, because they were often spying for the CP secretary. Thus there was an attitude of mistrust. When I was put to work in an office in the factory, my co-workers made only ironical comments. I liked them but they did not give it back in return.

Many superiors were hated and also feared. They harrassed the workers, often threatened them. For this, many were beaten up by the workers outside of the factory, in the darkness of the evening.

2. They worked well enough. The pieces they manufactured were checked by the quality control office. This control took place twice. The ratio of rejects was high, because the material was bad. Also the workers had to work too fast, otherwise, they did not earn enough. If a worker broke something he had to pay for it.

Workers did not like to be praised. All they wanted was more pay.

3. There were holiday resorts, only for those who belonged to the trade unions. The management chose the workers who were to go to the vacation camps, as it pleased them. This was pure protectionism. The CP members were always in the majority.

Every worker was entitled to two weeks' vacation a year. After three years, he got one day more. Nobody could take his vacations when he pleased.

There was medical insurance and illness compensation. There was a plant doctor who signed the medical certificate. Very often, he would not do so, and workers who were ill had to work.

Pensions were very low. My old housekeeper, a woman of 86, received 140 forints per month. This was not enough to live on.

- E. No, I would not have liked to live in the country. For young people, the means of earning a living were better in town. They also had more distractions there. The agricultural worker had a better diet, and they did not spend their money on food, instead they bought land. The general standard of living was higher in towns.

In the towns, there were more Communists, but you could avoid them more easily. In the villages and small towns everybody knows everybody else, and this was much more difficult.

I hated the collective farming. Only those who had no land liked it. The majority of Hungarian peasants hated collectivization; naturally, the well-to-do more than the others. In our village (Szamosker) the collectives disintegrated after Nagy became premier.

I would prefer private farming. What I produce myself, I want to sell myself. I approve the 1945 land reform, which had the agreement of the whole nation. No more innovations are necessary.

XI. POLITICAL LIFE.

A. 1. I was never interested in politics, neither before and after 1948 nor today. My uncle told me one day: "Politics are the dirtiest thing on earth, never put your hands into them, you'll never be able to clean them." I always followed his advice. I despise the politicians. I have no sympathy for any political party. This was the attitude of the whole family. There was never the question of politics at home.

2. I always hated the Communist Party and always told openly my opinion. I heard of Bela Kun. After 1948, my opinion was that the CP was a group of disgraceful people, who imprisoned many innocent persons, including some of my friends. The Communists were obeying the Russians like slaves - they executed their orders.

B. 1. Many people were forced to enter the CP because of their jobs, otherwise they would have been fired. Only CP members could attain higher positions. There were many Jews who reached high positions this way. There were also a few fanatical Communists. Many CP members were only opportunists who were not really interested in the Party. The manager of the Ganz Shipyard was a former shoemaker who reached his position thanks to the CP. I knew a 17 year-old girl who was a secretary in the Ministry of Education. When asked to join the CP in order to get a higher position, she refused and said she would rather work with her hands than in an office.

I used to associate with people of my kind who did not like to talk about politics. However, I knew a Jewish AVO captain who used to come to the espresso where I met my friends. He signed visa applications in the passport department of the Ministry of Interior, and didn't care too much for the CP, just collected his good salary. He sided with us during the Revolution and was not harmed, after he had shown us some of the torture chambers of the AVO.

2. In 1953, after Nagy became Prime Minister, I was hoping that he would allow the other political parties to function again, but nothing happened.

(When asked about Party policies and Party morale, respondent showed aversion, jumped to his feet, and shouted that he did not care much about the whole damn business. He remained very nervous and annoyed as the interview continued.)



4. The Communist leaders wanted to nationalize everything, to collectivize the land, to suppress all private enterprise. These were their collective aims. They only thought of their own political aims, did not care for the other people. They were a type of fanatical men. Their own aims were important to them, the rest did not count.

C. 1 & 2. I always expressed m opinion. I got fired from my last factory job after an argument with the CP secretary.

For fear of the AVO, it was difficult and dangerous to speak up freely. It was not possible to strike. Among themselves, the workers did talk against the regime. After the 20th Congress of the Soviet CP, criticism became more open. For the peasants, it was almost impossible to resist collectivization. If they refused, they were persecuted, often jailed and their land confiscated.

3. I heard of the Petöfi Circle, but did not go to the debates. Therefore I did not know what was discussed there. The writers were dissatisfied because they could not write freely, only in the spirit of the people's democracy. They stood against the regime together with the other intellectuals because they wanted to freely express their opinions and ideas.

## XII. THE APPARATUS OF POWER

- A. 1. Most of the secret policemen joined for the material advantages, to have a good life. There were also many malicious men among them.

As I already mentioned, I knew an AVO captain in the passport division of the Ministry of Interior. As he signed visa applications, he did not feel guilty about being a member of the AVO. Many AVO officers were Jews, like him.

2. People in Hungary knew that many persons were detained in jail by the AVO. I knew a girl who was beaten by the AVO -- she showed me the marks. I myself spent 3 months in jail after I hit a secret policeman at a country fair. I was beaten very frequently.

3. I cannot give any figure, but I know many people were executed.

4. Under Communism, Hungary was a country of constant fear. This is absolutely true.

5. Many informers were formerly jailed criminals who were paid to spy on or follow people. Some prostitutes were also informers.

6. These people were just as feared and despised. If one kept one's mouth shut, one had less trouble. "To keep silence makes gold..." as the Hungarians say.

7. During the Revolution, very few AVO men took sides with the people. Some would take off their uniforms, put on the regular police uniform, and continue to shoot at the people, from the windows.

8. The AVO must be dissolved, its members brought to justice.

9. The regular police had a decent attitude. There was no corruption in the police. There were too many people in jail, the number of prisons was not sufficient.

For policemen's role during the Revolution, see events of October 23rd. Many policemen gave their weapons, their belts, even their uniforms to the people. Later, they fought on their side against the AVO. When we freed prisoners from certain jails, we found many regular policemen among them who had been jailed by the AVO.

- B. 1. The courts never administered justice correctly. The sentences were always unjust and too heavy. There were so many prisoners that there was not room enough for them in the jails. Many prisoners had to work in the mines.

It was not advisable to file suit against Communists. They could always find a way out, through the judge or the lawyer. There were no changes between 1948 and 1956.

2. No.

3. The People's Courts were disgraceful. In my opinion, the treatment of alleged "war criminals" was unjust.

4. Prisons and labor camps were places of torture. Political prisoners were, for instance, forced to stand in cold water up to their knees into which electric currents were sent. Prisoners could not always trust each other, as spies were sometimes planted among them. They did not know what was going on in the outside world. They could write no letters, could not receive any visits.

5. I spent 2 years as a POW (1945-1947) in the Ukraine. In the camp, the situation was terrible. We were about 30,000 Hungarians. Many died of typhus and dysentery. We worked in kokhozes, but were very weak and hungry.

- C. 1. The Army could have played an important role if it had been well supplied with ammunition. The Army sided with the people, also fought with them. Some officers did not fight at first, but at the end, all did side with the people.

There were no differences in the behavior of soldiers that were related to class origin. I was rather surprised to see the majority of the Army side with the people.

2. I was in the Army in 1951 for a period of 7 months. Life was not too bad, but we did not like the officers because they looked down on us. Only CP members could become officers. Former officers were thrown out. The new ones were often opportunists.

The relationship between officers and soldiers changed during the Revolution - they felt together.

Some officers were competent, others were not. They received Russian-type training. Officers of peasant origin often thought they were "big shots".

In my opinion, nobody got better treatment than others in the

Army. There were political seminars, but many soldiers did not attend them. Soldiers never talked politics among themselves. They did not like it. After seven months, I broke my leg, and left the Army.

3. The food had a very bad taste.

4. New uniform and new spirit.

D. 1. They are sluttish and have little discipline.

2. I can only think of 1945, when they caused a big upheaval in the country. They looted, raped, and behaved like savages. Had no discipline, not even the officers.

After 1945, the Russian troops were hated by the whole country, and this attitude did not change thereafter.

3. The population did not want to have any contacts with them. Only the prostitutes would go with Russian soldiers. No inter-marriage.

The Soviet troops stationed in Hungary liked the country because they had a better life there than in Russia. They did not have too much esteem for the Hungarians.

4. No contact with Russian soldiers. Some Russians fought a while, then joined the freedom fighters when they saw they could not finish with them. The officers did not stop fighting. Some Russians fought with our group. After November 4, when our situation became hopeless, we sent them away.

5. I can answer all questions by the affirmative.

6. Yes, but I cannot give any details.

E. 1. Many administration officers did not want to work too hard, and kept sending the people from one office to the other. They always tried to have somebody else do their work.

I did not have serious trouble. But I always said that I did not care for politics. As I mentioned, I was fired by the plant C.P. secretary, after an argument. But I never felt I was being singled out. Some technical managers made a point of helping their friends.

2. Self-criticism was nonsense.

F. Bribing was the only way to get around the regulations. If caught, the official was severely punished.

G. Some were intelligent, but most of them just tried to pretend they were intelligent, without any success.

(Because of respondent's growing aversion for political topics, and nervousness, chapters XIII, XIV, XV left out. His ignorance on events outside Hungary made useless check on chapter XVI.)

As regards XV, respondent used to read only the "LUDAS MATYI" and the magazine "SPORT", hardly read any books.

## XVII. KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED PERSONALITIES

A. Respondent unable to name anybody.

B. Imre Nagy: "Stood on the side of the workers."

Mindszenty: No opinion.

Rajk: "He is dead."

Gerö: "A rotten man."

Kadar: "The same."

Eisenhower: "He is all right."

Respondent does not know Hammarskjold, Dulles, Eden, and Truman.

Among people listed under 3./ he knew Churchill (no opinion), Stalin ("He is dead, thank God"), Ferenc Nagy ("May he live from the money he took out of the country!"), Tito ("A fat Communist").

XVIII. ATTITUDES TOWARD EXILES AND EXILE ACTIVITIES

- A. 1. Many Hungarians had to escape, first of all the freedom fighters who feared arrest and deportation. Then the people who had relatives in the USA and in other countries of the free world. The refugees' majority consisted of young people, particularly young workers. My own reason for leaving is already known. In addition, I had an uncle living in the USA.
2. The old people, the peasants who were attached to their land, the large families. I think they continue to fight with the means at their disposal. I don't know of a person who decided to remain in Hungary if he could have escaped.
- Those who remained in Hungary are glad for us, now that we have reached a safe and free place.
3. Nobody would have stayed. And the Communists would have gone to the USSR.
- B. 1. Yes, I was aware of such organizations, but I did not know their names. I do not think they are very important. I had no contact with such organizations since I left Hungary.
2. See attached list.
3. I do not think they accomplished very much till today. Who knows what they should have done...
- C. I met no redeffector.
- D. We must try to help those who remained in the country, with all the means at our disposal. I cannot do very much by myself. I am not interested in joining any exile organization.
- I did not like political parties. After the Russians' withdrawal, before November 4, I did not like all the political agitation, the reorganization of the political parties. I think the first task was to consolidate our victory, to strengthen the situation, and to leave politics for later.
- E. I don't know at present whether or not I want to go back. If I settle in this country, I want my children to learn Hungarian as well as English. I want to live in peace and to retire in peace.

XIX. AUDIENCE REACTIONS TO RADIO AND LEAFLETS

- A. 1. Yes, I listened to Radio Free Europe. The reception was better, though it was much jammed, too. I listened almost every evening. I told what I heard to my close friends in the espresso where we used to meet.

I had my own radio, a radio with battery, which I got from Ferenc Puskas, the famous soccer player, who bought it in the West. I listened alone, in my bed. I also heard about Western broadcasts from some of my friends.

2. It was not authorized, but I did not care. During Rakosi's time, a person caught listening could be jailed. This did not deter the people. For the last three years, less danger.

3. Programs were good, news accurate enough. I preferred RFE because of its programs.

4. Thanks to the foreign broadcasts, people knew about the outside world and about what was happening there.

5. During the Revolution, radio broadcasts made us believe some help would come, but none came. As for me, I didn't have time to listen during the Revolution.

6. Yes, RFE should continue to broadcast into Hungary, so that the people do not remain isolated from the free world.

7. Accurate news, programs about life in the free world, good music.

- B. I never heard of N.E.M., nor of the Twelve Demands.

- C. 1. I never did see a Free Europe leaflet, but I heard that  
2. leaflets had been dropped.

3. It was very dangerous to pick them up.

4. They gave hope and encouragement to the people.

5. Yes.

6. No opinion.

- D. To help Hungary, I think all these organizations had a common goal.

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CHECK LIST OF EXILES  
AND EXILE ORGANIZATIONS

A. <u>ORGANIZATIONS</u>	<u>Subject has not heard of</u>	<u>Subject has heard of but knows nothing about org. or individual</u>	<u>Comments if any elsewhere</u>
ACEN (Assembly of Captive European Nations)			
Rabnemzetek Kozgyulese	(X)	( )	( )
Hungarian National Council Magyar Nemzeti Bizottmany	( )	(X)	( )
MHBK			
Magyar Karcosok Bajtarsi Kozossege	(X)	( )	( )
Liberal Democratic Union Kozep-es Keleteuropai Liberalis Demokrata Unio	( )	(X)	( )
Christian Democratic Union Kozeuropai Kereszteny Demokrata Unio	( )	(X)	( )
International Confereration of Free Trade Unions in Exile Menekult Szabad Szakszervezetek Nemzetkozi Szovetsege	( )	(X)	( )
International Peasant Union Nemzetkozi Paraszt Unio	(X)	( )	( )
Socialist Union of Central and Eastern Europe Kozep- es Keleteuropai Szocialista Unio	(X)	( )	( )
American Hungarian Federation Amerikai Magyar Szovetseg	(X)	( )	( )
"Latohatar" Latohatar	( )	(X)	( )
Hungarian High Schools Magyar Gimnaziumok			
Bauschlott	( )	(X)	( )
Lindenburg	( )	(X)	( )

B. <u>INDIVIDUALS</u>	<u>Subject has not heard of</u>	<u>Subject has heard of but knows nothing about org. or individual</u>	<u>Comments if any elsewhere</u>
Msgr. Bela Varga	( )	(X)	( )
Ferenc Nagy	( )	(X)	(*)
Tibor Eckhardt	(X)	( )	( )
Paul Auer	(X)	( )	( )
Imre Kovacs	( )	(X)	( )
Imre Szelig	(X)	( )	( )
Charles Peyer	( )	(X)	( )
Laszlo Taubinger	(X)	( )	( )
Miklos Kallay	( )	(X)	( )
Zoltan Pfeiffer	( )	(X)	( )
Istvan Barankovics	( )	(X)	( )
Msgr. Josef Kozi-Horvath	( )	(X)	( )
Bela Fabian	( )	(X)	( )
General Zako	(X)	( )	( )
General Ferenc Farkas de Kisbarnak	(X)	( )	( )
Otto of Hapsburg	( )	(X)	( )
Admiral Horthy	( )	(X)	( )

\* He took several thousand dollars from the country when he left. If he would have come during the Revolution, he would have been beaten up by the people.