

CH-2-F  
Interviewer:  
M. Padhorszky  
Date: May 10, 1957  
Place: N.Y.C.

# I. PERSONAL INVENTORY

Name: Code number CH-2-F

Age: 10

Sex: Female

Religion: Protestant

Education: Grade school--was in the 4th grade

Parents: Both living and with her in the United States. Grandparents in Hungary.

Has sister 7 years old.

This little girl comes of a close and religious family. Was surrounded by the loving care of grandparents while father was in prison and mother was working. Family seems to have discussed political events freely in front of children, and this young girl's attitudes reflect those of the family's. The child's attitude shows clearly the impact and the importance of family life and its influence.

Tell me something of your family and where you lived.

"We lived in the Buda district with my mother and father and grandparents. I also have a little sister much younger than I am, she's only seven."

Who took care of you when school was over for the day?

"It was Granny or Grandad who usually looked after us while Mommy and Daddy were out working. I did not attend the day schools."

Tell me something about your school. What was your favorite subjects?

"I liked to read best, and especially the fairy-tales or stories with history in them. But, sometimes at school they wanted us to read about Russians. That, we really did not like. I also liked very much everything that had to do with flowers, trees, animals, you know, natural history."

Can you tell me why you didn't like to read about Russian history or Russian tales?

"Because we just don't like the Russians. Besides, I think that some of the stories were very silly. Imagine, there was one which said that an old woman gave a beautiful flower to a Russian soldier because he killed a German. I think that's unfair. And ever since the revolution we even dislike the Russians more, I can tell you."

"I also had some old fairy-tale books from the old times and Grandpa always read them to me. The ones I liked I can remember were ~~the~~ called "The Seventy-seven Old Hungarian Popular Tales." And, you know, Miss, on Sundays it was the other way around. I read to Grandpa aloud from the newspaper. He let me do that. Only, when I have read too long, he told me to stop and said, "you are going to spoil your eyes."

Can you tell me something of your teachers at school?

"We had only a girl who taught us. She taught us all the subjects, except there was another one for singing lessons. She was young, I think, but she had three little children. One was six years old, and twins two years old. They were terribly cute and we liked to play with them very much."

How were you punished when you were disobedient?

"Well, the teacher put us in the corner, or we got rapped on the knuckles. On the other hand, I must tell you, whenever we were good we got little picture cards and we collected them. You know, these picture cards were all about before the war times of Hungarian history and pictured the Hungarian heroes of that time."

Did you get any pictures with Russian heroes?

"Oh no, we wouldn't have wanted them and the teachers never gave us any.

Then again, when we were very naughty or didn't learn well, then the teacher wrote a note to the parents. If the child was very naughty, it went to the father because the fathers are usually more strict."

Did you like your classmates?

"Yes, some of them I liked quite well, but some were rather naughty. I didn't like them."

Can you tell me how life was at school? About your lessons, and so on.

"Well, we had our lessons in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon we had different subjects. Always, after school, two of us had to remain behind, one to clean the big blackboard, put the chairs in order, and the other had to carry out the garbage and water the flowers. You know, we had very many flowers in our windows at school because we liked the teacher very much and we always brought her flowers. So, we had to care for them. You know, I remember so well, the day the revolution broke out I was just on duty after hours and I tidied up the classroom with my friend. It was already 8 p.m. The other children went home at six. Grandfather came to pick me up because it was so late and he was quite scared and couldn't imagine what had happened to me. When we got home, my father and mother were not at home and I was told they had gone to town to demonstrate. So, my sister and I did not go to bed as we should have done, but were sitting up and waiting for our parents."

What did you do during the revolution?

"We were listening to the radio all the time. My goodness, I was so excited, you have no idea. Especially when the radio said for the young students who were fighting to lay down their arms or else they would all be killed. I was praying for the



good Lord to make them put their arms down. I did not want them to be killed. You know, I went into the bathroom and cried and cried. I was so excited."

Let us go back to school a bit. What did you believe-  
what you learned at school or your parents?

"You see, Mommy and Daddy always told us to be very careful what we say at school and not to talk about things we discuss at home and hear on the ~~foreign~~ foreign radio. It might have had consequences for all of us, so I was always very careful. The Communists are very bad people. You never know what they are going to do to you."

What do you know about the Communists, for instance,  
Rakosi?

"Oh, this one, he is an awfully sly, bad man. You know, he was a Hungarian. But, then he went to Russia and he completely changed. He looks up everybody who is not Communist and who does not like him."

Can you tell me who is a Communist?

"I think that a Communist is a man who does not love God and who does not believe that there is a God in heaven, and also who has no confidence at all in Jesus Christ. A Communist always says that religion and God are all lies. Also, I think, a Communist is a man who says that the Red flag is the real flag of Hungary. You know, this is not true, because the real flag is the red, white, and green."

Do you know anyone else who is a big Communist in  
Hungary?

"Oh yes, I know another one. This one is Gero. You know, he was the one who whispered in the ears of the Russians to come back again and to conquer the Hungarian Freedom Fighters and he was so nasty to call the university students an unruly mob and gangsters."

Did you talk about politics at school/with your classmates?

"No, we did not, at least if we did it was only in ~~whispers~~ whispers. We knew that there were several Communist children amongst us in class."

How do you know they were Communist children?

"Oh, my friend and I listened when they were talking to each other, so we knew they must be Communists. These kids always said everything is fine now, Rakosi is a good man, Stalin is a wonderful man, and so on. They also said that religion is just nonsense, and all lies. So, of course, they must be Communists. I only talked to my very best friend whom I liked very much. Her father was also in prison. I always told everything that happened in school to my mother, but I did not tell everything that happened ~~in~~ at home at school. \* For instance, I never told anyone I went to Sunday school and I was learning religion.

Some of the children at school were really very bad. One was extremely pertinacious to the teacher and she talked back whenever the teacher reprimanded her and openly dared to tell ~~her~~ the teacher she was wrong and I am right. What do you think of such behavior? This is no way to behave and I know it's very wrong."

I tried to find out if the girl knew the names of any top Russians, but she could not name anyone. I also asked her if she knew ~~her~~ who Eisenhower is and she answered:

"Yes, I know, he is the president of the United States."

Tell me, do you have any idea what the Freedom Fighters and those who took part in the revolution really wanted?

"Yes, I know. There is one thing everyone wanted and that was that the Russians should not tell us what to do, but let the Hungarian people do what they want."

"You see, we would have liked to achieve about as much as the Boles, but the trouble was that we had a Gero. He told the Russians to come back and he succeeded, that's all."

I asked the little girl where she got the idea of a Poland-like solution and she said from her grandfather.

Did you ever hear anything about America before you came here?

"Yes, I heard and I knew that America was discovered by Christopher ~~Columbus~~ Columbus. I also heard that people are not so poor as in our country. I was told that everyone can migrate to America. You know, when I came here I was so amazed to see how very true this is. I see that people here have so ~~many~~ many rooms. In Hungary only the top Communists have such lovely large apartments."

What would you like to do in the future?

I certainly want to go back to Hungary and I hope very much that this will come true. You see, I personally think that this ~~will~~ will happen in three years or maybe five years, but not later. You know, it's very important that the Americans help us a little bit, because the poor Hungarians by themselves can't achieve a thing. You know that, don't you?"

DO you think there is anything you can do here in America?

"Certainly. I must do my best to help the Hungarians. Also, I think I must write to my grandparents very often, because I must make up for having lost us. They must be very lonely, those two poor old people. I have also written to them that I'm learning English as fast as I can so when I go back to Hungary I can teach them. Don't you think that's a good idea?"

What do you want to become when you grow up?

"Oh, my greatest wish is to become a gardener, maybe a doctor also, but I think I would prefer to be a gardener."



Can you tell me of an incident that impressed you during the revolution?

"Yes, I can. I remember one day from our apartment window we could see and hear the doctors from the hospital going from house to house asking people to give them materials they could use as dressings at the hospital. They had so many wounded that they had run out of supplies. Imagine, everybody in the big apartment houses were throwing down sheets, pillowcases, white shirts, anything they could find to help the wounded. \*Don't you think that was a wonderful thing to do?"

What was it that surprised you the most when you came to the United States??

"Miss, I am appalled to see how dirty this city is. I really cannot see how people can live in such dirt. You know, in Hungary we were not allowed to throw everything down on the sidewalks and floors. It is really something terrible. Maybe I shouldn't have said this, but really, this is how I feel about it."

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THE END

NOTE:

This interview was conducted under the supervision and direction of Mr. Gleitman, and was the first interview for girls. Due to subject's age Dr. Gleitman found it not necessary to ask more questions.

Dr. Gleitman discussed with me the Questionnaire to be used for ~~skintan~~ child interviews, and I have submitted a draft on same and compiled the questions on the basis of the two first child interviews (one boy and one girl) As soon as the Questionnaire is revised and approved, the child interviews will be conducted in a more satisfactory way and will cover more.