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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGARY  
VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Friday, 5 April 1957, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Alsing ANDERSEN

(Denmark)

Central W. Council established to present common front  
Kadar forces Com in W.C. after 12 Nov. Size of AVH and decree of 9 Dec  
Kadar in Parl up to even. of 2 Nov  
Growth of Home Guard at Pestsziget. How? 26 Oct - 4 Nov  
Weakening of Soviet Troops 28 Oct - Hunper  
Surrounding Budapest on 2 Nov. new troops  
Defection of Soviet Major - Pestsziget &  
150 tanks destroyed, 34 planes, 700 killed -  
3500 Fr. Fighters armed by Harny Rumain  
Kadar seen in Parl 2 Nov. with Soviet car to Szolnok



At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Gabor Havas took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. Your name is Gabor Havas and you are a prominent Social Democrat and president of the Workers' Council of the catering industry of Budapest. At the end of October you organized the Social Democratic Party. I ask you to make your statement as to the events to which you were an eye-witness or in which you participated.

Mr. HAVAS (spoke in English): May I speak in Hungarian?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, of course, but please do not speak too fast.

Mr. HAVAS (interpretation from Hungarian): Before I speak of the revolution I would like to tell the Committee about some of the methods with the aid of which the Communists took over power. I would like to speak of the elections in 1947 and how the Communists succeeded then in getting control in their hands by any means at their command, although you cannot really say that control was in their hands at that time because they only gained about thirty per cent of the votes, and they could not even have achieved that had they not used the following methods.

Before the elections they got hold of the register of voters. People in this register could make objections to Social Democrat, Smallholders' Party and Communist candidates and in certain cases such objections were made against Communists, but particularly against the Smallholders' Party. Inspection of these objections, which numbered several thousand, was to be carried out by a committee, but they did not do their job properly, although they were urged to do so, and made all sorts of **excuses** to prevent people from making their objections, so that a great many people were deprived of their right to vote.

The Communists proposed that the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party should merge but many thousand Social Democrats working in industry did not want to lay themselves open to future reproach on the basis of their having joined the Communist Party. The Communists did this with other parties too but their trump card was the distribution of the so-called blue slips. They published an instruction that people who



(Mr. Havas)

for any reason could not vote in their own district could do so in any district. At that time I was the chairman of the election committee at Pannonia Street in the 5th District. When voting started at about eight or nine o'clock in the morning great crowds of people were coming in with such blue slips to vote in our district. I should mention that a representative of each party sat on the election committee. When all these people appeared with blue slips I realized at once that there was trickery afoot and we heard that the same thing was happening in other election districts and that people with such blue slips were being brought in by truck from outlying districts of Budapest and even from the provinces. In this way people were able to vote with the aid of the blue slips in ten or fifteen different places.

When I saw this and realized that it was a plot I refused to allow people with blue slips to vote. The Communist member protested and called up the Ministry of the Interior and within a very short time a car appeared carrying two civilians. They asked me to go to the Ministry of the Interior with them immediately, where I saw Rajk, the then Minister of the Interior. He reminded me roughly that it was my duty to accept these blue election slips and I told him that in that case I would resign as chairman of the election committee. He said he would take further steps against me and dismissed me, and I did not return. On the same day and for the same reason the Social Democratic Minister, Istvan Riesz, handed in his resignation. This was not accepted by the Government and in the afternoon, with the approval of the Social Democratic Party, he withdrew it. It was the same Istvan Riesz who was arrested in 1955 and later committed suicide in his cell or was killed — it has never become clear which.

I would like to recount one other incident which is very characteristic of the Communist machinations which before the revolution enabled them to obtain power. I was a director of a large textile factory one of whose plants was at Ujpest. One of the technical leaders there was a man named Paduch, a textile engineer who had somewhat rightist views before the war but tried to fit himself into the situation after 1945. He was an excellent worker and an excellent technician — one of the pillars of the technical staff of the factory. The Communists wanted to get rid of this man Paduch but they did not succeed with legal methods, whereupon the following happened. Among the coal brought into the factory, as later inspection showed, they put a hand grenade, but this was discovered before the



(Mr. Havas)

truck actually entered the factory. The AVH came out and started an investigation, as a result of which they found two similar hand grenades in the cupboard in Paduch's office. These had been hidden there so that they could get rid of him and they did arrest him and take him away.

I wanted to tell you these few characteristic incidents to illustrate the kind of methods the Communists used in order to threaten people and take over control, which they did in 1948. Their final stroke was the forced fusion of the Social Democratic Party with the Communist Party. This treachery against the Social Democratic Party was carried out by Szakaszi, Marosan, Riesz, Schiffer, Juszti and a few others, all members of the so-called left-wing of the Social Democratic Party. The masses of the Social Democrats had nothing to do with this merger. Social Democrats are not Communists and no one could succeed in making them Communists, which is shown by the revolution and the behaviour not only of the Social Democrats but of the vast majority of the workers.

On 20 June 1950 I and 200 other Social Democratic functionaries were arrested. Even before this in 1948 I had had to give up my directorship in my firm because of my party activities and anti-Communist feelings, which were known, and because there could no longer be any Social Democrats in the Government. Until 1950 I worked in various smaller jobs and like all the other Social Democrats I entered into no political activities.



Until 1956 there was no Social Democratic Party in Hungary because they excluded us from any political activity and also from any means of making a living. We were forced to do the most menial tasks in order to earn our daily bread. The Communists regarded the Social Democratic Party as their greatest enemies because that was the Party which served the interests of the working people and could gain their support. Even the utmost terror could not move the masses of the people away from the Social Democratic Party.

On 20 June 1950 at 2.30 in the morning my bell rang; two AVH people were led into my bedroom by my wife. They told me to get dressed and said they were taking me to be questioned. Since 10 June many Social Democratic officials, including Anna Kethly, had been arrested and taken away to unknown destinations, so we had expected to be arrested, and the appearance of the AVH people was no surprise. They searched my house, but naturally did not find anything because I was prepared for them. They took all my documents, my birth certificate, my driving licence, and photographs of no value. They did not touch my valuables. I was put into a prison van and taken to the police cells at Mosonyi Street. It appeared later that this building had been specially reserved by them for the reception of the Social Democrats.

They pushed me into a cell where there were already about fifty Social Democrats. I knew all of them and had many good friends among them. We were kept in most unhealthy conditions until we were taken one by one for questioning, and those who went away never returned to that cell. My turn came in about two days when they led me at a quick pace to another building where there were three men, two young men and an older man. They asked my name, and whether I knew why I was there. I said I did not know. Then they started to beat me with rubber truncheons and with their fists, using obscene language. They beat me from the right and from the left, and I fell several times, when they pulled me up. I must say I felt no pain during the beatings, but I was very scared.

When they saw I could no longer even think, they started questioning me. They accused me that with Anna Kethly and others I had conspired to overthrow the people's democracy. They accused me of being anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and wanted me to admit absurdities of the kind of which they usually accused people. I will not go into these, as they are not interesting. After my first questioning they pressed me to sign a type-written confession which they placed before me. When I began to read it I could see it contained the things they had insinuated and which I had refused to sign earlier. They then led me away to a solitary cell from which later they



(Mr. Havas)

brought me out and beat me again. They alternated the beatings with psychological methods. The three AVH people who were carrying out the investigation were in civilian clothes. The leader would leave the table and go behind my back, and the other two were already behind my back. One placed my head in a certain position, and I thought they were going to shoot me. Then they would laugh; there was a stenographer there and even she laughed. After that they started the questioning and the beating again.

The next time this happened I signed the official confession because I could no longer bear the beating and the threatening. They threatened to bring my wife in, and said they would torture her before my eyes; they used every means in their power to make me sign and I signed because I wanted five minutes of peace. I got a haemorrhage from this beating so they took me to the prisoners' infirmary in the same building. Here I got very good food and good medical attention and in a few weeks I was on my feet again.

Among the Social Democrats who were with me there, those who were still on their feet and still able to work were taken to Rooski and others to Vac. Those who had been incapacitated by the beatings, including myself, were taken to Kistarcsa where there was a camp of about 1,500 people. At times this number increased to 3,000 or 3,500 people, although the camp facilities only provided for 1,500. Men and women were in separate buildings. The new arrivals were held in a so-called reception room, where they got very rough treatment and an absolute minimum of food.

What happened to me here I learned later was a routine procedure characteristic of this camp. They tried to select people from among the prisoners who were respected by them because of their social position, and they tried to organize them as spies or informers. They promised us nothing, but in certain cases they succeeded in recruiting such informers who caused a great deal of trouble. I did not know about this at the time. They called me before a Lieutenant Toth who later became the commander of the AVH people. He was a sadist; he had me brought before him and tried to frighten me. He scolded me and said I was a Social Democrat but I could not be such a bad Fascist and maybe there was still some human feeling left in me to help the people's democracy. I asked how I could help in the situation in which I found myself. He replied that there were many base people among us and I should talk to them and report to him, then I could see what he wanted. I said I was a prisoner and would submit to any punishment but all I asked was to be left alone. Then they started to beat me and took me to the cellars.



At Kistarcsa every building is a prison but there is one modern asbestos-lined building which is used only as a punishment cell. They took me to the prison, chained my right hand to my left foot, and left me in a dark cell about three metres square. There was no heating, and this was in the middle of the winter of 1950. For clothing I had nothing but a shirt, an undershirt, a pair of shorts and a pair of shoes, and I was left in chains in that hole. I was there for twenty-four hours when I was given a little piece of bread, about twenty dekas. It was so dark I did not know what the time was and I could not move because if I did so my wrists and ankles bled. I had to freeze and starve. Then they took me up to a solitary cell on an upper floor where I got the regular prison fare and it was not dark and I was not in chains. After twenty-four hours of that they took me down again and the whole performance was repeated.

In the middle of the fifth night Toth appeared; he turned on the electric light and asked "Have you had enough? Have you thought it over?" I said I had nothing to think over. Next day they took me to the upper floor of the prison, and three days later to the reception centre, then to the place where the regular internees were being kept, and I was there for three and a half years. Each prisoner could receive a package once in three months, but I had only four such packages and only four visitors during thirty months. Everyone else fared the same, everyone with whom they did not succeed was treated in this way, but they did achieve their object with some people. Colonel Szentpeteri, a high-ranking military officer, became a traitor, but it was interesting to see that they could not get anywhere with the workers and the simple people.

This was the way the AVH treated people and tried to break them. One cannot wonder that after such treatment there was always, after a shorter or a longer time, a signed confession.



(Mr. Havas)

I know of no such cases but I do know of cases where honest self-respecting people were faced with people they did not even know and whom they were seeing for the first time in their lives, about whom they had to say: "He conspired with me and he did such and such a thing". One man returned to me crying after such a hearing and said that they had treated him in such a way. I tried to console him; he died later of a broken heart. In 1954 they released me.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your valuable description of Communist methods; it will be of importance to the Committee in preparing its report. However, the Committee is pressed for time and I would ask you to describe as soon as possible the more recent events which took place during the revolution and your experiences during that period.

Mr. HAVAS (interpretation from Hungarian): I was the chairman of the Workers' Council in the industry where I worked during the revolution. I should like to inform you about the Workers' Councils and the work they performed as well as the formation of the Central Workers' Council and the interdiction which existed forbidding the closing down of the Workers' Councils. Furthermore, I would like to explain the role of the Workers' Councils as it is performed today; all of them worked in the same way. There are very few people left in them who took part in the revolution and these Councils are already studded with elements which are completely in the service of the Government, which has introduced them into the Workers' Councils. The present aim is to increase production and to re-establish the "speeding up" system. I am aware that the Committee has very little time but I would like to read some extracts which describe the situation of the workers before, during and after the revolution. In that way I wish to prove, even although such proof has already been given to the world and the Committee will have heard of it during previous hearings, that the revolution was not brought about by Fascists but by people who went through Communist schools, and by workers who during the last eleven years had everything except freedom and bread. When the Workers' Council of my factory was first established their first step was to get rid of those extremist Communist elements who during the last ten years had denounced the workers and put increasing burdens upon them. In my factory there were about 100 officials and 700 workers. In order to show you what a small number of real Communists there were I would like to submit some statistics to you; these statistics are characteristic of all factories. There



(Mr. Havas)

2  
were only about three officials and two workers out of a total of about 800 people, who were reformers and extremists. Therefore out of 800 people we only found about five Communists with whom we could not co-operate. We put a stop to the much feared personnel department which held records of all employees in which data were recorded regarding their previous employment of the last eleven years. Once an employee had a bad record in one factory it pursued him during his whole life. On those records depended his place of work, his salary prospects and, in many cases, his freedom and even his life. The director of personnel in each factory or firm worked in close co-operation with the AVH and a delegate from the AVH appeared from time to time at the factory to hold meetings with the director of personnel -- who was always a reliable Communist -- and the AVH appropriated all the information given to them by the director of personnel. In that way decisions were taken on each case. The director of personnel had an informer in each sector of the factory to provide him with information. There was in fact a complete system of informers and thus control was exerted over hundreds of thousands of people. I have not yet spoken of how the Russians started this. The trade unions were instruments of the Government and were used to establish production standards, working conditions and wage scales; naturally they would always be established in such a way as to serve the interest of the State regardless of the worker, his standard of living and, very frequently, regardless of his health. It is therefore not surprising that after the outbreak of the revolution the first demand made by the workers was that they should have such representation as would serve their own interests. I do not want to describe here the decisions which were taken by the free trade unions concerning the elections of Workers' Councils. I should only like to prove that the workers never had any Fascist ideas or Rightist tendencies but wanted only to work in the spirit of socialism. For example, whether or not a person was a member of the Communist Party was not a determining factor in his chances of being elected to the Workers' Councils. Frequently many Communists were elected to the councils. I must emphasize at this point the fact that among the 800,000 to 900,000 card-carrying members in Hungary there were only 800 to 900 real Communists who were convinced of the truth of their dogma. The rest were protecting their own interests or else found it necessary to join the Party to ensure the security of their positions.



(Mr. Havas)

The Workers' Councils were elected and started their work between 25 and 30 October 1956. It was characteristic of the political maturity of the workers that knowing, and professing to share in, the demands of the revolution — which included free elections — the workers, because of the disillusionments they had suffered in the past, wanted to ensure freedom of action and to safeguard those results which had been achieved in the last ten years. As a matter of fact, I do not want to say the results had been "achieved"; the system which called itself "socialism" was forced. The workers did however want to safeguard what they already had because they did not know with what system they would be faced after the elections, which ought to have been free and secret elections. They were even prepared for the fact that after the revolution, and after free elections, Hungary might possibly have a capitalist type of government; they therefore wanted to take their fate into their own hands and they wanted strong Workers' Councils. These were definitely not Fascist aims. Some Workers' Councils found it difficult during the revolution to establish contact with one another and therefore the Central Workers' Councils was formed in Budapest.



(Mr. Havas)

The Central Workers' Council held its first meeting on 2 November. One meeting was held in the tramcar trade union building in Akaczfa Street and at the same time in another building there was a meeting with a mixed delegation comprising the chairman of the Workers' Council, members of the fighters' groups and the students, and they were negotiating with Vas Endrei. At these two meetings after they had formed the Central Workers' Council and elected as chairman Sandor Racz they adopted a resolution consisting of seven points. I should like to read these seven points because they are completely devoid of any Fascist elements: (1) they demanded a sovereign independent democratic socialist state; (2) they demanded free and secret elections; (3) they demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops; (4) they demanded the drafting of a new constitution; (5) they demanded the disbanding of the AVH; (6) they demanded that only two armed organizations should exist in the country, namely, the police and the army; an amnesty was demanded for the participants in the revolution as well as the punishment of Rakosi and Geroe; (7) they demanded that the general elections take place within two months and with the participation of all democratic parties.

It was further agreed that the general strike would be maintained during such time as these demands were not met with the exception of the workers in the food supplies trade so that the capital city could receive food, and the workers in the mines, but only in so far as these workers were necessary to produce sufficient coal for the population of Budapest.

After 2 November one meeting followed another. From 12 November the Workers' Councils negotiated with Kadar but were unable to come to an agreement. Kadar and the Government saw the desperate economic situation of the country and realized that they would have to force the people to work again. They had to disarm the opposition of the workers. They had not at their disposal any armed forces or militia and, therefore, until such time as they could establish such a force they had to negotiate but as the AVH became increasingly stronger they made fewer and fewer commitments.

They slowly returned to their old methods. They put communists into the Workers' Councils. They decreed new elections for the Workers' Councils. There was the greatest insecurity in the economic sphere throughout the country and the workers realizing that the negotiations of the Workers' Councils had no effect at all eventually did not accept the decisions



(Mr. Havas)

of the Workers' Councils. In spite of the fact that the strike was finally brought to an end the workers refused to return to work. However, in some of the Workers' Councils where there were already a few Kadar people it was possible to start partial working. Even in the Central Workers' Council when the strike was decreed there was a difference of opinion as to the means. In view of the threats of the Government certain members left their jobs.

After 8 December, when the newly-formed AVH was so powerful the Government felt itself strong enough to become ruthless and they started to arrest members of the Workers' Councils. It was on 9 December that the Workers' Councils met for the last time and ordered a forty-eight hour general strike. This strike was held throughout the whole of the country and this was the last organized strike in the country.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sorry to interrupt you again but in order to organize our work I want to inform you that tomorrow we are going to hear a member of the Central Workers' Council who has escaped and I think he will be able to give us all the necessary information that we require on the Workers' Councils and the Central Workers' Council especially so I ask you to pass on to another passage of your statement, please.

Mr. HAVAS (spoke in English): I understand.

(Interpretation from Hungarian): I am informed that the Committee have been unable to get a clear picture of the exact disappearance of Kadar from Budapest. In this connection I can state the following: I have spoken to Janos Garamvoelgyi, who was a former lieutenant-colonel of police, and this man was negotiating with Kadar in Parliament on the evening of 2 November. According to Garamvoelgyi, in the middle of the negotiations, Kadar was interrupted by the telephone which was on his desk and Kadar spoke in Russian. This police lieutenant did not know Russian but understood the word "Antropov". After this talk Kadar said to Garamvoelgyi, "Please wait for me. I will return in half an hour," but he did not show up again. In spite of all this I believe



(Mr. Havas)

that Kadar was still in the Parliament Building on the evening of 2 November.

Because of the lack of time I have left out quite a large part of my statement and I should very much like to know what would interest the Committee and perhaps they will be kind enough to ask me questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your statement. If there are no questions I want to assure you that it is not because of any lack of interest in the subject but as we have heard nearly one hundred witnesses now, you will understand that we have got a lot of information and that is why it is perhaps not necessary to ask you further questions. There are no questions to put to you and I thank you for appearing before the Committee.

Mr. Havas withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Oltvanyi took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. I understand that you have a statement lasting about twenty minutes to give to the Committee and I now ask you to begin.

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately, my feeling is that twenty minutes is a somewhat short period for my statement. It is, first of all, the love of my own country and my patriotism that prompts me to appear in front of you as a witness and make a statement on this most important period of history which might, at the same time, be the most critical period for the whole world.

I was born in 1915 in Budafok, Hungary. I am a chemical engineer and furthermore I was an officer in the army during the Second World War in a technical capacity. I mention this because my statement is connected with this part of my work.

I was sentenced to five and a half years imprisonment for agitation. Apart from that, I have worked mostly in the field of war techniques and I was the technical director of the Szalassi factory.



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

In order to convince you that I am not a Fascist even though I was an officer I should like to note that under the regime of Salasi the Hungarian type of Nazi, I lived in the underground and did not participate in the official work, so that from November 1944 to April 1955 I lived in the mountains surrounding Lake Balaton. I therefore was not a Fascist. As also the Bolsheviks gave me a four and a half year sentence this proves I was not a Communist, either.

A part of my statement is mostly of a military character, in view of the fact that at the beginning of the revolution the 20th district of Budapest, namely Pesterzsebet, Soroksar, Soroksar-Ujtelep, and partly Millenium Telep, belonged to us. At the beginning of the revolution the fighters elected me as their commander, and this was later confirmed at the official elections. My sphere of activity extended over forty-four square kilometres of the territory of Greater Budapest, and if you take into account that I was the only commander this was the biggest territory of Hungary under a single command. During the whole revolution I did not accept any order from above and our district worked independently, so that the revolution was really built up from below towards the top, and thus we acted leaning upon our arms and not upon the leaders who were appointed later.

I would like to give here a few data about the arms of the 20th district of Budapest. We had about 15,000 Home Guards and artillery of seventy-six cannons. The police of Pesterzsebet, the police of Soroksar, and the twelfth military command of the army of Pestszsebet joined us also.

I should like to deal chronologically with the most noteworthy events. Firstly, on 23 October nothing happened in our district. At 6 a.m. on the 24th Russian armoured cars came through Pestszsebet and Soroksar. The exact time, namely 6 a.m., proves that the Russians had equipment in readiness near Budapest and were already entering Budapest at 6 a.m. I cannot identify most of that Russian armoured division. I myself saw six T.34 vehicles. These came from the district of Toekoel into the district of Budapest. I knew this from their index numbers. Vehicles bearing numbers between 200 and 300 were stationed at Toekoel. I learned that by accident. On the evening of the same day, the 24th, at about 7 p.m. Hungarian military units, consisting of about 150 or 160 men, came through the district, and at the corner of Soroksar Street and Nagy Sandor Street students and youngsters were standing to whom the soldiers, without being asked, handed



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

over their arms. These were the first armaments of the 20th district, and represented 150 to 160 infantry arms and three cannons. With these arms we tried in the course of the night to prevent the new Russian vehicles coming from Soroksar to Budapest, but we could only do this for half an hour as later the Russians made a detour and by that time our group consisted of about 300 people. These 300 were partly surrounded by the Russians and partly scattered.

As I have said, most of the people were students and workers, as Pesterszebet is the largest workers' section of Budapest. Early in the morning of the 25th the police of Pesterszebet arrested several of the young people who fought and took them to the police station of Pesterszebet whence they were released two days later. At that time, therefore, the police were still against the revolutionary forces. Until 25 October nothing happened in that district. I myself went over to Buda in the morning of the 25th, and when I returned in the afternoon I saw at the bridge of Boraros four Russian vehicles come from Uelloei Street and, without anyone firing at them, continually direct a volley of fire on to the houses of the people there. I had not heard any kind of fighting or guns beforehand. When those four vehicles reached the bridge they continued to fire on the bridge even though at that time there was no one on it. The four vehicles went over the bridge to Buda.

When I reached my home at Pesterszebet in the evening I again found new Russian vehicles gathering, and at the corner of Kossuth Lajos Street and Soroksar Street there were more than eighty Russian vehicles and storm troopers going in the direction of Budapest. This huge number had a terrifying effect on the population, even the quietest people became nervous, and it was of course the psychological basis for what they did afterwards. These eighty armoured vehicles entered the territory of Budapest the same day.

Nothing special happened during the night but on the 26th the students in the 20th district began demonstrating with flags in Foe Street and Kossuth Lajos Street, and tried to get arms and occupy the central party headquarters. This happened around 9 or 9.30 a.m., and the students, when they stopped in front of the party headquarters, entered the building, brought out Communist leaflets and literature and set fire to them in the street. They also found arms. There were sixteen guns in the Communist headquarters, which proves that the



(Mr.Oltvanyi)

Communists did not feel safe even in their own headquarters and protected by their own AVH; they found it necessary to have guns and ammunition themselves in the party headquarters. It is also noteworthy that the demonstrators went in front of the Post Office building and on entering it found that the Communists even had arms in the Post Office building. The demonstrators found about eight to ten guns there, and armed with these they went in front of the police building where they sang the Hungarian National Anthem, and afterwards asked the police to hand over their arms to the revolutionary youth. At first the police organized themselves for defence and there was an armed policeman in each door and each window, but after a short discussion under the leadership of the political officer of the police they handed over their arms to the revolutionary youth. The most pleasing event was when the Communist political officer came out and handed over the arms saying: "The police of Budapest do not fire on Hungarian workers and Hungarian youth". He was followed by the other policemen, and about eighty to ninety infantry arms were handed over in a few minutes. No force was used because the demonstrators were not suitably armed to attack the police. Therefore, recognizing the truth of the sixteen demands of the students, the police began to waver and finally came over to the side of the revolutionaries. Other police posts followed. The headquarters of the police were a long way from the individual police stations. There were four important police posts in the district, and they were about five, six, or one of them even ten kilometres distant from each other.



Furthermore the police not only handed over the arms but tore the Soviet star and the Soviet insignia from their uniforms, threw them on the floor and spat on them. In their fright they left the police building, only four or five policemen remaining, among them the political officer of whom I have already spoken. His name was Karoly Udvardy and during the whole of the revolution he was on the side of the home guard and in all the work that followed we co-operated.

The police building was then taken over by the freedom fighters and it was there that the first election of the home guard was held and I became the commander. We then began to organize the home guard, first from the students and later joined by workers and some of the police. Meanwhile other soldiers from groups in Pesterzsébet came in and joined these people and several hours later the police station at Toorock Floris Street in the 20th District also surrendered together with all its personnel and its commander without any of the demonstrators even going there as it was very far from the centre. They came in to the centre to report that they were joining us, so there can be no question of their having been forced to join us. These groups were strengthened later and to the end they served the revolution faithfully and it is proof of their faithfulness that Pesterzsébet was perhaps the last to fall in Budapest; they stayed at their posts until the bitter end. Until the last day Soviet military units could not set foot in the central area of Pesterzsébet or Soroksár.

On that day too an even more distant police command post joined us and reported that the decision to do this was unanimous. Two members of the AVH had tried to take over control but this was discovered in less than two hours. We went out then to that command post but did not find even those two people. On the spot a new group commander was elected and the number of fighters was increased. They also gave their arms, their uniforms and their food to the new home guard.

26 Oct On the same day there was another significant event. About 100 to 120 soldiers joined us, which meant two or three groups, twelve or thirteen cannon and a tremendous amount of ammunition. These were mainly soldiers fleeing from the Russian troops in Budapest.

So, slowly we started to plan the home guard and its organization was carried on within a fairly small area because there were four or five similar groups to ours operating there which we only took into our organization later.

On the night of 26 October the order against the carrying of arms had been issued and people were coming in during the night asking for refuge. They slept there until morning and then went on to harry the Russians. There was obviously no



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

necessity to keep the police under control by force because they themselves offered refuge to the freedom fighters.

On 27 October a group of military officers reported without being asked and offered to supply the 20th District home guard command with a radio. There were four lieutenants in a car and they brought radio spare parts and more than eight radios, weapons and hand grenades. With their help we were able to set up a radio receiving station in the police building. We could not set up a transmitter because at the same time we were installing a transmitting station of considerable power at the Communist Party headquarters. With these radio installations we were later able to monitor the Russian military radio and thus to find out even if only a few minutes in advance all the Russian orders. In this way we discovered how they intended to open their attack in our district and this saved many lives since we knew the orders before their own soldiers could put them into effect.

On 27 October the 22nd home guard supply unit offered its help to the new home guard which was being formed at Pesterzsébet, and this help was quite considerable. A man named Colonel Kiss was the commander of this group for whose training and equipment he was responsible. He put their warehouse full of supplies at our disposal. Our people were given new uniforms and in one day hundreds of them were trained. There were officers from the regular army among us and thus we could base our organization on a group of real military people and it was this that led others to join us later. The military warehouses were opened to us completely and we thus obtained military equipment and food for our people. The barracks were in a large school building and every two days a group of people would be given infantry weapons and taught how to use them. Then they would be transferred to me as commander of the home guard. This went on regularly until 4 November. The school building was at Martyrok Road in Pesterzsébet but unfortunately I cannot remember the number.

On 27 October the Hungarian peasants began to supply the fighters in Budapest with provisions, thus providing valuable support. At the same time we set up an office at the home guard headquarters and completely reorganized the police. We set up various detective groups and relieved the AVH, but this all happened very peacefully and no one was harmed. We simply told them that their presence was no longer desirable and they must leave the building and stay in their homes. I can testify that this policy continued until the end in the 20th District of Budapest. Until the last days of the revolution no atrocities of any kind were committed by the home guard



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

in the 20th District. No one was hanged; we passed judgment on no one since there was no prosecutor or judicial corps in the district. We who were fighting for legality did not want to fall into the error of illegality. We placed people under guard, we questioned them, but no one was hurt by the national guard or the home guard. Since Pesterzsobot is a workers' quarter there were a great many AVH people and party functionaries -- about 1,000 I should say -- living there. These people were not willing to report for work on the critical days of 27 and 28 October so the administration of local affairs was held up. The home guard and the national guard therefore had to take over the civil administration. We opened the shops, supervised the sale of food and organized the provisioning of the civilian population because there were more than 180,000 people living in the district at that time and we had to take care of them and did so right to the end.

On the afternoon of 27 October we fought our second battle on the bank of the Danube at Pesterzsobot and Csopel. There the AVH and Russian soldiers together organized an attack against our group at the brick factory.



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

We succeeded in scaring them off with very little firing at that time. There were three wounded on the battlefield, and then the youth started to bother the AVH and the Russians. They were chased to the edge of Pesterzsebet by the Atrá factory, where their ammunition ran out. When the Russians noticed this they surrounded these badly-equipped young men, who surrendered with upraised hands. The Russians searched them, then stood them in a row and machine-gunned them. Thirteen of them were students, the eldest not more than twenty-two.

This caused tremendous indignation among the people of Pesterzsebet whose armed resistance was strengthened. From that moment they started fighting more actively and it was hard to hold them in check. The people began to hate the Russians and the AVH so much that it is difficult to tell you in a few words. Small groups were fighting without any leadership in all parts of the district.

In addition to the thirteen young men there were five others who died on the same day, most of them in a similar manner. Only one out of twenty-four was killed during the fighting, twenty-three were people who surrendered to the Russians, who took away their weapons, searched them and then shot them. These are facts; we buried these people ourselves, and even today they lie next to each other in the Pesterzsebet cemetery.

By this time the Hungarian regular army were joining us in such numbers that our artillery was greatly strengthened, and we had more than sixty cannons. On 28 October artillery units stationed on the borders of Pesterzsebet joined our unit, and telephone and radio communications were set up. Small Russian units tried to get into our area from Budapest but we succeeded in scaring them off. Our resistance became so strong that the Russians by then were unable to get anywhere near the twentieth district except in military vehicles and were unable to get into the city through the twentieth district. Then we noticed that the Russian troops seemed to be weakening. Many armoured vehicles were put out of action in Budapest and we felt that the Russians did not dare to attack. They did not dare to go round at night, and in the daytime they could move only in armoured vehicles; the crews were so frightened that they stayed inside the vehicles for two or three days without eating, being afraid to lift the trap doors of the tanks. Battles became more serious for them later because they were fighting for food, and the worst battles were those near the places where food was available. They did not



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

get any replacement rations, and by 28 and 29 October they were starved.

On the same day the radio of the Pesterzsebet Home Guard, the Roka transmitter, started its work. Radio Free Europe admitted it could get transmissions from the Roka transmitter, and repeated them. I have here the text, translated into Hungarian, of a radio broadcast given by our transmitter which was picked up by Radio Free Europe.

In those days the police and the Home Guard began picking up AVH people who were hiding in Pesterzsebet. We held no one longer than twenty-four hours; we questioned them and gave them a slip of paper stating that they had reported at the police station. Then we let every AVH man go home, telling them to stay in their apartments. I think this is the proof that our revolution was democratic, it was not revenge that led us to fight and although we were fighting against the brutalities of the Russians and the AVH we did not repay brutality with brutality, but suppressed any attempts at revenge. We proved in hundreds of cases that we were thinking only of a free Hungary.

On 29 October when the AVH was officially dissolved the Russian pressure lessened considerably, and on 30 October in the morning the cease-fire came into effect. At this time we stood victorious; there were no Russians and no AVH with arms at that time in our district. We succeeded in keeping out every Russian and every armed AVH man who tried to come in and this state of affairs applied all the way to the southern part of Budapest outside the territory of our own district for a distance of about fifteen kilometres.

The Russians entrenched themselves in the vicinity of Alsonemedi; the greater part of them withdrew even further to the vicinity of Pestszentloerinc and Soroksar where they awaited military reinforcement.

The CHAIRMAN: I just want to ask you whether it is necessary to give us the events day by day, as you have now spoken for forty minutes instead of the twenty minutes allotted to you. I ask you to conclude as soon as possible.

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I will do my best to tell you about the events very briefly. From 30 October until 2 November there was nothing particularly interesting. On 2 November the Russians began again to surround Budapest and stopped provision trucks from getting into the city. I should



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

like to state here that even twenty hours before Maleter went to Toekoel to talk to the Russians the latter were preventing food from going into Budapest. I want to state emphatically that on the night of 2 November and on 3 November by six o'clock in the morning Budapest was surrounded by the Russians, though they were far from the city and were reinforcing and regrouping their military units. While the discussions with Maleter were going on, the Russians moved thirty kilometres closer to Budapest. My observers gave me reports about Russian troop movements every two hours, and we knew exactly on what roads and in what districts they were. While the talks with Maleter were going on, at one o'clock in the afternoon of 3 November more than 300 T 34 tanks, more than twenty Stalin anti-personnel cannons, and more than seventy other cannons and four regiments of infantry were being drawn closer to Budapest. We knew from our reports that some of the Russians had moved from near the Toekoel airfield towards Alsonemedi, first towards Budapest, then further away, but from Alsonemedi they went straight on to the border of greater Budapest at Soroksar, and they were there at three o'clock in the afternoon.

We could see the Russians coming in before our eyes and reported to the Home Defence Minister and to Prime Minister Imre Nagy himself in the evening, calling their attention to the danger. They were within our range and we had enough artillery strength at our disposal to put them out of action in an hour or two, but I allowed no firing, only because I did not want the negotiations to break down for that reason. We wanted to avoid any possibility of their saying we were provoking them. Of course it is obvious the small and ill-equipped Hungarian revolutionary Home Guard and National Guard groups could not have achieved the same result a few days or a week later against ten, twenty, or thirty Russian divisions, but at that moment we were carrying on a defensive battle and not an attacking battle.



(Mr. Oltványi)

We did not fire unless they tried to attack us. We succeeded in preventing them from getting into our interior territory but at the same time, unfortunately, they did succeed in getting into Budapest by by-passing our district when they came from Kispest and Csepel. This was one of the most decisive military proofs that the Russians had absolutely no intention of withdrawing from Hungary or of coming to any agreement with Maletér; they wanted to attack Hungary and interfere in Hungarian national and civil life. During those days there were already soldiers who had come from Romania and Russia manning the armoured vehicles; people from around Ungvar-Uzhorod saw soldiers from Romania joining in the fighting. We had managed to capture several Russian soldiers, a major, a captain and three first lieutenants. I questioned them all myself. The major was the only one who knew that he was in Hungary but he did not know how far from Budapest he was. The other four asked us: "How far is the Suez Canal from here?" Doctors who were working at their stations at that time heard that question. When we told them: "You are in Budapest", and went on to say that we were not angry with the Russian people but were simply trying to rid ourselves of Bolshevik imperialism and that factory workers and not fascists were fighting, the captain promptly offered us his services. He taught us how to handle the Russian anti-personnel weapons with which we later fired on the Russians. It was the captain who trained the sights of the guns on the Soviet troops and who told us where the Russian troops at Pesterzsebet were concentrated. He also permitted us to destroy four of the so-called "Stalin" weapons at an airfield which we had captured. It was not until later we discovered that we had those "Stalin" weapons in our possession. He died a hero's death on the 5th when he was shot by the guns of a Russian tank. On 30 October we held official elections at Pesterzsebet at which time the parties had already been organized. In the presence of a tremendous crowd of people, and by free and secret elections, I was elected commander-in-chief, that is to say, my unofficial election was confirmed. Then the Budapest Revolutionary Council was formed. On the same day we ceremoniously buried twenty-four of our dead heroes with the consequence that the following night the embittered populace stormed the police headquarters in an attempt to drag out and lynch the AVH who were there. We managed to save them almost at the risk of our own lives because we did not want any hanging to take



(Mr. Oltványi)

place in our district without a judicial trial first having taken place. This is very important documentary evidence; we do not want them to say of us that we murdered as they did.

On 4 November an attack was started by such tremendous Russian armed forces that, by then, we were forced to keep within the boundaries of our own district and only fought a defensive battle. In fact we only fired when provoked by the Russians.

There is one other important event which I would like to mention. On the day previous to the attack I have just mentioned, in the Nepliget Peoples' Park at the border of Soroksar, we saw Russians take people from trucks and execute them. The people had only tried to bring food from the countryside to that district.

The great attack aimed in the direction of Budapest started at three o'clock in the morning at Soroksar Street and already at seven o'clock Russian troops were in Budapest. On 4 November the Russians made an attack on Pesterzsebet in order to obtain food supplies. Infantry arrived, accompanied by T.34's, carrying large bags. We were very much surprised at this until we discovered that they were searching for potatoes. The soldiers were so hungry that they ate the first potatoes they found raw. On the outskirts of Budapest the Russians even started a fight whenever they thought they could get a little bread or water. Once, they handed over to us enough arms for us to arm a hundred people in order to persuade us to give them some bread.

On 5 November a very strange and sad event occurred of which I was an eye-witness. At the corner of Hatar Street and Nagykoeroesi Street in Pesterzsebet Russian trucks, containing Hungarian people, drove off in the direction of Budapest. We succeeded in liberating a few of the people but unfortunately two of the trucks escaped. I myself interrogated the thirty people we had been able to liberate, among whom was a freedom fighter, but the majority were priests, ordinary civilians and agricultural labourers returning home from Budapest. Their hands had been tied behind their backs with wire in the most brutal way and when they were freed they could hardly move. Even the next day marks could be seen on their wrists; one of them was maimed for life because of that treatment. The Russians cannot deny these facts because the home guard, consisting of many



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

hundreds of inhabitants of Pesterzsebet, witnessed such incidents.

The CHAIRMAN: You have spoken for one hour instead of twenty minutes as you promised. Therefore I am obliged to ask you to finish your statement now.

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): It is with much respect that I tell the Committee that I am now at the end of my statement and it would help me if the Committee would put some questions to me.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I would be very grateful if the witness would answer my question briefly.

You stated earlier that you operated independently at all times during the fighting. Does this mean that you received no orders or instructions from the Government or from the Ministry of Defence and that you made no effort to ascertain whether what you were doing was in the general interest of the revolution?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): In my view it was not important to maintain contact with the Ministry of Defence because at the start of the revolution it was still full of communists, such as General Janza. Directives coming from such people did not interest me. We took up arms against them because we did not feel obliged to mix with soldiers and officers who had been trained in Soviet Russia and we did not wish to obey them. For that reason I did not accept any invitations to any of the meetings they held during the revolution. It was only after I had been appointed by Bela Kiraly that I maintained contact with him.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did you have difficulty, towards the end, in maintaining your supply of arms?



Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): Towards the end of the revolution the supply of arms was still small compared to our requirements. There were more people wanting to fight than there were arms to give them. Most of the time we took arms from the Russians but the only trouble about this was that we were frequently unable to find replacements of ammunition for these arms and, therefore, could not use them.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did you, personally, see interference with food supplies coming into Budapest?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): The incident I mentioned earlier — the machine-gunning of eleven people at Soroksar — at the moment when that happened I was not present there. However, I went there an hour and a half later and I saw the dead. I know of this fact from the population and also a member of the Home Guard was there whose name is Ferenc Viza. he is at present in Switzerland. He reported this to me.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I was interested in what you said about the reports you received every two hours as to the movements of Russian troops and presumably you had observers. How was this system of observation set up? Did you in fact have spies in the Russian formations or were they people who made observations from houses? How did they report to you?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): During the Hungarian revolution the most efficiently organized section was that of south Budapest and Soroksar. Here we had complete military discipline. We dressed the Home Guard in uniforms and, therefore, even outwardly we observed army discipline. After the attacks on the 4th, I instructed every Home Guard to dress in civilian clothes.

The movements of Russian troops were followed by us with great and systematic interest. Our groups of observers functioned in the following way: the No.1 group was made up of members of the police post of Soroksar and twelve members of the Home Guard who were attached to this police post. They observed the route of Dunaharaszti and Soroksar. At the same time one of my other groups was stationed at Pestszentlőrinc and Toerdek Floris Street in the police post there.



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

From there they sent out continuous and systematic groups of observers to the southern periphery of Budapest especially to observe the main road from Alsonemedi to Soroksar. The same group observed the road that connected Pestszentloering and Soroksar. Apart from these observers there was also a central group of observers who had motor cycle transport and they travelled towards the Russians and relayed back messages day and night. They went unarmed among the Russian troops and as a matter of fact they even went beyond the Russian troops and got to Cegled fifty kilometres from Budapest. Therefore, they travelled regularly through the ranks of the Russians. They hid their motor cycles and it happened that sometimes for half a day at a time they would spend their time with the Russian troops making all sorts of barter arrangements with them. They took with them bread or lard and the Russians far from capturing them invited them in and spoke with them. It was through these observers that we were able to discover the number of Russian troops stationed in the localities and on the roads mentioned in south Budapest and what kind of **attacks** were planned for the 3rd and 4th.

Our observation arrangements were planned ahead because we had telephone communications with the police posts which in turn gave this information to the observers and approximately every two hours I evaluated the meaning of the information. Every two hours I changed the military map on the wall to show the positions of the Russians. I had two or three people from Soroksar who had been in Russian prisons during the last war and knew Russian well. They would spend three days at a time near the Russian command at Alsonemedi and it was from them that I learned of the new supplies and new troops that were coming in in order to start the attack.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Could you tell me very briefly to whom you passed this information which you evaluated every two hours?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): On 3 November I could not get these evaluations through until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. On that day particularly I had not succeeded in establishing contact with Budapest as the telephone had not been working properly. It was at 3 o'clock that I started giving this information to the Ministry of Defence where approximately every hour a new soldier took over



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

my information because General Bela Kiraly was not near the telephone all the time. I reported every quarter of an hour, and from 6 o'clock onwards, in view of the fact that they had a direct line to Imre Nagy, I informed Lajos Varfalvi, who was at the Pesterszebet town hall, of this information and he then relayed to Imre Nagy the result of our observations. I reported this information until half past four in the morning when at that point telephone communication broke down again.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): You told us that the area which you commanded — the 20th district — contained a population of 180,000, is that correct?

Mr. Oltvanyi (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, that is correct. Pesterszebet, Soroksar, Soroksar-Ujtelep actually form the 20th district of Budapest and the population of this area is more than 180,000 but I said 180,000 because the people living on the periphery could not be included from the point of view of defence.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): What is the population of Greater Budapest?

Mr. Oltvanyi (interpretation from Hungarian): Greater Budapest has a population of approximately 1,800,000.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): From 23 October up to 3 November there were only two serious battles, is that right?

Mr. Oltvanyi (interpretation from Hungarian): From 23 October to 3 November there were only two battles that were really significant but on our territory of forty kilometres there were continually smaller fights occurring but they had no strategic or tactical importance.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): How many Hungarian people, according to your estimate, were killed during this fighting?



Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): Until the fall of the 20th district on 11 November the number of the dead was 120 to 122. Out of this number eighty were members of the armed Home Guard and approximately forty were civilians.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many Russian tanks were you able to destroy during this time?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): In connection with this point I should like to clarify the fact that the destruction of these tanks occurred not only within our district but we were able to destroy vehicles and armoured equipment in other districts because the Stalin candles that we were able to get hold of from the Russians had a range of at least six kilometres.



(Mr. Oltvanyi)

Therefore we were able to fire with them only to distances over six kilometres, and thus the total number of vehicles destroyed was 124 T.34, forty smaller vehicles or armoured equipment, and fourteen vehicles bigger than the T.34, namely the largest and most modern of the Russian armoured cars. Altogether the number was approximately 150 vehicles. Beyond that our greatest feat was the destruction of jet 'planes. We were able to destroy in one hour thirty-four of those which were stationed at Toekoel, which is the southern part of Csopel. This is the airport of Toekoel near Sziget Szentmiklos. At the airport the jet 'planes were still alight the next day. We also destroyed the whole airport there. I know this fact for certain because my observers counted the loss in men of the Russians, and owing to the Stalin candles this loss of Russian lives amounted to 700.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Thank you.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): With regard to the attack on that aerodrome, are you quite sure that your group was able to destroy thirty-four jet 'planes at, if I understand it correctly, the airport at Toekoel?

Mr. OLTvanyi (interpretation from Hungarian): Not all of the thirty-four aeroplanes were jets, because they had training 'planes also and I could not determine the difference between the two as they were all on fire, but I can say that 70 per cent of them were the most modern Russian jet 'planes. They were fighter 'planes, twin-engined bombing 'planes. I know them because these were stationed at Toekoel for some time; they were not units newly arrived.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): To ask a question of a different kind, I understand that you were the commander of the revolutionary forces of south Budapest. Were you recognized by the Government as commander of the revolutionary group of the south Budapest forces, or not?

Mr. OLTvanyi (interpretation from Hungarian): When I was first elected, namely when we occupied the Pesterzsébet police building, this was not accepted officially. However, on 31 October I was elected officially on the recommendation of all parties and with their approval. Furthermore, the Revolutionary Councils, including the Workers' Councils of the factories, prepared this election and it was on this basis



that they allowed me to continue to act as the commander of the Home Guard, they approved my earlier election, and from then onwards everyone recognized me, the Defence Ministry as well as the Prime Minister, Mr. Imre Nagy.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): You told us earlier that from 3 November onwards you transmitted the information you received first to the Ministry of Defence and secondly to Mr. Varfalvi. Why did you communicate the information to Mr. Varfalvi?

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): I needed Mr. Varfalvi because I organized the command of the Home Guard in the police headquarters of Pesterzsébet, and unfortunately they did not have a secret telephone line and I could not therefore communicate with Parliament House from the police headquarters, whereas the town hall of Pesterzsébet had a direct line with Parliament House and therefore with Imre Nagy. For this reason Mr. Varfalvi was the one who sent on to Imre Nagy the results of our observations.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I would like to be a little clearer about one point in your long statement. I understood you to say that Russian soldiers who were sent to intervene in Hungary exchanged their arms for bread. Was that really the case, and if so had they not an organized supply service? Were they dispersed? Had these units lost their way? Were their supply lines badly organized? I should like to have a little further explanation on this point.

Mr. OLTVANYI (interpretation from Hungarian): In the battle which took place in south Budapest it was not a rare occurrence for the Russians to hand arms over to us. This happened every day in one or other sector, the Russians exchanged arms for food, mainly bread. The hungriest group was on the southern side between Pestszentlőrinc and Soroksár, in an area of about three kilometres; they were 200 metres deep taking up their positions there. These were for four days cut off from replacement of supplies and therefore did not receive any food. According to the best of my knowledge, during the whole period of the revolution the Russians did not send any food supplies to the centre of Budapest for Russian troops, because the custom was for the Russians to come out from Budapest in the evening and to be handed



(Mr. Oltványi)

their arms and food supplies in the outskirts; but they were so badly organized for food, and they had so little food, that they were forced to hand over their own arms for food. I cannot give any other proof than the fact that out of 15,000 people 3,000 or 3,500 were able to get arms in this way.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions. We thank you for your comprehensive statement.

Mr. Oltványi withdraw.

At the invitation of the Chairman Mr. Tibor Pasztory took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. Your name, I understand, is Tibor Pasztory. You were Secretary for Economic Affairs to the Minister of State, Mr. Zoltan Tildy, and so we shall be very interested to hear your experiences, I ask you to begin your statement.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): First of all, I should like to thank the Committee for hearing me.

I would like to relate my personal experiences, which were gained in Parliament House during the second part of the revolution when I was with Zoltan Tildy. Afterwards I would like to make a very short statement on the events which led to the revolution, as well as on the state of affairs after the second Soviet intervention.

Although it may not be the custom, may I tell the Committee that my name can be used everywhere and at any time, but as my statement will involve reference to colleagues and others who are still in Budapest their security should be safeguarded, and I would like to ask whether I should mention their names or not.



The CHAIRMAN: If you mention names we will take care that they do not appear in the verbatim record. Of course there may be names that are of great interest to the Committee -- Ministers and others whose names we would like to know -- but we will see to it that they are not mentioned in the record if that would involve any danger for the people concerned. Incidentally, the verbatim records are confidential and will not be published.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): My wish is that the names I mention should not appear in the verbatim records but that the Committee take cognizance of them verbally.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, of course, that will be done.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I should like to emphasize that although I left Budapest on 30 November I have been in continuous contact with Budapest since then and with two of the Ministers in the Imre Nagy Government directly. I would like to say a few things that will be supported by facts and I make my statement realizing full well my responsibility. I want to be completely objective in order to help the work of the Committee.

First I would like to say that preparations for the peaceful unarmed demonstration began on 20 October. The youth of the universities and the workers wanted to express openly their disagreement with the Communist regime and their feeling that the complete political and economic oppression of the country demanded a change of government.

The CHAIRMAN: May I just draw your attention to the fact that we have had so many witnesses testifying on the development of the revolution from 20 and 21 October that it is unnecessary to go into detail in that connexion. But your experiences as a collaborator with Mr. Tildy are very important to us as are the events in Parliament of which you can speak.



Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): On 29 October Dr. Hamori, who was the Secretary of State, in the continental European sense, of Zoltan Tildy, asked me to come to Parliament to become Tildy's adviser in economic matters. I was in Parliament several times, sometimes at night, and with the exception of four hours I was there from 30 October until three o'clock in the morning of 4 November. A government was first formed as you probably know on the 27th but the workers asked that a coalition government be formed. On the 30th Imre Nagy stated that there was a coalition Government and that henceforth this would conduct affairs of State in Hungary. He said that it would be the task of the Government to organize the free elections demanded by the people.

May I mention here that according to Hungarian constitutional law when the Lower House of Parliament is not meeting the Presidential Council exercises its rights. In order to ensure the legality and responsibility of the Government the members of the Presidential Council were not removed but, under the presidency of Istvan Dobi and in accordance with the Hungarian Constitution, sanctioned the formation of the Government of Imre Nagy as well as the actions of that Government. Thus it was with the knowledge of Istvan Dobi that Imre Nagy continued negotiations with the Soviet Union and I want to emphasize that Imre Nagy can be considered a free man only from 27 October. Nagy's Government sent a note to the Soviet Union on 30 October on the subject of Russian withdrawal. I was present at the drafting of that note which was handed over to the Soviet Embassy, and the answer of the Embassy was that they had contacted their Government. The Soviet Embassy were extremely polite and even withdrew most of their troops from the territory of Budapest in order to ensure a peaceful atmosphere in the city. The greater part of the Russian troops which -- and I should like to emphasize this -- the Soviet Government had already put in readiness on the borders of Hungary before 23 October were withdrawn from the larger towns to their rallying points in the countryside.

There was an important event when Minister of State Tildy, after contacting an attaché at the Soviet Embassy, went himself to the Embassy at 10.30 a.m. on 1 November. On his return he was smiling happily and I am purposely going into detail over this. Hamori and I were in his room when he came in and stated that the negotiations with the Russians on the withdrawal of their troops were proceeding very satisfactorily.



On 2 November the Government of Imre Nagy announced its neutrality and renounced the Warsaw Pact, informing the diplomatic representatives in Budapest of this so that the Soviet Union would not imagine that Hungary wanted to be under Western domination. Also on the 2nd the Soviet Embassy requested a delay in the negotiations. These were postponed until the 3rd and started in Parliament on that day in the presence of the full Hungarian Government. At the end Tildy stated that discussions with the appropriate technical personnel would start that same night. The Soviet delegation asked for patience as regards the timing of the withdrawal but emphasized the fact that in principle they fully agreed with this and only wanted to discuss technical details that evening. On the evening of the 3rd negotiations began, the Hungarian delegation being led by Maleter who was Minister of Defence. During these negotiations Imre Nagy spoke by telephone with Maleter but later on in the night when Imre Nagy telephoned again a Russian answered and said that he had no means of passing the receiver to Maleter. As to what happened then to Maleter I only know what we all know. That is how Maleter became a prisoner of the Russians.



(Mr. Pasztory)

I should like to say a word concerning the aims of the Government. In accordance with their desire for a policy of neutrality they did not plan anything that would involve a close alliance either economic or political with any specific country. Our economic plans included establishing strong links with Austria and revising the economic treaties concluded with Soviet Russia by earlier governments, because many of these were contrary to the interests of the Hungarian people. The Imre Nagy Government wished to have the most friendly relations with all countries including Soviet Russia, and it was for this reason that even during the revolution Imre Nagy had some opposition. The Government thought that an open break with the Soviet Union would not be advisable and therefore they showed the utmost patience, and asked the people of the country to be patient.

The Government of Imre Nagy, however, insisted on renouncing the Warsaw Pact because it did not wish to belong to any military alliance. At that time a Hungarian military and technical delegation was in the Soviet Union, led by Biro who was the younger brother of Rakosi. This committee went to the Soviet Union in the middle of October, entrusted by the Hegedues Government with the task of dispersing the military clauses of the Warsaw Treaty, an important factor of which was the use of radar, and the use of Hungarian engineers for perfecting the radar system. These engineers told me personally that on looking into the technical and military clauses of the Warsaw Treaty they found it contained implicitly strong evidence of the intention to attack the West.

I should also like to mention as a matter of interest that news, official and unofficial, was continually coming to Parliament. The Hungarian news service and the Hungarian post offices all over the country informed people in Parliament what was happening. I often spoke to them personally on the telephone, though during that time when the Soviet delegation was negotiating the details of withdrawal there was a great deal of armoured equipment coming from Romania and from Zahony from Carpatho Ruthenia towards Hungary. According to my information at that time these military movements were in two directions. One wing came from Zahony to northern Hungary, to the mining regions which were at least not capitalistic; the other wing was coming towards Budapest, and this wing split in two south of Miskolc and went partly to Szolnok and partly to Budapest.



(Mr. Pasztory)

The troops coming from Romania approaching Debrecen went towards Pecs and the southern part of Hungary. The ring encircling Budapest was formed in the night of 3-4 November and when the military news from the Ministry of Defence was received, I was in Parliament. Imre Nagy established contact with the Yugoslav Legation.

I would like to say here that Janos Kadar who was the first secretary of the transformed Communist Party and was a member of the lawful government of Imre Nagy, left his office together with Antal Apro whom I saw for the last time on the morning of 2 November. I saw Kadar, fleetingly, in the late hours of the afternoon of the 2nd. The Nagy Government was informed -- I do not know from what source -- that the Kadar group went with a Soviet car to Szolnok.

When the Russian troops poured in and formed a ring around Budapest, Imre Nagy, even though he was a communist, fled to the Yugoslav Legation. Tildy and Bibó were not ready to leave Parliament; together with Szabó they did not seek asylum at the Yugoslav Legation as they wanted to follow events. At about three o'clock Tildy gave me instructions to go to Buda, where I live, and asked me to maintain contacts from there. He told me to forward any information of a military nature to the appropriate quarters.

In view of the encirclement by the Russians and because of the illegalities that this involved, Imre Nagy and his government were sure the United Nations would intervene after they had been informed of the situation.

There were local battles both in the territory of Budapest and in the provinces in the early morning of the 1st but there was no organized resistance. In the early morning of the 4th I spoke from Buda to Tildy twice, and to Dr. Hamori, the chief of Tildy's secretariat, and at eight o'clock to another old friend of mine, and these people were all in the Parliament building. My friend informed me that Soviet units had surrounded Parliament and were forcing everybody to leave the precincts of the Parliament building. At that time Imre Nagy was still in contact with Tildy and with Bibó from the Yugoslav Legation. I mention these names because I am sure of them. My friend gave me this information at eight o'clock in the morning, when he and Hamori were forced to leave the Parliament building and when I called at eighty-thirty Bibó, the State Minister, answered. He told me he was going to stay in the Parliament building, which I may say is a huge labyrinthine building with a lot of entrances and numerous rooms. Bibó stayed in one



(Mr. Pasztory)

of the rooms. He was not sure whether to leave the Parliament building, and said if it were possible to start the radio he would again ask for help from the United Nations. However, he did not succeed in putting the radio in order, and as far as I know he left Parliament building on the 5th. The newspapermen who remained with him also left the Parliament building on the 5th or 6th.



(Mr. Pasztory)

I spoke with Bibó personally and with Tildy, through Hamori, several times before 13 November and I informed the newspaper people of the outcome of my talks. What I have said supports the fact that the Government of Imre Nagy was lawful either on the basis of the status quo ante or on the basis of the events which started on 23 October. Nagy had never resigned, Kádár was really preparing a coup d'état and it was the presence of Soviet armed forces which prevented the Nagy Government from governing. Therefore, the Government of Imre Nagy is at present the only constitutional Government of Hungary but it was rendered impotent by the Soviets, the treachery of Kádár, the insincerity of the discussions with the Soviets — of which Nagy was already aware, and the combination of all those circumstances. There was really no legal basis for doubting the statement made by Nagy concerning the withdrawal of troops from Hungary. It is furthermore contrary to the truth often proclaimed by the Soviet Union, namely that there was a counter-revolution in Hungary. I had occasion to deal personally with hundreds of thousands of Workers' Councils representatives in the presence of Tildy, or even of Nagy, when, between 1 and 3 November, the Workers' Councils hesitated to continue work because they did not see any possibility of Nagy's promises being fulfilled. Nagy's promises were, of course, based on promises made by the Soviets. On 3 November between 5 and 8 o'clock, after the Soviet negotiations were finished and only technical details remained to be settled, I negotiated with the workers' representatives of all the large factories around Budapest on behalf of Tildy. We made a statement on the radio, which I had drafted in collaboration with many of the Workers' Councils' delegates to the effect that work in all the industries and factories of Hungary should re-commence early on the morning of the 5th because Imre Nagy guaranteed the withdrawal of Russian troops and the holding of free elections and that a coalition government, composed of ~~ministers~~ of state and ministers without portfolio, would lead the country. Those guarantees were based on the Russian promises. Imre Nagy therefore found that with those guarantees he had really satisfied the demands of the Workers' Councils. On 4 November the workers saw that Imre Nagy was unable to fulfil his promises and that his Government had been made impotent by the second intervention of the Russians and therefore the battle in Hungary continued, as you know. I have now finished my statement and I am ready to answer questions which I anticipate with great interest.



The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I thank you for your interesting statement. I know that the members of the Committee would like to ask you questions but as it is now very late I must ask you to return here tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

Mr. Tibor Pasztory withdrew.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.