BORBA INTERVIEWS WIFE AND DAUGHTER OF RUDOLF SLANSKY

In its May 12 issue the Belgrade daily Borba published an interview with Jozefa and Marta Slansky, the wife and 19-year old daughter of the executed leader of the Czechoslovak CP, Rudolf Slansky. Mrs. and Miss Slansky arrived in Belgrade as guests of Borba which since April 24 has published daily installments of Mrs. Slansky's book A Report About My Husband. Asked by the interviewer why she decided to write her book, Mrs. Slansky answered:

I could not help but write it. I was sad and felt the necessity to express myself. On the other hand, I could not and did not want to take anybody into my confidence. I started writing at the end of the fifties. I put my remarks on paper, then destroyed them and started anew.

Q: Whom were you addressing with your text?

A: I wanted Marta to know what kind of a man her father was. She was then three years old and does not remember her father.

Q: (to Miss Slansky): How did you receive the notes of your mother?

A: I learned many things. My mother and brother informed me well.

Recalling the way in which the book A Report About My Husband originated, Mrs. Slansky mentioned the writer Pavel Kohout. At the 1963 Congress of the Czechoslovak writers Kohout demanded
a full rehabilitation of innocent people. "I heard about Kohout's speech and called him by telephone. Until that time I did not know him. He came and we sat together until early morning. I told him everything I had endured. At our next meeting I showed him my manuscript. He asked me to continue writing. For fully five years only five people knew about the text: my two children, myself, Kohout and a physician. Kohout had two sets of the text with himself fearing I might destroy the manuscript."

Q: How much did you reveal in your book?
A: Some sections of the manuscript I crossed out. However, everything I wrote is true and faithfully laid down.

Q: Your husband has been rehabilitated. You have told the world the full truth. How do you feel today about past events?
A: It is said that time cures everything. I would say, judging by my own experience, that this is not true. Many things have changed but there are things which can never be corrected.

Q: Are you again a member of the Party?
A: I have never ceased being a member of the Party. By the way, after I returned "to the world" [i.e., from prison], I was told that I had been expelled from the Party in November 1951. After the 1963 rehabilitation, I was given back my Party card in which it is still indicated that I have been a Party member since 1929.

Q: You have behind you a period in which it was most possible for you to see who your real friends were. Some of them have vanished; some new ones have appeared. What are your feelings now?
A: Life would not have been possible without friends. Friends are the best guarantee of life. Most people close to us have experienced the same fate. However, there were people in those times who were not afraid. It was of great significance that our family remained united.

The family? Many Slanskys did not survive. Rudolf's parents and two brothers perished during the war in German concentration camps. The third brother received a life sentence from a show trial [in Communist Czechoslovakia]. Several years later he was released and today is the deputy dean of the Prague University named "17th of November."
Q: In several instances in your book you speak with sympathy about Pavel Yanik, a security officer. Why?

A: At that time even the slightest expression of mercy could help people to survive or endure life more easily. However, it was not only Yanik who behaved so helpfully. We were greatly aided also by the official [prison] physician, Dr. Randrt.

[A after a few words about the son of Rudolf Slansky, whose name is also Rudolf, the interviewer talked with Miss Slansky.]

Q: What person represents an ideal on which you would model your life?

A: In the first place my brother. I like his political judgment and his views about life.

Q: What do you think about the maturity of your generation?

A: My generation has seen what one gets when authoritarian individuals are worshipped blindly. I am sure that this generation will do their utmost to prevent such times from ever returning. By the way, the period in Czechoslovak history when authoritarian individuals were worshipped is very short. To do so is not in accordance with our mentality.

Q: What most highly attracts young people to appear on the political stage today?

A: New room for expansion and possibilities for independent expression of one's own opinions.

Q: How do you form your views?

A: I benefit very often from so-called "verbal journalism." For a long period of time the most significant information could be acquired through conversation and by means of communication with other people. Official sources were very scanty. For years all information concerning things which were about to happen reached the public several months before they were officially announced but today this happens only a few hours before.

Q: Are you a member of the Party?

A: No.

Q: Would you like to become a member?

A: Not now. However, I am pondering this. Before I join the Party I would like to answer the question: why am I joining it? My brother has been frequently asked how he could be a member of a Party in which there are people responsible for the tragic end of his father. Rudi has found an answer. I have not yet found one.

Slobodan Stankovic