

UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



CONFIDENTIAL

A/AC.88/PV.56  
6 April 1957

ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGARY

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING (CLOSED)

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Saturday, 6 April 1957, at 10.00 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Alsing ANDERSEN

(Denmark)

QQQ - workers from Tokaj: on battle at  
Miskolc also resistance on border  
to Czechoslovakia near Satoraljaj'hely.



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

The CHAIRMAN: I again bid you welcome to the Committee. There are some questions which members would like to put to you.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You said yesterday that Mr. Nagy was not really in control of the Government until 27 October. Would you tell us why you said that?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Seeing the demonstration, the Hegedues-Geroe Government sent a car to Imre Nagy's apartment on 23 October and took him to Parliament when Geroe and Hegedues and an AVH unit were present and he made his speech during the night of the 23rd in their presence, the substance of which was that he tried to reassure the people of the country. Obviously he wanted to stop bloodshed. Since Imre Nagy was informed of Soviet armed intervention in the following days, the 24th, 25th and 26th, when Geroe was still present, they forced Imre Nagy to guard and defend the prestige of the Communist Party. Geroe and Hegedues, with Soviet approval and in fact on Soviet instructions, so to speak contributed, that is to say they by their own will appointed Imre Nagy Prime Minister, as he himself announced on 24 October in his speech over the radio, in order by these means to calm and reassure the people who were on the point of boiling over. The revolution, however, was not slowed down or stopped from taking place because at 11 a.m. on the 25th I myself was present when an unarmed crowd of demonstrators assembled in front of Parliament, whereupon the AVH, still under the influence of Geroe, fired into them from the top floors of the building opposite Parliament, at that time a Communist museum. Imre Nagy was then in the Parliament house, and in spite of the demands of the crowd he did not emerge to make a speech as they demanded, or to answer the questions of the people. This fact itself proves, too, that Imre Nagy was not a free man, as I heard confirmed otherwise at discussions in Parliament at which I myself was present. Imre Nagy himself said later that although he had tried to prevent blood from being shed, and to calm and reassure the people even on the 25th and 26th, nevertheless he received threats from the former leaders still



(Mr. Pasztory)

then present, that is to say from the AVH. They did not leave him alone for a single moment, he could not speak to anyone independently, and it can be said quite literally that in those days he acted with a gun at his back.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do you know whether Mr. Nagy was in the Parliament house all the time between the 23rd and 27th?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I do know that he was there.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): He was in the Parliament house all the time?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungary): I was not in the Parliament house at that time. Materially, he was in the Parliament building for a time, I do know that, and I think he was also at the Communist Party headquarters for a short time, but of this I am not certain.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You said that you were present when the note about the withdrawal of Soviet troops was drafted. Would you tell me who drafted that note?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Imre Nagy was present, also Zoltan Tildy, Geza Losonczi, Hamori for part of the time, Zoltan Vas; I was not there all the time continuously, but I also was there part of the time.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Were you present when the Declaration of Neutrality was drafted?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I was not present at the drafting of the Declaration of Neutrality, but afterwards I spoke about the question with Zoltan Tildy and he spoke to me, because I, who was concerned primarily with various economic factors, was to serve in this connexion to reassure the people.



Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do you know who served as private secretary to Mr. Nagy during this period?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I do know. I know him. I cannot think of his name on the spur of the moment, but I am sure I shall think of it and I will let you know in writing. We met several times although Imre Nagy was on a floor below the one where our office was. Naturally, I was there quite often.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do you know a man named Gyoergy Heltai?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, but only fleetingly, as according to my knowledge he worked only occasionally in Parliament.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): But you did see him in Parliament during that period?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I did see Gyoergy Heltai in Parliament during that period. I think we are speaking of the same Gyoergy Heltai.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You said yesterday that many people were sure that the United Nations would intervene in the Hungarian affair. Why were you so sure of that, and what form did you imagine that such intervention would take?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I must answer that question in two parts. The people themselves, ignorant of the full legal factors involved, naturally hoped for and expected armed intervention. Our Government, because it thought that its demands were being accepted by the Soviet Government, did not in the first days of October ask for any intervention by the United Nations, but when it became obvious that the Soviet negotiations up to then were being conducted only to gain time and for tactical reasons, our Government, and we who were the



(Mr. Pasztory)

comrades-in-arms of the Government, expected United Nations military intervention because the Soviet Union was contravening international law and the acts of the Soviet Union would have justified help being given by the United Nations.



(Mr. Pasztory)

I myself hoped this and during the telephone conversations I referred to yesterday we spoke of this and we were all very disappointed.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): To get on to those telephone conversations, you say you left Parliament House and went to Buda where you had telephone conversations with Parliament House every half hour. Would you tell me what was the purpose of those telephone conversations and what they were about.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): They were with a person whose name I wish to be withheld and once with Zoltan Tildy, several times with Hamori, his principal private secretary, and also with Istvan Bibó. We spoke of who should get what reports, whether there was any reaction from the United Nations to Imre Nagy's and our request for help, what kind of reports were coming in about the Soviet Union and who should play what role in the future. Naturally we wanted to maintain continuous contact among ourselves.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You said yesterday that you had been told that the Russians had forced everyone to leave the Parliament building. You were not there yourself but could you tell me how the man who informed you of this on the telephone came to be aware of it? Was he in Parliament House? Was he forced to leave there?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): In the telephone conversations carried on with Parliament building on the 4th and the 5th with Zoltan Tildy, Dr. Hamori, Istvan Bibó and the person whose name I wish to be withheld, I had already been told that Russians were entering the building, that Soviet units were surrounding the building and that all civilians and the guard of about two to three hundred soldiers had been sent out at gun point. I would like to add that when the battles died down somewhat, from about the 8th onwards, I was in personal contact with Istvan Bibó, the person whose name is being withheld, Dr. Hamori and, through an intermediary, Zoltan Tildy. We discussed this question again and on 27 November when I last talked to Istvan Bibó at Bishop Ravasz's apartment he gave me instructions as a member of the Government going to the West, so you can take this statement as the message of Zoltan Tildy and Istvan Bibó.



Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do I understand that right up to 27 November a number of people were still discussing affairs in Hungary in a manner hostile to the Kadar Government? In which case was this not a somewhat dangerous pastime?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): It was dangerous but that was immaterial to us. Budapest is our home and we wanted to save our home. To do this we were ready to risk anything. That is why I did not leave Budapest earlier but only when I had instructions to do so from Tildy and Bibó. Until then I hid in various places. I went to my own apartment only twice and sought refuge with various Western correspondents and others I knew.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): You told us that you started your functions in the Government on 23 October. Is that correct?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): No, I am sorry, there must have been a misunderstanding because I never said that. It was 29 October.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): What did you do before 29 October? Did you have any immediate connection with Minister Tildy before the 29th?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): My contact with Zoltan Tildy started in 1948. A second cousin of mine, was a minor party official in the Smallholders' Party. I was still a university student at that time and I wrote articles of a political nature for newspapers. In this connection I went into the Parliament building and on one or two occasions I was introduced to Zoltan Tildy and had the opportunity of being with him.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Before getting into contact with Zoltan Tildy what was your work?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Until 23 October 1956 I was the financial director of the nationalized boiler factory and I was also a



(Mr. Pasztory)

member of the so-called rationalizing committee of the National Bank which was a semi-official body. Our aim was to attack the Communists from the left and to try to lead the economy of our country, in so far as the Soviet Union would allow it, in the direction we wanted. I would like to mention here that several members of my family were employees of the Hungarian National Bank and I have many contacts through them with people who, in spite of their anti-Communist feelings, were financial and economic experts working for the National Bank even during the Communist regime.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): So you had contacts and knowledge in economic matters and were chosen by Zoltan Tildy as his adviser in economic affairs. Is that correct?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): On 29 October I reported to Parliament House where I met Zoltan Tildy in the corridor with Hamori. They asked me to join them in the Parliament building from the following morning onwards and to work especially in the economic department. There were no strict distinctions between finance and other matters at that time and they evidently considered my qualifications to be such that I could advise them.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Did the movement which started on 23 October have only a political basis or was there also an economic motive?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): If this interests the Committee I can answer this question from three points of view.

In the first place the Hungarian people without any distinction between the intellectual classes and the working masses had realized years earlier that the Soviet Union was carrying out a tyrannical, imperialistic and looting policy in Hungary. This became obvious in the economic as well as in the political field. This already had led to Imre Nagy becoming Prime Minister in 1953.



(Mr. Pasztory)

After the death of Stalin, looking at this question from the point of view of the Soviet Union, there was an opportunity for Imre Nagy to get into the office of Prime Minister and to serve our national ends by means of his economic programme better than had previously been done.

The Geroe clique again assumed power, and Imre Nagy was relieved of the premiership, and Zoltan Vas was also by-passed. Even today Zoltan Vas and Imre Nagy call themselves Communists, yet they are sober-thinking economic experts. The Petoefi Circle which in the first place had gathered Communists to itself, now gathered all kinds of intellectuals, economic experts, artists, musicians, literary men and people representing cultural activities. I myself was present at several of their meetings. We tried to get a programme more suited to our national political ideals. I was never a member of the Communist Party, and the general view was that for a healthy political life the Soviet order must be attacked rather than the Communist order, because it was the Soviets who were looting and tyrannising our people. It was hoped that gradually in this way we would be able to free ourselves by a process of evolution. Prominent intellectuals who were former Communists, or who even today admit to being Communists, took part in this movement. We criticized the Soviets; by 1956 we were at the point where our people had had more than enough and the working masses could no longer bear the Soviet imperialist oppression. We demanded a change of regime and tried to achieve this through an unarmed peaceful demonstration.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): I should like to leave the political field now, and enter into a more technical field which the witness seems to know, the economic field. "Isms" do not interest me for the moment -- communism or imperialism. What I should like to know is what was the economic situation in Hungary before and on the eve of 23 October? Was it an agricultural economy, an industrial economy, or a mixed agricultural and industrial economy? Could Hungary be self-sufficient economically? I should like to have specific technical replies rather than political replies to these questions.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): In the period before the demonstration there had been the economic transfer from feudalism to socialism



(Mr. Pasztory)

resulting in a breakdown of the agricultural economy. Originally a rich agricultural country, with agricultural exports to Western Europe, this country became unable to support itself in many fields. For example, we had to import wheat, and unfavourable foreign trade was forced upon us in 1953 to 1954.

The increase in foreign trade was intended to increase the foreign exchange holdings of the country, but according to the National Bank, the amount of our holding of foreign exchange was determined by the Soviet Union. Thus the Hungarian industry was channelled in unnatural directions, particularly in regard to commodities that could be exported, and it was the holdings of foreign exchange by the Soviet Union bloc that increased.

A characteristic example of this is that the raw silk shirts which in Hungary cost 240 forints were exported at an equivalent of one dollar, at the usual rate of exchange seventy forints. The merchandise that was intended to provide for a country of nine and a half million people was indeed very small, and the purchasing power was even smaller than the available commodities, namely, only about 15 per cent of the pre-war purchasing power, but this seemed sufficient from the point of view of the casual onlooker. It was significant that the quality of the merchandise in view of the market was very low indeed, but the greater part of our export merchandise was of a much higher quality.

If I may return to the agricultural question for a moment, it was indeed a bad decision of the Rakosi Government to force the strong collectivization of the agricultural industries. The agrarian reform of 1945 had wanted to put an end to feudalism. The 1947 reform had been directed at putting into one unit the very small property units of three, four and five acres. In order to appreciate this position, one should remember that the Hungarian peasant is very individually-minded, and does not take kindly to any sort of dictation from above. This psychological factor, together with the fact that the supply of machinery to these small agricultural units could not be adequate because of the increasing demands of the armaments industry, meant that our agriculture went into bankruptcy, and this made Hungary, formerly a self-sufficient country, dependent on foreign countries even for its agriculture.

For reasons solely connected with foreign exchange, in 1954 and 1955 when we had a flood, on Russian orders we exported to the Soviet Union, and because of the



(Mr. Pasztory)

existence of a barter treaty we had to import wheat from France.

In order to get an accurate picture of our agricultural situation, it must be remembered that with low productivity the national income decreased proportionately and this led to the fact that the country was living not only on current income but on capital, thus diminishing and slowly consuming the national capital.



(Mr. Pasztory)

The AVH, the police, and the maintenance of the Government in general consumed all that remained of this national income, together with the most uneconomical development of heavy industries in Hungary and the very unfavourable commercial treaties which Hungary was forced to conclude on the orders of the Soviet Union, and which had to be balanced by a continuous and steady increase in prices. Labour productivity increased only in the heavy industries with the importation of raw material from the Soviet Union; the country was forced to produce products which it did not need or, alternatively, which it could have imported on much more favourable terms. I should like to mention one commercial treaty which was concluded with the Soviet Union. The rolling stock factory of Gyoer expected to send rolling stock to the Soviet Union. It was not allowed to import from Sweden the essentials necessary for the construction of this rolling stock but was obliged to import them from the Soviet Union instead. The treaty contained a clause whereby Hungary would be obliged to pay a fine if the rolling stock were not delivered by a certain time, whereas the agreement with the Soviet Union pertaining to the importation of the essentials necessary for the construction of rolling stock contained no clause providing for interest charges in case of delay. Consequently there was a delay in the delivery of the rolling stock to the Soviet Union and Hungary was therefore obliged to pay the fine.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The witness has just told us that from 1945 until 1946 there was a fall in agricultural productivity and an increase in agricultural imports and that, on the other hand, there was an increase in productivity in heavy industries especially. Did this decrease on the one hand, and increase on the other hand, result in a balance of trade for Hungary? On 23 October 1956 did that balance show a profit or a deficit?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Our foreign trade balance showed a deficit on the one hand; on the other hand our debts increased, that is to say the obligations increased faster than the revenue. What was worse was that the part of the national income which had to be devoted to pensions and fixed productivity continually increased. A great proportion of those payments consisted of amounts which had to be allocated to the maintenance of, and the unnecessary increase in, the state apparatus — including the Party apparatus. Therefore any increase in productivity lagged far behind the increase in prices.



Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The witness told us of a deficit in the balance of payments. In 1956 was that a mere temporary trend towards a decrease in production which chanced to happen at that time, or did it start earlier? In other words, I should like to know approximately the proportion of the deficit.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): In 1945 our country emerged from a very difficult war period and many mistakes were made in establishing the social reforms necessary at that time, and in 1948 those reforms took a completely wrong direction. The deficit varied from year to year but it was always on an upward trend. This was balanced only to a certain extent by the amounts which were used for investment in industry. Therefore, the balance of payments showed a deficit. However, there were never any official statistics regarding that.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Did Hungary calculate its balance of payments separately or were they included in the accounting system which was directed from Moscow?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): At no time during this period was the leadership of Hungary in the hands of the Government; it was not even in the hands of Hegedues and his Government or those who preceded him. The supreme authority in Hungary was the Communist Party which received instructions from Moscow and it was compulsory to obey its orders. Even the Ministry had to obey. The production quotas were determined in Moscow and the only duty of the Hungarians was to fill these quotas. The level and the nature of exports were determined by Moscow.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): On the eve of the events which took place on 23 October what was the level of the cost of living, the salaries and the wages, and what was the purchasing power of the average wage? Was that wage sufficient in view of the prices of essential commodities, such as bread, sugar and so on? In other words, was there a "living wage"?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I must ask you to be patient with me because I find it necessary to make a few notes.

The level of wages and prices in 1947 was approximately 50 per cent lower in terms of purchasing power than during the last year of peace. This proportionate level fell



(Mr. Pasztory)

even before 1956 to such an extent that the standard of living of the average wage earner fell by 25 per cent compared with his standard of living during the last year of peace. The exceptions to that were very few and therefore insignificant. The salaries of officials and white collar workers were thus only 18 per cent of what they had been during the last year of peace.



(Mr. Pasztory)

I was the financial manager of an industry that was classified as category 3. My income was below 2,000 forints although our industry had achieved far more than their production quotas and few equally successful and profitable enterprises existed. From this salary I was able to buy myself a third-rate suit of a very poor quality but made by a tailor. I was also able to buy ready-made two very poorly made overcoats of a quality that is so inferior it would not be known in the West.

56 The lowest wage received by working people was 600 forints. In the early fifties the average was 1,000 forints and by 1956 it had increased to an average of 1,100 forints. One kilogram of lard cost thirty forints. Therefore, during one month a worker could buy thirty to thirty-five kilograms of butter. A good quality man's shirt cost 240 forints and, therefore, the earning power of a worker was equivalent to four such shirts a month. This purchasing power deteriorated gradually because the increase in wages was very much smaller between 1947 and 1956 than the increase in prices. For example, in 1947 butter cost two forints eighty fillers but by 1946 it cost six forints sixty fillers. Wages did not increase 100 per cent but only a maximum of 20 per cent.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): As there was a continuous deficit in the balance of payments of Hungary, the economy of Hungary must have been dependent on an outside economy, which economy was that? How was this deficit compensated for and if so from where did this aid and support come?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): The construction of a so-called socialist economy does not even remotely resemble any capitalist economy. When prices and wages are pegged, a deficit does not obviously have the same meaning as in a capitalist country and, therefore, the results of a deficit are also different and are compensated differently. In Hungary there was absolute control of the circulation of money and they could also resort to the printing press. In Hungary this was the only means of exchange but not of value. There is absolutely no comparison and, therefore, there is no basis on which its true value in foreign exchange could be expressed.



(Mr. Pasztory)

The State industries did not work with money even though they represented 95 per cent of the circulation of the money in Hungary and this also includes the buying power of the peasants. Actually, the most significant monetary factor was the peasants because they received, at least in theory, cash for their crops. However, under this regime they had to hand over a great part of their products in kind, not in money, and whatever cash the peasants might have received was considered as payment for taxes. I should like to emphasize that there was absolutely no circulation of money between enterprises. They had clearing arrangements. No cash transactions were involved in the State enterprises and it was only a question of simple bookkeeping as to what the deficit or the profit of an enterprise was.

The State enterprises received capital from the State and were able to borrow capital from the State. However, these enterprises were compelled to use as little of the capital they borrowed or received from the State as they possibly could. The reason for this was, as I said earlier, that there were cash transactions with the peasantry and the capital needs of the State enterprises had to be kept as low as possible so as not to increase the flow of cash indirectly to the peasants. This factor explains why the ever-increasing deficit did not lead to a complete economic collapse. The deficit was also continually made up by further loans from the State.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): This economy which had a large deficit was surely leaning on another economy even if we exclude the monetary factor because when production was falling for some reason in order to maintain the wage levels there had to be some economic aid in the shape of raw materials or machinery. That must have been obtained from somewhere. Did this support exist or did the Hungarian economy lean principally on the printing press?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I should like to emphasize that in order to understand the economic construction one must study the methods and plans established by the Hungarian Government. I can only answer this question shortly as it would take a very long time to answer it more fully.



(Mr. Pasztory)

The deficit was compensated by the increase in the debt, in other words, the increase in the circulation of money, and living on the national capital with a consequent diminishing of the national wealth. The monetary aid received from the Soviet Union — when I say "aid" I say that sarcastically — had to be covered by payment in kind which was well over the actual value of the "aid" given. The records of the Ministry of Finance show that there had been a continual increase in the debt outstanding to the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries. These were the means used to compensate the deficit. I should like to mention that the principle way of covering a deficit is the using up of the wealth of the country and it was for this reason that I started out by saying that my country was completely impoverished.



(Mr. Pasztory)

The fact that this was manifested to such a small extent, at least to the outside world, can be explained by the fact that the amount of consumption goods, however small, was greater than the purchasing power; the purchasing power was always smaller than the available consumption goods. This can be compared to a situation where, say, the amount of consumption goods in America remained stationary while at the same time salaries and wages were decreased considerably and the United States Government increased prices ten times.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Were the majority of the Hungarian people aware of this economic situation, which was certainly not a good one, and was that awareness, together with other political reasons, one of the causes of general dissatisfaction leading to the revolution of 23 October?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): The economic situation in Hungary was only one of the factors in the events of October. The population of Hungary were informed of the economic situation from two sources. Everyone knew from their own daily life the cost of, say, a kilogram of flour or a dress, and how much wages they received, while at the same time they saw one per cent of the population which had much more than was needed, ten-room houses, luxurious cars, when at that time the average Hungarians often lived three and four in one room. It was a well-known expression that we were attacking the Soviet system from the left. This often appeared in the press, and even in the newspaper Nepszabadsag, which was a communist organ, and in the Literary Gazette. I myself originated such a statement at one time. Therefore from the press and from their own life the Hungarian people could see what the economic situation was.

I would like to emphasize, however, that economic factors were only one of the reasons for the dissatisfaction in Hungary. Even the least educated peasants knew and know clearly the main lines of our thousand years history. I believe Lenin was right when he said that there is continuous evolution, and even though the evolution of Hungary in the social sphere has not always been satisfactory the Hungarian people realized that a completely different way had to be found for progress in Hungary. The greatest discontent was the



(Mr. Pasztory)

psychological oppression exercised by the Soviets through the Hungarian Workers' Party on the people of Hungary. The imprisonment of crowds of innocent men, the fear and the murders, these were things which we wanted to oppose. We also knew that the looting of our country by the Soviets was also putting us into a colonial situation. That was understood by peasants, students, workers and everybody. This was why we went out into the streets on 23 October where, I repeat, it was not with arms but with aims that we wanted to bring about a change in our life.

The CHAIRMAN: Before calling upon the representative of Uruguay I would like to ask a question with regard to the living standards which have been discussed between you and the representative of Tunisia. Do you know the wages of an AVH policeman as compared with the wages of a skilled industrial worker?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): The pay of the AVH was about 20 - 60 per cent higher than the wages of non-AVH people. However, the reward of the AVH was represented not so much by the pay as by other factors. Thus the AVH man received free lodging accommodation, whereas the worker did not; the AVH man received clothing, the worker did not; the AVH man could buy a meal for three forints whereas the worker had to pay twenty-five forints a day. Furthermore, the AVH received all kinds of bonuses; for example, a considerable bonus was received for an arrest. At the time of the revolution we found and brought to Parliament a note from party headquarters. Unfortunately, I am unable to mention the name of the person, but I would be willing to take an oath about it. This note said that the amount of salary, including representation expenses, amounted to 10,000 forints a month, at a time when the man did not need any cash for his living expenses as he received most of these free. The middle-class and the aristocracy had their possessions in the form of furniture, gold, silver, pictures, or in the vaults of the National Bank. I could tell a long story about the possessions in the vaults of the National Bank. These possessions were sold or taken by the thin layer of top communists. In order to be frank I would like to note that as a consequence of the inflation of 1945 and 1946 it was the peasants who received the valuable possessions of the people in the cities, but later on even the peasants had to relinquish these in order to carry on cultivation of the land and to satisfy their quotas of production which,



(Mr. Pasztory)

unless satisfied, involved a penalty of imprisonment. Therefore, the peasants were also impoverished later on.

The CHAIRMAN: As far as I understand, the wages of a worker were about 1,100 forints a month.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): That is so; the average rose in 1956 to 1,100 forints.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): If I understood correctly I think you said you were a member of a nationalization committee. If that is so, when did you function as a member of a nationalization committee, and who appointed you to that position?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): There is here, I believe, a misunderstanding which troubles me. I was never a member of any committee of that kind. Such appointments were already being made by the Ministry in 1945 and 1946, and I have never worked in a Ministry. I was, however — and this is where the error must have occurred — a member of a committee composed of some of the more senior members of the National Bank. We were in not altogether semi-official connection with the Communist Minister Zoltan Vas, in 1953. The committee was trying to help in the increase and redistribution of the national income in a way which was not, of course, the same as that of the Communists'. The control organs of the Communist dictatorship are really based on control organizations which control other control organizations. We wanted to reduce those, and to reduce the number of people and the administrative costs, so that the diminished national income could be put to more productive uses and our country saved from complete bankruptcy.



Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): Would you please answer yes or no to my questions. Were you a member of the National Bank of Hungary?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I was not a member of the National Bank. I was the financial director of a firm manufacturing basic items necessary for industrial boilers. As such I was a member of the Committee of the National Bank which discussed these questions and we tried to influence Vas, who seemed to us the best-intentioned Communist Minister. We tried to tell him our ideas for preventing a further impoverishment of the people. This was a semi-official organization and was called the rationalization committee of the National Bank. This information will be found in my curriculum vitae which I have given you.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): You acted in a semi-official capacity, you belonged to a branch of industry which furnished certain materials to the State and you were a member of an economic committee which wanted to inform the Government of the economic situation. Did I understand you to say also that you were not a Communist or a member of the Communist Party? You said that you criticized the Communist Party and attacked it from the left. Could you tell me exactly what you mean when you say you attacked the Communist Party from the left?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Without a revolution one cannot attack a Communist regime from the right. The reasonable party members, namely those who were not Communists by conviction, and the non-party technicians who composed this committee did not inform the Government qua Government, they informed one Minister named Vas, and we gave him all kinds of suggestions and plans.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): These programmes and plans were given to a Government Minister? Is that correct?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): He was not a member of the Government in 1953; he was the head of the Prime Minister's secretariat. In 1955 he was the chairman of the union of Hungarian co-operatives.



Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I should be grateful if you would answer my questions very briefly as I just want to verify certain points.

As far as you are concerned, would you prefer a capitalist system in your country?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I no longer want the re-establishment of a capitalist system on Western lines. I do not want this as a person, nor did the Nagy Government want it. It is my personal conviction that a free election in Hungary should decide the social and economic organization of the country and that a system which was partially capitalistic and partially based on State ownership would lead the country out of economic bankruptcy. The Government particularly wanted good economic and political relations with Austria which is closely bound to the Hungarian economy and with which there are of course no transport problems. We also wanted to acquire foreign capital, but we did not want a restoration of capitalism. We wanted a modern, up-to-date economic organization based on the decisions of a Parliament chosen through free and secret elections.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Do you favour the nationalization of land?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): In my opinion the agrarian reform was necessary from both the economic and the social point of view. There were faults in the carrying out of this land reform and these increased after the illegal Communist Government came to power in 1948. I think it is necessary to find a middle road which would put an end to injustice of all kinds and get rid of the last vestiges of feudalism in Hungary.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Do you find traces of feudalism in Hungary now?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Naturally today there could not be traces of feudalism but in 1945 certain feudal features did exist. On the other hand social demands should not be satisfied only in the Communist way, and I say that as a person who is definitely opposed to Communism.



Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Then of course you did not encourage the nationalization of industry?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): The nationalization of industry which took place in 1947 was not illegal but it was unnecessary and incorrectly carried out. As an economic theory the Communist way of running an economy is wrong and carries the seeds of its own errors. This does not mean that social reform was not necessary in Hungary and it does not mean that in my opinion the ideal economy is a capitalist one. In my opinion the State has a controlling part to play in order to correct injustice and prevent abuses, but society has to be based on the individual, naturally under State control. This is the role of the State, which should be directed by a lawful Parliament.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Would you say that your views with regard to nationalization are shared by the large majority of people in Hungary?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I say in full knowledge of my responsibility that both the peasants and the workers, on the basis of their experiences during the last few years, agree with my opinion.



Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): What is the per capita income?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): As I said, the average monthly wage of the wage earner is 1,000 to 1,100 forints. Highly skilled workers in exceptional cases receive 2,000 forints. But these are so few that they do not affect the average. There were many workers who only earned 700 to 800 forints.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): In respect of the total population of the country, what is their income per head?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Not only the workers, but the white collar workers received an average over the whole country of only 800 forints a month, because the income of the white collar workers remained below that of the ordinary workers.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Do you know the per capita income in respect of the whole population?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I can only tell you the per capita income of those who work and those who are pensioned. It is the average of these that amounts to 700 forints a month per capita.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): You are an economist and yet you cannot give me these figures?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): There were no official statistics appearing in Hungary about the national income of the population of 9,000,000.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Would you say there was large-scale indebtedness among the people?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): In Hungary everyone had debts and it was a vicious circle. The workers were indebted to the State for advances on wages, the peasants were indebted because of their taxes and the necessity to hand in their produce. The pensioners had debts. The small industrialists had debts, and I mean the ones with only one or two employees.



Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): That would indicate a very heavy indebtedness?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, there was a heavy indebtedness in Hungary, but I should like to emphasize that this was not the determining factor of the events of October.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You are now trying to give reasons, but I am asking for facts; psychologically you are working in a different way. Now tell me, would you say there was a tremendous amount of unemployment in Hungary? I suppose 90 per cent of the people were unemployed?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): There was no significant unemployment in Hungary. Of those who were able to work most of them were working, and there were even some who did not really belong to the working force who took on work in order to increase the family income, for example, mothers. Among the peasants even children worked.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): In other words, would you say there is full employment in Hungary?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): There were the possibilities of working in Hungary. One might say that in certain spheres of work people were working who should not have been, but this was on the decision of the Communist Party. The building industry, for example, took a great number of workers, and it was the incorrect and uneconomic decisions that made other possibilities of working.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Were there old age benefits?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): There were many ordinances on the subject. Those who had only worked before 1945, or stopped working in 1945, or who had not worked for ten years after 1945, did not receive any pension, or else received a ridiculous amount of 500 to 700 forints a year. For example, my father, who was a technical adviser and a mechanical engineer, who was pensioned before 1945, received under the Communist regime a pension amounting to only 400 forints, whereas in the early forties he had received a pension of about 1,000 pengas, the former currency.



Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): So the system of old age benefits is inadequate?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, the pension system was inadequate. Those who were pensioned in 1956 and had worked for at least ten years from 1945 without interruption, and without having any political accusations against them, received a somewhat higher pension on condition that they had also worked for many years before 1945. The position in regard to the peasants was not regular, there were all kinds of makeshift arrangements, and some of the old age pensions were of a ridiculously small amount. The whole thing was badly organized and of course the peasants represented a large proportion of the population.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Am I right in assuming that even benefits of that nature were influenced by political considerations?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): It was not explicitly stated but that is how it applied. Those who had a political accusation against them, those who were interned, or in prison, were not eligible for pension. Those who could not work under the regime, such as many intellectuals who were not considered to be favourable to the regime, did not get pensions; therefore the political orientation had a direct effect on the pension.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Let us pass to another subject. Do you know the composition of the Praesidium? When was it elected?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): The Praesidium was called into being by the Hungarian Constitution, and the head of this Praesidium was the President of the Republic.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): How many members?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): With the Hungarian Constitution that was born in the years 1948-1950 the Praesidium had five members -- the chairman, several deputy chairmen, and the secretary. I myself know personally two members, namely the chairman of the Praesidium, Istvan Dobi, and the secretary, Istvan Kristof. These people were in Parliament House at the time I was there.



I met them several times, and for this reason I stayed with the Praesidium which according to the Constitution is to exercise the functions of Parliament when Parliament cannot do so. This Praesidium took the oath from Imre Nagy as head of the Government, and that is why I consider the Government of Imre Nagy lawful.

The CHAIRMAN: Two of the witnesses waiting outside cannot stay in this town after today so we have to hear them at this meeting. Can we therefore be as brief as possible?

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I am not asking for your reasons, I want facts. Do you know the composition of the Praesidium in 1956 just before the revolution began?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Of this Praesidium I knew only Dobi and Kristof, the other members I did not know.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many members were there?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): Five members and one secretary, according to the Constitution.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Are any of them outside Hungary now?

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): According to my knowledge, no.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions, and we thank you for your appearance here.

Mr. PASZTORY (interpretation from Hungarian): I should like to thank the Committee for their patience and their questions. In view of the fact that I received the order direct from Tildy and Bibó that I should represent Hungarian affairs in the West, I want to ask the Committee to kindly give their attention to the Hungarian problem, and I thank you for hearing me.

Mr. Tibor Pasztory withdrew.



At the request of the Chairman Witness PPP took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. This witness does not appear on the list before us. He wishes to remain anonymous.

You are a professor and I understand you participated in the drafting of the sixteen points presented by the students. Your statement will take about twenty minutes, I believe. Would you please commence it.

WITNESS PPP (interpretation from Hungarian): I consider it a great honour to appear here before this United Nations Committee and hope that I may be of some assistance to it. I would like to remain anonymous because my immediate family is still in Budapest and, knowing Russian methods, I fear for their safety. If my name should become known as a result of the testimony I am about to give I shall report to the Committee any harm which might come to my family as a consequence.

I am an engineer by profession and I have never been a member of any political party. I have always held democratic beliefs; I have always disagreed with force, revolution and dictatorship. I was publicly known to be a pacifist and therefore was not even called to the Hungarian army. In 1944, because of my convictions, I was arrested by the Fascist Party although I had not taken part in politics. It was alleged that I was pro-Russian, pro-French and pro-English. I had also helped to hide Jews and therefore was an enemy of the Nazis. After the Russians came into power in Hungary my circumstances took a turn for the worse. For one and a half years I was under police observation because I did not want to work for, or join, the Communist Party. I was swept into the revolution like everybody else. My testimony will concern the events immediately connected with the revolution and of which I was an eye-witness.

It was commonly known that the sixteen points prepared by the Technical University student youth — the MEFESZ — acted as a catalytic agent in precipitating the revolution. I think the Committee is aware of the political situation and the attitude adopted by the students before 22 November 1956 and so I shall not give further details concerning that. Briefly, I should like to say that the students and the industrial workers tried to rid Hungary of the Russian terror and oppression.



(Witness PPP)

The student movement in Budapest began to gain in strength even although there was not any direct contact between the various university groups at that time. The Szeged University Group decided to start the Society of University Students which was called MEFESZ the better to express their discontent. This was greeted with great enthusiasm by everyone including the Budapest university students and between 19 and 22 October the various university student groups held meetings. Then the society of the Communist university students — DISZ — decided to hold meetings in order to take the wind out of the new group's sails, as we say. They endeavoured to co-ordinate the demands of the students and to restrict them as much as possible. That decision was also taken by the Technical University student group and indeed met with agreement from everyone else.

On the 22nd the various Budapest university groups held meetings which were relatively uneventful at that time. However, decisive events took place at the meeting of the Technical University students which had been called by DISZ the Organization of Working Youth, which was the Communist student organization. I received an official invitation to that meeting and have prepared a photostat copy which I shall hand to the Committee; the original is in my possession. The Committee will see from that invitation that the aim of the meeting was to discuss the students' local demands; among those were a demand for rebates on public transport fares, cheaper text books, the improvement on housing conditions for students, better food and so on. In fact, they were strictly student demands. As regards their political demands, they chiefly wanted Kadar to be given greater influence, which proves that Kadar was being forced on the students at that time. On 22 October the meeting was held in the aula of the university; the rector, the professors, the workers, the Party secretary and Party officials were all present. Five or six thousand people remained there without food or drink until two o'clock in the morning. I was not fully informed of the agenda of the meeting and did not arrive until four o'clock in the afternoon, but from then onwards I was an eye-witness of all that happened. The discussions were restricted purely to practical and local demands; all those who spoke demanded that technical subjects should be taught instead of only Marxist and Leninist subjects, that there should be language courses in English, French and German instead of only Russian and that other curricular changes should be made. However it transpired that there was an overwhelming demand for wider and basic changes to be made before the practical changes could be dealt with. The aims of the revolution were then



(Witness PPP)

more or less formulated: namely the withdrawal of Russian troops, independence for Hungary, adherence to the principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Declaration of Human Rights. About five o'clock one of the students addressed the crowd on the subject of the political changes which had taken place in Poland, which he had heard from radio broadcasts emanating from the West. He said that Gomulka wanted an evolution to take place and not a revolution and that the Soviet Union were trying to prevent that by surrounding Warsaw with their armed units. However it was due to the political leadership in Poland that there had been no bloody revolution. That speaker also said that the Soviet Union wished to crush any vestige of independence which might remain in any of its satellite countries. The speech was greeted with immense enthusiasm by the crowd who all shouted that they wanted democracy to be established in Hungary. It was said that the present administration of the country was undemocratic, and suddenly they all demanded that Imre Nagy should take over the Government as, during his previous Prime Ministership, he had made certain concessions, and therefore might prove to be the right man to lead Hungary. I gained the impression that the meeting was not an organized one and when I asked what its purpose was nobody could give me a satisfactory answer. They all discussed it among themselves and finally one of them said: "Perhaps already we could demand that Soviet troops be withdrawn from Hungary but who should be the first to utter such demand?"



(Witness PPP)

They agreed that it should be the Communist Party secretary who should say this because in his official role he was the only person who dare say any such thing. One of the Communist youth leaders went to the microphone and said that while Russian troops were stationed in Hungary political evolution and developments could not be carried out as there was absolute imperialist tyranny.

This is the way matters developed until 7.30. At 7.30 one of the students proposed that since our meeting was placing itself in such a significant position in relation to the whole of the Hungarian political situation and were discussing basic questions we must bring the results of our discussions to the notice of the Hungarian people. They then started to discuss by what means it would be possible to bring this matter to the notice of the Hungarian people. The suggestion was made that we should announce it on the radio and as the time for the evening news report was nine o'clock they decided to send a delegation to the radio broadcasting station which would be composed of three volunteers. Their task would be to see that an announcement was made over the radio of the discussions that had taken place at the Technical University. I said to the students, "What do you want to have read? Have you drafted it?" They said, "No. We will narrate it." I said, "You cannot do that. There is a censorship, and it will have to be written down and then read by the news reader." Then a student tore a piece of paper out of a notebook belonging to another student — I have it here — and on this piece of paper we drafted a number of points. Some of them are not really of interest to you as they related strictly to the students and included such matters as the lower price of textbooks, rebates and transportation. However, we decided that all these particular problems of the students would be taken care of if Hungary ever became independent and we drew up a list of ten points that dealt with basic political questions.

The order is characteristic because the aim was not revolution but evolution and we wanted to achieve this evolution by new central elections in the party organization so that the workers in the nationalized factories would be able to elect city delegates and national delegates. The second point was that the Government should be reorganized under the leadership of Imre Nagy who was the only person the students thought appropriate at that time. The third point was that Hungary wanted to remain friendly with the Soviet Union. In fact, we wanted to be



(Witness PPP)

friendly with everybody and you can see here a very interesting addendum which one of the students put in advocating Hungarian and Yugoslav friendship. Apparently he had been in Yugoslavia and heard the news that a certain part of the uranium mines would be given to Yugoslavia in order to make a deal with Tito. Since Geroe had taken a position supporting Rakosi at the Rajk trials Tito had made great attacks on him and in order to reinstate himself with Tito there were reports that Geroe was offering part of Hungarian uranium to Yugoslavia. Also included was the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The fourth point was the free participation of all parties in the elections. The fifth point demanded a new economic policy and the guardianship of uranium and other natural resources by Hungarians and the use of them by Hungarians. The sixth point was the autonomy of the agricultural and plant collectives. The seventh point was the supervision of the political processes, the acknowledgement of individualism and the breaking up of the collectives. The eighth point was the political and economic supervision and a general political amnesty. The ninth point dealt with the question of national holidays, for instance, on 15 March and 6 October, and the re-establishment of the old Hungarian national emblem. The tenth point demanded the freedom of the press and permission for a new newspaper to be published by the Hungarian university students' organization called MEFESZ.

We also demanded the destruction of police records and documents. For instance, I saw a dossier about five centimeters thick which they had about me. Every one or two weeks there were reports coming in from everywhere about what one did, whom one met, what conversations were held. It was the destruction of records like this that we demanded.

The final declaration expressed our solidarity with the Polish peoples' evolutionary attempts at trying to gain their freedom. I also have a photographed copy of this document. We redrafted these points and the events which followed were unforgettable. Men broke down and cried and declarations like this were made "May God grant that with this initial expression of human rights in Hungary Hungary's liberation may start and perhaps the breaking up of the work of communism all over the world."

After that we went to the radio station where the censor was only willing to read five of our points in the night news broadcast. I have marked these five



(Witness PPP)

points so that you can see which particular points the censor refused to allow us to read. For instance, our demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops; free elections; a new political and economic life; the freedom of the press and new elections within the Communist Party. The students said "We demand all or nothing." They returned to the Technical University where in the meantime more drafting had been done. The points which the radio station had not allowed us to read were read by the students and they aroused great enthusiasm. It was emphasized once more that we must bring them to the notice of the Hungarian people. If the radio station would not co-operate then we had only the press left but as the national press was completely in the hands of the Government and heavily censored we realized it could only be the students' press which could be used. The Communist students' group did have a paper and the editors were present at the meeting. They were in favour of the ten points but because of their own personal security they were only willing to print nine and wanted to leave out the point about the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. There was a long argument as to whether we should publish the nine points only but eventually we decided not to publish them at all through the Communist students' paper.

Fortunately, apart from the paper belonging to the Communist youth there was a paper published by the local students, and this paper was called Joevoe Mernoেকে. The editors of this paper volunteered to go immediately and try to publish the ten points without censorship on their own responsibility and the paper was to appear on the next day. Five of the students went to the printing shop, destroyed the front page which had already been set up and replaced it with new type. They inserted with a short foreword an account of what had happened at the meeting and followed this with the ten points. This duly appeared on the morning of 20 October and 2,000 copies were printed. The people who worked at the printing shop also took great risks when they helped us. They put the paper from the warehouse at our disposal, and were very enthusiastic about our actions. I also have a photographed copy of this paper which I will give to the Committee. I should explain that the publication of this paper was not easy but we were determined to succeed. We asked for all the typewriters to be put at our disposal and even the Communist teaching staff opened the offices and gave us the typewriters. Even the students and the assistant teachers worked on every available typewriter



(Witness PPP)

at the university that night. There was a rotaprint duplicating machine at the university which could be used by the director only with the approval of the AVH to make sure that there was no illegal duplication.



(Witness PPP)

For an hour and a half the students argued with the rector to give this rotaprint machine to them. He did not, but closed his eyes and refused to look while the students got hold of it somehow. They got the key. Meanwhile, suddenly a student said, "We have the machine; we can start duplicating" and everyone who could brought paper from wherever he could find it, everyone took paper from all the classrooms and several thousand copies were made. One stencil after another went to pieces. During the night ten points became fourteen or sixteen, and to show how unorganized it was I can show you an amendment which already had eleven points instead of ten. The withdrawal of the Soviet troops had become a separate material point. I could show you a copy of the later morning duplications which had fourteen points. Here there were already points about the inspection of Mihaly Farkas publicly and the removal of the Russian emblem from the Hungarian national emblem and flag. We assumed complete solidarity. This point was quite important.

I would like to refer to an episode at about 10.30. Someone made the suggestion, "Let us call Imre Nagy to the students' meeting", because this meeting had become so important that his advice, even his personal appearance, would be very appropriate. Therefore another three students, and I as driver, went to Imre Nagy's apartment where there were AVH armed with machine guns and automatic pistols. They kept us at a considerable distance from the house, they would not let us go near. They said, "You have come from the Technical University, have you not?", so that they must have known what was going on at the Technical University and that we were going to get Imre Nagy. The AVH must have had men at the meeting at the Technical University who were continually informing the AVH centre of developments. We were received in that way. The AVH asked us to identify ourselves and took the number of the car in which we had arrived. When we returned unsuccessfully to the Technical University a student announced through a microphone what had happened, and the students stood up unanimously and said, "Everyone here is playing with his head and with execution", so that it had come to a question of collective action and collective solidarity, and we all assumed collective responsibility for each other.

I do not know if the Committee would be interested in further details about spontaneous outcries. For instance, one student demanded complete Hungarian independence and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, referring to the Hungarian



(Witness PPP)

Revolution of 1848 and the role of the students at the time of Lajos Kossuth. Some girl students said, "We ought to pin the cockade on to our hats". One or two ran out and returned after half an hour with ribbons of the Hungarian national colours. I cut the ribbon with my pocket knife and everyone started pinning pieces on to their lapels. The students pinned these cockades to their lapels quite spontaneously.

Another resolution was born at this meeting. On 23 October, the next day, because of the solidarity we felt with the Polish events, we arranged that a demonstration of sympathy would be organized by us, the students of the Technical University, at the Bem statue. Someone mentioned that the Writers' Union also wanted to do it, but someone from the Writers' Union who was there declared that that union, for its own part, wanted no kind of demonstration. So it was decided that youth of the Technical University would organize it. Meanwhile this meeting had been long-drawn out, students at other meetings in other parts of the city had finished earlier and they found out by telephone what had been going on with us at the Technical University. People kept coming from other parts of the city, students from other students' meetings, people from the Belojanis factory, from Csepel; miners from Dorog coming home to Budapest heard on the railway station what had been going on in the Technical University, so they did not go home but came to us at the Technical University, and they spoke one after the other. There were miners from Dorog, workers from the Manfred Weiss factory at Csepel, and workers came from other plants also to join the students. I also have here the resolution calling upon the students to make the demonstration decided upon for the next day and I will place a photostat copy at the disposal of the Committee. It says, "We want a silent demonstration because it is only by silent, peaceful and orderly demonstration that we can gain our ends. We wish to finish the procession at the Marcibany Place." That was the original conception, that the demonstration should end at the Marcibany Place, but as we were afraid that Communist provocateurs would try to start some kind of disorder we decided later that the whole of the youth would go back to the Technical University and finish there in columns of ten in order to forestall any Communist provocation. The first point says that in close rank, in columns of ten, we would link arms so that no one could get into our midst and be able to cause any provocation. The student meeting finished officially at 12.30 the next day, and the Hungarian National Anthem and another national song were



(Witness PPP)

sung twice. This had been forbidden until then. Many of the students then went home, but many who had been organizing the duplicating work of the night before stayed until 1.30 or 1.45. I myself went home about 2 o'clock. By 7 or 8 o'clock next morning several thousand copies of typewritten or duplicated handbills were ready, and volunteers, boy and girl students, distributed them among the various plants. They distributed them also among the party secretariat headquarters. They did this so that the party should not be able to stop it later. Copies were also pasted on the walls of many houses in Budapest.

The Committee probably knows already that in the morning of 23 October work in Budapest stopped, everyone went out on to the streets weeping, people read the points and then rushed home or to their factories. Every stenographer and every typist did nothing but copy these things in all the offices. The Communist Party forbade this in vain. Everyone was talking about it; in conversation, over the telephone, the news spread in a few hours and within a short time all Budapest became an ant-hill. People pinned the Hungarian national cockade to their clothes, and a really fantastic miracle occurred, for I regard it as a miracle that the whole people became unified. About 100,000 AVH spies, informers and stool-pigeons had been planted in the national life of the nation and forced to supply information. On the morning of this day, for the first time, someone had dared to say that the Russian troops should leave Hungary. We had reached the point where we dared to say this publicly. This was the catalyst, and the point at which the chains were broken which had bound us until then; the point at which the net in which the AVH spy system had been holding us was broken. Everyone became convinced. No one asked in the street "Who are you?", everyone was on terms of tutoyer, everyone was on familiar terms, everyone could be trusted, everyone had a feeling of complete unity, because the entire system based on lies collapsed in a moment on the morning of 23 October. It was for this reason that about 100 or 150 or 200 people appeared at the Bem statue in the afternoon in complete order and complete discipline from the factories. The Committee is probably aware of the episode when the Minister of the Interior, Piros, on the radio in the morning, forbade the demonstration and five Communist students from the Technical University handed in their quasi-ultimatum because, they said, they would hold their demonstration even if troops were ordered out against them. After about half an hour's argument he allowed the demonstration.



(Witness PPP)

The CHAIRMAN: We know everything about that.

WITNESS PPP (interpretation from Hungarian): I would like to add a document concerning the events before the demonstration in front of the Bem statue when the professors of the different universities of Budapest asked the students to observe discipline during the demonstration.



After the demonstration at the Bem statue I returned home and during supper listened to Geröe's speech. Nobody could believe this was possible but the Geröe speech made such an impression on me-- the pacifist who agreed with everybody, disliked fighting with anybody and was always able to get on well with his colleagues and friends-- that I lost my patience to such an extent that I banged the knives on the table and broke a plate. My wife and I left the house because we could not stand it and everybody seemed to have had the same reaction because they were all out in the streets. I went to the Parliament building and then to the Stalin statue, where I arrived immediately after it had been thrown down. While I was there a young man came along on a motorcycle shouting that the AVH were shooting people at Sandor Street. Ten metres from me there was a truck holding people with a gramophone on which they were playing Hungarian patriotic songs. Many of us ran to this truck and stopped the gramophone. We shouted into the megaphone that the AVH were shooting at the people in Sandor Street and that we must go to the radio building. This was of course the most stupid advice--that an unarmed crowd should go to a place where the AVH were shooting at the people--but everybody got on to the trucks and went over to Sandor Street, and I went by car with my wife. We were fired upon for the first time just as we were turning into Sandor Street. The car was shot at and my wife's nerves gave way so we had to leave and go home. As a peaceful man I did not at that time want to participate in this fighting because I did not approve of it, and I stayed at home for one and a half days. I was afraid of a nation-wide tragedy and I admit I was rather scared so I gave in to my wife and stayed at home. After this day and a half when offensive remarks and appeals were being made on the radio I could not stand it any more. I left the house and for the first time had arms and hand grenades in my hands. I went through the psychological transformation that I imagine all the people went through and which made even the most peaceful people, including the children, rise up.

I then participated in the work of the central committee of students at Barnabas Street and if you are interested I shall be delighted to give further details of this. Meanwhile I want to make one more statement, which is that this miraculous transformation occurred, in my view, because the people were faced by a clearcut choice. You were red or you were white; you were Russian or you were Hungarian; you were good or you were bad; you had a Christian outlook or you were a member of a devilish atheistic regime.



This is borne out even in the obtaining of arms. I can testify as to how an AVH officer opened a munitions depot. On the evening of the 23rd a friend of mine went to this munitions depot and said to the AVH officer, "I have known you all my life but if you do not open the depot I will shoot you." The AVH man opened it and the civilians were able to take out the contents. It was a choice between free determination or terror and that is why the Hungarian people were united as never before in history, not even against the Turks.

My statement that the revolution broke out spontaneously and that events unfolded themselves in this way could be illustrated by further details but I will not go on unless you ask me to. I would however like to mention one thing. I have on me the pass given to me by the university students union which was made out on 31 October. It was only when we had gained victory that we started organizing. During the fight we did not know who were the leaders of the students at each university. When Nagy said that representatives of the students should go to him we realized that we had no leaders. It was then that we organized a committee of ten people to take care of the various administrative matters that arose. I do not want to state my registration number because I could be recognized by that but it is one of the very early ones so it was made out on the first day and this was only 31 October.

The organization of the first military unit of the university called Sandor Petoefi was started only after 1 November. Until then people only had the arms which were given to them in the streets. On the 26th we organized a continuous monitoring service at the Technical University so that we could hear foreign broadcasts and get news of what was happening in Hungary. It was from Radio Free Europe that we learned that at Győr, Pecs and Miskolc Workers' Councils had been formed and that their fundamental principles were identical with ours even though the points might be somewhat different. At the same time we sent motorcyclists from the students' centre in Barnabas Street to make contact with these groups. The organization therefore started long after the outbreak of the revolution and when its aims were reached, or nearly reached.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that you are able if necessary to stay until Tuesday?

WITNESS PPP (interpretation from Hungarian): For me the most important thing is help you in your work and all my personal considerations are secondary to that. If you wish me to stay I will make an effort to do so.



After the demonstration at the Bem statue I returned home and during supper listened to Geroe's speech. Nobody could believe this was possible but the Geroe speech made such an impression on me-- the pacifist who agreed with everybody, disliked fighting with anybody and was always able to get on well with his colleagues and friends-- that I lost my patience to such an extent that I banged the knives on the table and broke a plate. My wife and I left the house because we could not stand it and everybody seemed to have had the same reaction because they were all out in the streets. I went to the Parliament building and then to the Stalin statue, where I arrived immediately after it had been thrown down. While I was there a young man came along on a motorcycle shouting that the AVH were shooting people at Sandor Street. Ten metres from me there was a truck holding people with a gramophone on which they were playing Hungarian patriotic songs. Many of us ran to this truck and stopped the gramophone. We shouted into the megaphone that the AVH were shooting at the people in Sandor Street and that we must go to the radio building. This was of course the most stupid advice--that an unarmed crowd should go to a place where the AVH were shooting at the people--but everybody got on to the trucks and went over to Sandor Street, and I went by car with my wife. We were fired upon for the first time just as we were turning into Sandor Street. The car was shot at and my wife's nerves gave way so we had to leave and go home. As a peaceful man I did not at that time want to participate in this fighting because I did not approve of it, and I stayed at home for one and a half days. I was afraid of a nation-wide tragedy and I admit I was rather scared so I gave in to my wife and stayed at home. After this day and a half when offensive remarks and appeals were being made on the radio I could not stand it any more. I left the house and for the first time had arms and hand grenades in my hands. I went through the psychological transformation that I imagine all the people went through and which made even the most peaceful people, including the children, rise up.

I then participated in the work of the central committee of students at Barnabas Street and if you are interested I shall be delighted to give further details of this. Meanwhile I want to make one more statement, which is that this miraculous transformation occurred, in my view, because the people were faced by a clearcut choice. You were red or you were white; you were Russian or you were Hungarian; you were good or you were bad; you had a Christian outlook or you were a member of a devilish atheistic regime.



This is borne out even in the obtaining of arms. I can testify as to how an AVH officer opened a munitions depot. On the evening of the 23rd a friend of mine went to this munitions depot and said to the AVH officer, "I have known you all my life but if you do not open the depot I will shoot you." The AVH man opened it and the civilians were able to take out the contents. It was a choice between free determination or terror and that is why the Hungarian people were united as never before in history, not even against the Turks.

My statement that the revolution broke out spontaneously and that events unfolded themselves in this way could be illustrated by further details but I will not go on unless you ask me to. I would however like to mention one thing. I have on me the pass given to me by the university students union which was made out on 31 October. It was only when we had gained victory that we started organizing. During the fight we did not know who were the leaders of the students at each university. When Nagy said that representatives of the students should go to him we realized that we had no leaders. It was then that we organized a committee of ten people to take care of the various administrative matters that arose. I do not want to state my registration number because I could be recognized by that but it is one of the very early ones so it was made out on the first day and this was only 31 October.

The organization of the first military unit of the university called Sandor Petoeffi was started only after 1 November. Until then people only had the arms which were given to them in the streets. On the 26th we organized a continuous monitoring service at the Technical University so that we could hear foreign broadcasts and get news of what was happening in Hungary. It was from Radio Free Europe that we learned that at Győr, Pécs and Miskolc Workers' Councils had been formed and that their fundamental principles were identical with ours even though the points might be somewhat different. At the same time we sent motorcyclists from the students' centre in Barnabas Street to make contact with these groups. The organization therefore started long after the outbreak of the revolution and when its aims were reached, or nearly reached.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that you are able if necessary to stay until Tuesday?

WITNESS PPP (interpretation from Hungarian): For me the most important thing is help you in your work and all my personal considerations are secondary to that. If you wish me to stay I will make an effort to do so.



The CHAIRMAN: I ask you because the next witness we would like to hear also has information of great interest to us and he cannot stay longer. We should therefore like to hear him before the end of this sitting, so if you could stay we should be very glad.

WITNESS PPP (spoke in English): I should like to be heard on Monday morning if possible as I have to go to Zurich at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I think the members of the Committee will have some questions to ask and it would be very difficult to finish today. I am very grateful that you can stay and we will continue on Monday morning at ten o'clock. I thank you for your statement and for the document you have made available to the Committee.

Witness PPP withdraw.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Witness QQQ took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome and I understand you have agreed to make your statement in fifteen minutes. I will ask you to adhere to this time limit because the Committee has a great deal of work to do. Will you please begin.

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): I was born in Tokaj on 3 June 1929. My parents were agricultural workers. I went to high school for some time but for political reasons was unable to continue my studies and became a car driver.

In connection with deportations I should like to give the following information. We received a telephone communication from the western railway station of Budapest to the effect that a train full of deportees was coming through Miskolc and that we should help to free them. This was at about 11.30 p.m. The train was guarded by eighteen Russian soldiers and we killed many of those, including an eighteen-year-old boy. We forced the railway trucks open and there were altogether 120 workers and students, including three girls. One of the girls said that she was deported because she was not willing to submit to a Russian officer.



(Witness QQQ)

They said the AVH people dressed in civilian clothes had put them on trucks saying they were taking them to work. The areas surrounding Miskolc supported the revolution by distributing milk and foodstuffs to the fighters. I can testify that the revolution was indeed a spontaneous one. It was not organized, but was the consequence of Soviet actions, because the Hungarian people could no longer look on at what was being done. Thousands of people died in the deportation camp at Recsk and we were revolted by the fact that hand grenades had been used against unarmed people, and machine guns turned on them, so that many were killed. There was an officer, a captain, who gave orders to his soldiers to disarm the AVH, but this was unnecessary because the crowd stormed the local Rudolf barracks. The police took off their uniforms and attacked the AVH themselves. All this happened at Miskolc and Mezőkövesd and the places around.

There was a Russian unit stationed in Miskolc which had a huge quantity of arms and an ammunition depot in a nearby mountain as well as some large containers of which I do not know the contents. These Russian soldiers went over to the side of the revolution. Naturally the Soviets did not like that, and when they made their second onslaught the troops were completely new and of Mongolian origin. This second lot looted the stores -- I myself saw them loot a brewery -- and most of them were completely illiterate. They could not read or write and did not know where they were, they did not compare to thirteen-year old Hungarian boys.

The revolution was joined by the mine workers -- because it is a mining town -- coal workers, and railway workers, as well as students. The army and police gradually armed the civilian population with Soviet arms called Katuska and with hand grenades. The same thing was done at Mezőkövesd. Three kilometres from Mezőkövesd there was a Russian unit with ammunition including mortars, and ample food supplies. The students of Mezőkövesd went close to this unit and succeeded in destroying it in an hour. After that armoured Russian troops from Miskolc came and razed the church and the schools of Mezőkövesd to the ground. In my opinion the Soviet soldier is not an ordinary soldier.

As I am limited to fifteen minutes I will conclude my statement there.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Are there any questions?



Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): You say you rescued some people from a train. How many people were in the rescue party?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): We were thirty and we had among us a former army officer called Laszlo Kovacs who organized the attack and was in command. We were on both sides of the railroad and the train was stopped.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many Russian soldiers were there?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Eighteen. There were two Russian officers, one was in front of the engine, and the other amongst the soldiers.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many of them were killed?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Seven died, four were wounded, and we took them by bus to hospital. Some of them we handed over to the army stationed at the Rudolf barracks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What happened to the rest? Did they run away?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): The rest were made prisoner and these were handed over to the army unit at the Rudolf barracks.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Whereabouts is Miskolc?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): It is north of Budapest.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What is the approximate population of that area?



WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Approximately four hundred thousand.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Was there heavy fighting in Miskolc?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, it lasted two days. One battle was very heavy fighting and the others smaller clashes.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many Hungarians were killed in Miskolc?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Approximately eighty altogether, because when we occupied the radio station of Borsod Province at Lilafuered we had a few losses there.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many Russians were killed in the Miskolc area?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): I should say about two hundred and fifty.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Did you destroy any Russian tanks?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, approximately fourteen of them when we took the Borsod radio building which was defended by Soviets and AVH. At Zsolca eight or nine more were destroyed, but still their force was so overwhelming that we were unable to destroy all of them.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions?



Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I have heard your statement which is very interesting and I would like some further details. I understand that a train of political prisoners headed for exile crossed the zone where you were. Who gave you the information?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): We had a telephone call from a railway worker from the East station of Budapest to a railroad worker at Miskolc. The train consisted of several cars, the first three contained scrap metal, the next part consisting of three cars contained deportees, and then there were two cars which were the Russian soldiers' quarters, and the rest were used for mining equipment. The railroad men knew that we were armed and were on strike, so it was to us they came with the information about this train. Uncle Laci was the oldest among us and organized us, and we agreed that the railroad men should not let the train into the station. Signals were put down and the train would stop outside the station and when it stopped we would enter into action, and that is what happened.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): Do you know of any other groups of people deported or exiled who were taken under the guard of Russian troops towards countries outside Hungary?



WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I was a bus-driver and therefore had the opportunity of going to other places, such as Nyiregyhaza and Mateszalka. At the frontier at Mateszalka, about twenty kilometres from Zahony, the railroad is larger and it was there that the railroad workers liberated people from the train. We also learnt at Mateszalka that transports of deportees, coming from Debrecen in the direction of the Romanian border had been attacked by the railroad workers, who had torn up the tracks and freed the deportees. The news had already been telephoned along the line that there were several engines drawing the train. The Russian guards adopted this trick in order to avoid being killed by sabotage; if the tracks had been mined the engines would be blown up and not the railroad cars. An old peasant who was bringing flour to Nyiregyhaza to Miskolc told me that railroad workers had liberated deportees from a train between Nyiregyhaza and a town at the Romanian border.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You said that there was heavy fighting in Miskolc on one day, and that on another day there was a battle which was not so fierce. Can you remember the dates of the heavy fighting and the dates of the less heavy fighting at Miskolc?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): The heavy fighting took place about the 28th or 29th and lasted for two days. It started after Geroe's speech on the 23rd when the students and workers of Budapest held a demonstration and attacked the radio building. On the 24th and 25th demonstrations in favour of the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the dissolution of the camps took place in Miskolc. I think it was about the 25th or 26th when a peaceful demonstration was held in the evening in which the miners and workers took part and did not report for work. On the 26th, at about midnight, the AVH collected twenty or twenty-five students, put them in trucks, and drove away. At about 7 o'clock in the evening of the 27th a crowd, carrying torches, started a demonstration demanding the liberation of the students. A major in the AVH called Jozsef Gati, his young brother who was a first lieutenant, and his wife announced over a microphone that the students would be released. The next day a crowd collected in front of the AVH building and elected a ten-member committee to enter the building and see if the students were still there. When they tried to force an entry the wife of Jozsef Gati and his young brother



threw hand-grenades from a third floor window into the street. One of the grenades fell on a horse which was standing there and one fell into a group of girl students. I was unable to count the dead. The Rudolf barracks were just opposite that building and a major of the armed forces there gave the order to disarm the AVH. With the aid of his troops we were able to surround the AVH building and then the main fighting started and continued until the very last minute. This was about the 27th or 28th -- I am not exactly sure of the day.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Could you tell us on which date the fighting took place at Nyiregyhaza?

WITNESS QQQ (interpretation from Hungarian): That was two days before the events which occurred at Miskolc. There were no major clashes and only one or two AVH men were hanged but the Soviet insignia were torn down. At Satoraljaujhely it took the crowd half a day to remove an enormous Soviet memorial; I was an eye-witness of the event. There were smaller clashes in Satoraljaujhely. Laszlo Pap who was a doctor at the hospital there gathered together about 600 students, armed them and went into hiding in the mountains. From them I heard that Soviet heavy artillery and armoured vehicles were drawn up along the whole length of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak border -- Satoraljaujhely is on the border of Czechoslovakia.

The CHAIRMAN: There are no further questions. On behalf of the Committee I thank you very much for your testimony.

Witness QQQ withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the meeting is adjourned the Secretary wishes to address the Committee.

Mr. JORDAN (Secretary): I merely wished to inform the members of the Committee that the backlog of verbatim records was delivered to their hotels this morning. Since this is rather heavy documentation I presumed the members would



(Mr. Jordan)

prefer to receive it in their hotels. I mention this in order that the documents should not go astray.

The CHAIRMAN: The meeting stands adjourned until ten o'clock Monday morning.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.