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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGARY

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SIXTIETH MEETING (CLOSED)

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Thursday, 11 April 1957, at 3.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Alsing ANDERSEN

(Denmark)

VVV Kadar in 1953 a friend of Nagy..  
3 Soviet officers by name join immigrants on 26 Oct  
Worse terrorism now than Under Radosi. Soviet arrest  
8 executed from 60 seized in Győr. Many examples  
Orders appear milder than ST but in fact worse  
WWW Buda Central Workers Comm. Workers forced Comm. to be  
extreme meetings with Kadar. The Gen. Strike  
difference with T.Us. W. Communist objectives prima-  
rily economic.



The CHAIRMAN: The first item on our agenda is consideration of the report. I call upon the Rapporteur.

Mr. SHANN (Australia) (Rapporteur): I have very little to add to what I said the other day. The members of the Committee will have received document 12, revision 1, produced first in Spanish, then in French and then in English and they will notice that the remarks which they made the other day have been reflected in the revised document. My own view is that it is not necessary at this time for us to engage in further discussion of this document. The members of the Committee the other day were able to give quite a comprehensive account of the manner in which they expect the report to be handled.

I would be grateful if members of the Committee within the next week or ten days, or even longer, on reading and considering this document should feel that they have views which they wish to express, might find it possible to let me have them in writing in New York so that these views may be carefully taken into account in the preparation of the final draft which the Committee will consider in New York. If they have comments on this document I should be grateful if they would address them to me at the Australian Mission to the United Nations in New York.

I do not think there is anything else I wish to say about this document or indeed about the drafting of the final report but if members of the Committee would like to make any further comments at this time they would, of course, be helpful.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no further comments on this outline of the report. I only want to congratulate once more the Rapporteur and the Secretariat on the excellent basis of the report.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): I have no particular observations to make on this detailed version of the draft of the report except one little question about which I have spoken to the Rapporteur which concerns Chapter III. In this Chapter there are statements of views by the Governments of the USSR and Hungary concerning the events in Hungary since 23 October. It is then a question in the report of the position of the Kadar Government but it seems to me that there is another position of the Government of Hungary which merits particular treatment and that is the position of the Government of Hungary between 23 October and 4 November. Therefore, I think there are two positions of the Government of Hungary, one between



(Mr. Slim)

23 October and 3 November, to be precise, until the date of the Declaration of Neutrality and until the notifications to United Nations, which marks a certain period during which the Government of Hungary requested intervention by the United Nations. The second part concerns the position of the Hungarian Government from the 4th onwards -- that is the Kadar Government. I think it is very important that in Chapter III both of those positions should be defined precisely. That is the only comment I have. I am completely in accord with the Rapporteur and I think that he is probably in accord with my comment on this.

Mr. SHANN (Australia) (Rapporteur): Yes, I am in accord with the representative of Tunisia. I am just a little worried about this Chapter of the report which will have to be very carefully drafted in order to make it impossible for anyone to take extracts from this Chapter and pretend that these are the views of the Committee itself and if we are able -- and I think we are able -- to incorporate in this Chapter certain other view which can properly be attributed to a Hungarian Government at a particular time I think it will make a deceitful process of this kind less easy.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I am in accord with the Rapporteur and what he has said. My delegation believes that the document we have before us expresses our considered views. In the near future on behalf of my delegation I will submit to the Rapporteur their views.

As to Part A I do not know whether the explanation is sufficiently clear as to the facts of intervention, as to the political independence of Hungary and as to the fundamental human rights. Are we going to concern ourselves solely with intervention and the situation which has resulted from this intervention or are we also going to concern ourselves with the present situation as well, that is, as to the government which exists today in Hungary? In other words, are we going to keep strictly to the events of the past at least in so far as the question of human rights is concerned?

It seems to me that the opinion of the Rapporteur is perfectly satisfactory but I think it is necessary for me to have sufficient time to study this document and after a profound and careful study of it I can then give my comments on it to the Rapporteur. Before we sign and agree to this report I think it is necessary that we should have more time to study this. I would like to say that the document before us is perfectly satisfactory but I think we should re-examine it again in New York. I am sure my



(Mr. Rodriguez-Fabregat)

delegation will give the Rapporteur concrete comments but I do not think that they will entail any material changes in the document which we have before us.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): I am in general agreement with the outline of the report. I would like to congratulate the Rapporteur and the Secretariat on the very excellent work they have done in this direction. If there are any particular comments I wish to make I think there is ample time left for them.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I have one further question on the matter of procedure. In order to be able to make our plans I should like to know if the Committee intends to occupy itself with the report during the time we still have left tomorrow and on Monday? Has this been decided? I would like to have enough time to study this document and I would like to know if the work which we have still to do in Geneva and the time available will include more time spent on the document we have before us or whether we are going to use the time remaining at our disposal mainly for hearing witnesses? I would like to have this information if I may as it would be very useful to my delegation and would assist them in making their plans.

Mr. SHANN (Australia) (Rapporteur): It had not been my expectation that it would be necessary for us to have a further discussion on the report here in Geneva. The representative of Uruguay will understand that this document is by no means the report itself. It is an outline of the sort of thing that we have felt is likely to be included in the final report. The final report will be a very much more expanded document than the one we have in front of us this afternoon.

I feel that we cannot at this stage profitably spend very much more time discussing the outline if that outline is generally -- I say, generally -- satisfactory to the members of the Committee. The opportunity is going to arise in New York for as much discussion of the actual contents of the report itself as any member of the Committee may wish and I certainly do not anticipate that we are going to be able to dispose of the text of a very long report within one or two or even three or four meetings -- it will take some time.

What I have suggested is that we should not here in Geneva take up more time on the discussion of the substance of the report but that we should finish hearing the witnesses and complete our work in Geneva with that. If the representative of Uruguay -- or any other representatives -- after mature consideration think there are certain things



(Mr. Shann)

they would like to say about the outline of this report -- that is, about the structure of the report -- I would hope that we can perhaps meet together in New York over lunch and talk about it there or perhaps they would let me have their comments in writing before we have progressed too far with the drafting of the final document.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I would not like the Rapporteur to misunderstand me. The only thing I wanted to ask was on a question of procedure because I wish to plan my return to New York in such a way that I shall not ignore the fundamental tasks of the Committee. That is the only reason I asked whether the Committee would be considering the report here in Geneva. I think we can use our time in Geneva to better advantage by hearing witnesses and when we get to New York we can give our observations or our ideas which we may have to the Rapporteur in New York. I would like to say that I shall have the honour to present to the Rapporteur certain observations as to each chapter and all these comments which I think will be in accord with the general lines of the report.

The only thing I wished to ascertain was that we will not consider the report further in Geneva, and I understand correctly that we will use the rest of our time in Geneva in hearing witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN: After listening to the remarks of the Rapporteur I understand that is the case. I also understand that the Committee have unanimously accepted the procedure proposed with regard to our future work. That being so we will now proceed to hear the witness.



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

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome. I understand you have been a member of Parliament and a member of the Smallholders' Party. Will you please begin your statement?

WITNESS VVV (spoke in English): First allow me to express the gratitude of my nation and of the revolution committee for the long, excellent and difficult work that you have done to help my home. I know that your work will be of great help in saving Hungary from violations of human rights. I am sure that the gratitude of the Hungarian nation will follow you.

Let me introduce myself in a few words. I am forty-five years old and was born in Budapest. My father was an historian and a statistician. I was educated in Budapest and began to occupy myself with politics at the end of the 1930's. (Interpretation from Hungarian): At this time I became a member of the Smallholders' Party and took part in anti-German resistance movements. The Germans arrested me. At the end of the war I was Parliamentary representative of the Smallholders' Party and became a member of the Legal Committee of Budapest. In 1948 I was arrested and I spent almost seven years in captivity. After release I took part in various political discussions in the revolution, in the organization of which, on political and military lines, I took part. As a consequence I had to flee from my home. While I was away, in November and December, I tried to place documents at the disposal of the Committee and took part in the preparation of the work of the Committee in Vienna.

I would now like to tell you briefly and concisely some of the things that I went through personally, and I propose to mention certain episodes which show how Soviet intervention from 1945 onwards harmed human rights and Hungarian independence, and how strong the Soviet influence was.

I would first like to refer to the events which changed the entire Hungarian social order. In 1945, as a consequence of the land reform of that year, the Smallholders' Party, of which I was a member, which had been fighting for land reform, for the breaking up of large landed estates, since 1930, still pursued this programme, and with other parties worked out a plan of land reform which would



(Witness VVV)

in truth have satisfied all points of view and all demands. In January 1945 the Hungarian National Committee of Debrecen started working on this land reform. Geza Losonczi and Jozsef Revai, for instance, who were members of the Communist Party, did not want to carry out such excesses as were later ordered by Marshal Voroshilov and carried into effect. At the end of January 1945 Voroshilov gave orders to the Government that it must act strictly on the basis of Soviet conceptions without any amendment, and that this must be the basis of Hungarian land reform. As the enactment of the proposals in Parliament would be lengthy the Hungarian Parliament had to carry the land reform into effect on the basis of the Russian orders.

I would like to sketch for you briefly the creation and organization of the AVH. In December 1944, in Debrecen where the temporary committee was in session, the Hungarian political police were set up. They started a training course in which twenty-two people took part. It was laid down as a guiding principle that only Communist Party members could be appointed to key positions in the AVH. It was at that time that Gabor Peter, Istvan Timar, Andras Villanyi, Istvan Tompa, Ferenc Pal, Gyula Princz and Zoltan Sikola were members of that training course. At the beginning of February Villanyi and Timar came to Budapest before these people who organized the AVH. Despite its endeavours the Smallholders' Party could not get any of its men into the AVH. Andras Villanyi, who was a class-mate of mine at school, told me that. I was in fairly close contact with him and he said that the Hungarian police had strict orders that only Communist Party members should be able to take part. Andras Villanyi was also amongst those who were executed later during the Rajk trials.

One of the most serious consequences of Soviet interference was that after the elections of 1945 they took out of the hands of the Smallholders' Party the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior. Some details of this may be of interest. The question has been put many times, "How was it possible that a majority party, which received 59 per cent of the votes in a free election, lost the most important portfolio, that of the Ministry of the Interior?". The Smallholders' Party, which obtained 59 per cent of the votes on 4 November 1945, naturally wanted to keep the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior, and named Bela Kovacs Minister of the Interior. The Communists apparently assented to this.



(Witness VVV)

The results were announced on Sunday night, and everyone generally knew them. On Monday and Tuesday it seemed that there would be no barrier to Bela Kovacs becoming Minister of the Interior. On Tuesday morning the newspaper of the Smallholders' Party published on its first page the speech of the then British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, in which it italicized a few sentences which said, "We hope that some light will be thrown upon conditions behind the Iron Curtain as the result of the elections, and that the position of the West will be improved in consequence". This quotation by the official newspaper of the Smallholders' Party of the words of the British Foreign Minister served as an excuse for Rakosi to rush to Voroshilov and announce to him that the Smallholders' Party had now come out in its true colours and that the Smallholders' Party could no longer be allowed to keep the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior. That same night, Tuesday night, there was a small banquet at which Bela Kovacs was to be received as the new Minister of the Interior. The dinner was timed for 8.30 p.m. The 274 representatives of the Smallholders' Party were there, but Bela Varga was the only member of the leadership present. The other members of the Party leadership — Zoltan Tildy, Ferenc Nagy, Pater Balogh and Bela Kovacs were not there. 8.30 p.m., 9 p.m., 9.30 p.m. passed, and at about 9.45 p.m. these four party leaders came in in a very bad mood; they were noticeably very depressed. They sat down and exchanged one or two words with Bela Varga who stood up and said, "I ask all those present not to drink a toast to Bela Kovacs as Minister of the Interior." From that single sentence we knew there was great trouble at hand. There was a profound silence in the room. We felt that perhaps with those words the catastrophe was about to begin. After about half an hour a Captain Wolf appeared; he was the secretary and interpreter of Voroshilov. He called the party leaders to him, and next day we found out that Voroshilov insisted that the Smallholders' Party must decline the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior; if it did not, three threats would be used.



(Witness VVV)

First of all it would not release Hungarian prisoners from the Soviet Union, secondly it would allow Soviet troops to loot all Hungarian towns, and thirdly it would increase the reparations that Hungary had to pay to Russia.

The Smallholders' Party apparently was in power because it held the three most important positions -- head of the State, Prime Minister and President of Parliament -- but power was actually exercised by three other organs -- the AVH, that is the political police, the Economic Council and the trade unions, and the leaders of these three organs were all members of the Communist Party. At the end of 1946 the Minister of the Interior, Rajk, was out-voted during a debate in Parliament. According to parliamentary procedure he should have resigned. Not only did he not do so but Sviridov, the Soviet member of the Control Commission, called the leaders of the Smallholders' Party together and announced that if such a thing happened again he would himself see that Parliament was dissolved.

At the end of 1946 the first "showcase" trial started, at the end of which the Bela Kovacs conspiracy was announced. Then Kruhina, one of the political and military leaders of the committee, was abducted by the Russians. He was going to inform Premier Ferenc Nagy of the plan they were preparing for the sabotaging of the Smallholders' Party. They tried to lure Ferenc Nagy to them by means of a fictitious telephone call and his car was stopped by two AVH men and two Russian officers who shot at him. They thought he was dead but later he succeeded in dragging himself to a place where there were some people and eventually got to the West.

When this happened General Zamercev, the military commander of the city, again threatened the leaders of the Smallholders' and Peasants' Parties that if they tried to do anything about the Kruhina matter there would be serious consequences for the whole population of Budapest. About two months later, when the Immunity Committee of the Hungarian Parliament would not give up Bela Kovacs, he was abducted from his apartment by Soviet soldiers on 17 March and brought before a Soviet court.

In the middle of 1947 the leaders of the Smallholders' Party were forced to dissent. They became Soviet prisoners and the Smallholders' Party became transitionally a collaboration party and the Hungarian Independence Party, of which I was a member, was formed under the leadership of Zoltan Pfeiffer.



(Witness VVV)

I would like to relate one characteristic episode. Lajos Dinnyes was Hungarian Prime Minister and on several occasions he told our party that we should give no information to the Western Powers and should try to dissuade the American, English and French representatives from sending any memoranda or notes to the Hungarian Government because the consequences of any Western communications would be that the Russians would multiply their demands.

On 31 August 1947 there were new elections in Hungary. On the orders partly of Zamercev and partly of a Soviet tactical officer whose name I do not know, blue slips were distributed. There were 600,000 blue slips in circulation and 520,000 of them were given as false votes for the Communist Party, and 80,000 for the Peasants' Party. It was not hard to establish, particularly in the provinces, how the voting on the blue slips was going because on all the main roads trucks were going from one place to another carrying voters with blue slips, and the votes for the Communist Party and the Peasants' Party were multiplied in all those places.

On 3 November 1947 the leader of the Hungarian Independence Party received the following threat from Russian sources through Dinnyes and Rakosi: "If Zoltan Pfeiffer does not leave the country within forty-eight hours he will suffer the same fate as Bela Kovacs."

At the end of 1947 after the Independence Party had been dissolved I was in contact with several members of the American Legation and as a consequence of this I was arrested in 1948. As regards the period of my arrest and detention I would like to speak of the few days when I was in a Soviet prison. I was in the political military department and then at No. 60 Andrassy Street undergoing interrogation and I went through all the tortures about which the Committee has no doubt heard. From there I went to the Attorney-General's department and then to the place where Russian interrogation was carried out. This was at Istenhegyi Street in Buda -- a villa in which the subterranean garages were used as cells. I spent five days there under very bitter circumstances. The Soviet lieutenant-colonel was continually asking me what items of information I had handed over to the American Legation and American representatives. Naturally I had done no such thing and had had no information at my disposal, but when I told him this he was not convinced. At the end of the third day he changed the questions -- or perhaps the interpreter had been interpreting them wrongly -- and asked me what the American Legation had wanted me



(Witness VVV)

to find out. The position was very serious and I had to find some solution because I was on the verge of a breakdown. I started to talk and told them fictitious things which the Americans, I said, had asked me to find out. The lieutenant-colonel's face brightened; he started taking notes and their treatment of me changed immediately. He personally took seventeen pages of notes and at the end of the fifth day, when the record was complete, I breathed a sigh of relief that this interrogation was over. Suddenly he stood up and the woman interpreter stood up and motioned me to do the same. I had no idea what kind of ceremony was going on. The Soviet lieutenant-colonel then started to read the record in Russian. After the second sentence I said in German that I was convinced it was correct and there was no need to bother reading it. He flew into a terrific rage and asked if I thought this was a Fascist court. "Do you think we want you to sign a record without having it read to you?" he said. He read the whole seventeen pages and then I had to sign it thirty-four times — at the top and the bottom of each page.

Soviet ideology made its influence felt in the prisons. In the collecting prison, for instance, a separate department was set up for the artists who had been captured and the statistics of this department showed that 128 pictures and statues of Lenin, 191 pictures and statues of Stalin and 108 pictures and statues of Rakosi had to be prepared in one year. This was in 1952 and all the artists worked on this task.

I would like to mention one other thing. There was a translation bureau which worked first at the prison in Vac and then at the collecting prison. In 1951 a French technical book was brought to the Vac translation bureau with instructions that it must be translated immediately. The French translators accepted the job and said it would take two months. It was a 500-page technical document, mostly radio and news reports. The translation was completed and two years passed. In 1953 the commander or his deputy came in to the translation bureau at the collecting prison bringing a Russian book. He asked who the Russian translators were and among others there were Lajos Csedi, who is now the Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, and Peter Mod, who is the Hungarian delegate to the United Nations. A third was Peter



(Witness VVV)

(Witness VVV)

Balaban who is still in Budapest. The officers said this was a very important and significant Russian work which had to be translated very quickly. They all looked at the book and Lajos Csedi said it would take three months. He was told it had to be done quickly so they said they would not undertake the work. Finally however, Peter Balaban picked up the book and said he guaranteed it would be done in three weeks. The others gaped at him and asked how he could say such a thing but he repeated that they would finish it in three weeks. The prison officer left leaving the book with the translators, when Balaban told the others it would not last them three weeks but only one. "I translated the French original work at Vac" he said, "and we still have a copy here." They found the copy and it turned out that this so-called Soviet technical work was exactly the same to the last word as the original French technical book which had been translated in 1951.



(Witness VVV)

I was in the prison with most of the captured leaders of the Hungarian parties. It might be interesting if I quote one single statement of Janos Kadar. At the beginning of 1953 various reports got into us in the otherwise strictly security prison, from which we concluded that Imre Nagy would soon find himself a political prisoner. We heard that Matyas Rakosi made a sharp attack against Nagy and called him a Trotskyist. Janos Kadar said that if Rakosi called someone a Trotskyist that person would within a short time wear convict's clothes, and that he was sorry for poor comrade Imre Nagy because, said Kadar, he was a good man and a good Communist. Kadar added that perhaps he had agreed with Nagy best of all, and that when he was captured Nagy had tried so much to release him. Kadar made this declaration in January 1953.

In May 1955 I was released and naturally had to behave very cautiously as everyone did after being released from prison since all releases were only temporary, on parole. Small groups were organized among the Smallholders' Party, meeting at apartments, at which the members of the various parties held discussions. We tried to find out, naturally under cover, what was the general feeling of the Hungarian people. During many months we put questions to various sections of Hungarian society -- to workers, peasants and intellectuals -- and we asked them whether in the event of a free election they would expect the Communist Party to get a majority vote. Almost without exception the answer was that the Communist Party would get about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent or 4 per cent of the vote. We also asked them whether in the event of a free election they would estimate the percentage of votes to be obtained by an extreme Right party. A poll of public opinion concluded that an extreme Right party would not get more than 3,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 4 per cent. This confirmed our conviction that the Hungarian people did not want extremes on either side and did not want a dictatorship.

As to the psychological and moral conditions which brought about the revolution perhaps I could give you a list of the factors which led the widest sections of the Hungarian people to hate the Communist Party. First of all, the lack of any national character; the lack of freedom of religion; the lack of a feeling of liberty; complete economic bankruptcy and the extremely low standard of living. Hungarian economy under bureaucratic control was and is so far behind that the leaders before and after Rakosi have not been able to improve it. This is due to the substance of the Moscow-directed economic principles.



(Witness VVV)

It made Communism very much hated and opposed in Hungary, and when the rights of the Hungarian aristocracy were stopped by the government before 1945, the Communist Party set up its own aristocracy and exceeded the rights and privileges of the old one. One of the things that made the lives of hundreds of thousands of Hungarians most bitter was the overworking, which also contributed to their hatred of Communism and led to the explosion of the revolution. The most important factor of the Hungarian people's feeling against Communism was the lack of security and the lack of the rule of law.

In September 1956 the former Smallholders' organization and especially the members of their youth organization sent representatives to call on me asking that I should come to one of the meetings of the democratic students' group called the DISZ. At first I did not understand what I should be doing at such a meeting of a typically Communist youth organization, but I was persuaded to go, so I went to Boeszoermenyi Street in the twelfth district where they were already expecting me. Young people who participated in the revolution led me into the room. This room had pictures of Marx and Lenin like all other public meeting rooms, and also the Red Star. I waited expectantly to see what would happen. A few moments later they suggested I should go into the next room, so I went with some other people and we exchanged a few words after which they suggested we should return to the big meeting room. On my return there I was astonished to see all the Marxist insignia and all the decorations of a Communist character that had been there a few moments ago had disappeared. The Red flag had been replaced by the Hungarian flag and instead of the pictures of Lenin and Marx, they had pictures of Kossuth, Szechenyi and Deak.

This Hungarian youth movement risked the fact that the wrong people would learn about these activities and for several weeks held their meetings of a patriotic nature when in each case the foreign insignia disappeared from the walls and were replaced by those closer to their hearts. This was the youth whom they had tried to educate for ten years in a foreign ideology. The Committee probably has much more data on this than most of us have who come from Hungary. The changing of Hungarian youth towards the Communist ideology was in the hands partly of Hungarian teachers but I should just like to mention one case. A woman teacher called Mrs. Elemer Vamos, sixty-five years of age, when she saw that what she had to teach was incompatible with her national feeling, and felt she could not bring up youngsters in a foreign ideology, committed suicide.



(VWV 5300312)

(Witness VWV)

I should like to make a few remarks about the outbreak of the revolution and the fourteen points. After the events in Warsaw, on 19 October 1956 the Szeged youth began demonstrations. By the 20th and 21st this had reached Budapest and the university students started drafting first twelve then fourteen then sixteen points which became the programme of the whole Hungarian revolution.

On 21 October Peter Balassa and Istvan Horvath, two young university students, came to see me with a third whose name I do not recall, and brought me a draft of the then fourteen points. They asked my opinion and advice and also the advice of several other people about these. It was at this time that the demand concerning the uranium ore was added to the list of fourteen points. By the evening of the 21st it had become sixteen points, and on the 22nd or 23rd these were printed so that by the forenoon of the 23rd copies were to be had all over the city.

After the demonstration of 23 October and after the first armed clash in front of the radio building the whole Communist State apparatus broke down like a house of cards, because of its internal corruption. Revolutionary organizations were springing up spontaneously everywhere and the people who had organized them took over the direction of the military operations. It is characteristic also that the local organs of the political parties formed themselves into active units much earlier than did the central parties. For example, the second district organization of the Smallholders' Party was already formed on 26 October, and the same thing happened in other parts of Budapest and in the provinces.



However, the central organ of the Smallholders' Party was formed only on 29 October. The same situation existed regarding the Social Democratic Party and the Peasant Party. The Social Democratic Party set up local organizations in sixteen districts of the twenty-two districts of Budapest, not including the local factories and plants. However, their central organization was only set up on 30 October.

One often hears the accusation -- and this originates from the Kadar press -- that the Hungarian revolution was cruel and was not based on humane principles. The press throughout the world published a photograph of an AVH officer who was strung up by his feet, half naked. Please allow me to tell you how this inhuman lynching came about. That officer, whose name I do not know, was not lynched by the revolutionaries but by a man called Jozsef Hudak who had been a member of the Communist political police. He had been dismissed from his job because of his previous wicked deeds; therefore he planned to take his revenge on the AVH. He had also been a member of the Hungarian Nazi Party. During the days of the revolution he was able to bring to fruition his plans of revenge. On the other hand, let me tell you that Janos Szabo, the military commander of the second district -- in which my organization was working -- very often released armed or unarmed AVH men. Frequently we provided escorts for them and gave them a document stating that they had not been a party to any of the cruel deeds which had been performed, thus hoping to avert the wrath of the people. However, the angry mobs sometimes took the law into their own hands; it was difficult to avoid that happening. During those days the leaders of the revolution followed the dictum of Istvan Szechenyi: "There are so few of us Hungarians that even one who kills his own father must be forgiven."

I should like to give you a few facts concerning the behaviour of Soviet troops. On 27 October, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, AVH men, under cover of the Soviet guns, entered a nursery home in Felvincy Street on Rozsa Hill and put all the babies into an unheated room; they killed a nurse who attempted to prevent them from doing that, they took up firing positions in the building and trained their guns on the surrounding streets. They killed the gardener, Jozsef Vica and severely wounded four men. On 28 October Soviet armoured cars surrounded a crowd of people on Endresz Gyorgy Place. They pushed a great many of them up against the walls on the corner of Endresz Gyorgy Place and Varosmajor Street and attempted to crush them to death. Two people, an engineer called Gyula Kovacs, and a twenty-seven year old woman were killed in this way. In the early morning of 28 October Soviet soldiers shot and killed a boy who was passing by carrying water. On 1 November



Soviet armoured units and infantry started to fire on Red Cross cars at Obuda. At the same time Soviet troops entered a house, No. 25 Jablonkai Street, saying that they wanted to make some purchases. They took away goods worth 100,000 forints leaving as payment only 100 forints.

The Hungarian fight for freedom was not the only way by which the will of the people manifested itself; it was, however, a proof of the sinking morale and deteriorating fighting ability of the Soviets. The Committee is no doubt in possession of much data concerning the Soviet soldiers who came over to the side of the freedom fighters; they surrendered their arms and vehicles. In this connection I would like to relate to you three personal experiences. On 26 October, in front of the Hotel Astoria, a Soviet officer called Sergej Govar, hung out a white flag on his vehicle which was leading a unit, saying: "We know that what we do here is inhuman and we know the punishment which will be meted out to us". A Soviet lieutenant called Vilizsin, who is at present, as far as I know, in Yugoslavia told me -- after he had come over to our side -- that he had fought against the Germans during the Second World War and he did not wish to fight against them again. He felt that the revolution would finally result in a fight against the Germans as well. Another Soviet officer called Avingridov who joined us in the fighting in front of the Parliament building when the Soviet armoured cars opened fire on the AVH who were hiding in the Ministry of Agriculture, said to me: "Stalin has already misled us once and we have no assurance that Khrushchev will not do the same thing".

I have tried to give a brief outline of the facts concerning the Soviet intervention in both the military and political sense. There is one further thing I should like to say. The Soviet press and the press of the satellite countries -- including Pravda -- have often said that the Hungarian revolution was prepared and directed from the West. The Hungarian revolution could not have been an organized one; it certainly could not have been organized from the West. It was a spontaneous outbreak, a national movement, and those people who were forced at five minutes past nine o'clock to take up arms in front of the Radio Building had not thought, ten minutes earlier, that they would be fighting and shooting ten minutes later. It seems increasingly likely that the Hungarian revolution was indeed directed, but it was not organized in Hungary and it is even less likely that it was organized from the West. Anyone who had tried to organize a revolution would have been arrested within twenty-four hours. What, then, is the explanation? From the time of the Moscow Congress -- and even before -- the writers' and students' groups had been permitted by the authorities, who had at hand all the means



for deterring them, to pursue their activities. How, then, was it possible for the writers to continue to oppose the Government and the Party when it would have been easy for the authorities to prevent, in twenty-four hours, any subversive activities on the part of the students and writers. It seems to me increasingly likely -- and I have data to prove it -- that the Hungarian fight for freedom was really the result of incitement by the Soviets in Budapest; not only I, but many others, have spoken to Russian officers and soldiers who were transferred, about 10 October, from Northern Siberia to Munkacs.



A Hungarian engineer who was in the Soviet Union during the days preceding the revolution and during the revolution itself has given me data concerning what Soviet units were transferred to the Hungarian border and if we ask ourselves the question "What could have been the political purpose of the Soviet Union in starting a Hungarian revolution" we are forced to answer that the Soviet Union was looking for a military and political excuse to put fifteen to twenty armoured divisions into an area near Yugoslavia.

If the members of the Committee will allow me I should like to give a few details about the present-day Hungarian situation. I must, of course, add that I was not an eye-witness of these events but with your consent I should like to bring to your attention details that have been cross-checked by at least three independent eye-witnesses in each case and I therefore believe that these details are reliable as to the situation in Hungary. This information I should like to give you is unknown in the press at the present time or anywhere else.

According to news arriving from Budapest, terrorism is raging to a greater extent than at any time under Rakosi. Oppression is being ordered and carried out by the Ministry of the Interior throughout the whole country. It is happening in the provinces in the following way. The Hungarian political police with the support of Soviet troops are surrounding a chosen locality. They go into each house to look for counter-revolutionaries. Among people under the age of thirty that they find they are ordered to take a number for that particular locality. For example, from Gyoh, where there are 3,000 to 4,000 people, they had to take sixty people — that was the number their orders specified. Of that number eight were executed.

From Kiskunmajsa they took away thirty people. They killed six of those people, two of whom were girls. The others were put in prison where they were held under the excuse of questioning and suffered great brutalities after which they were sent home. The executions that take place however are carried out the same night as the arrests. The relatives of those people who are executed receive by the next morning a printed note on which only the name of the executed person is written in ink. This note, not only in its contents but in its form, is indeed blood-curdling in its cynicism. This printed note simply states that these people were condemned to death for counter-revolutionary activities and the sentence was duly carried out.



(Witness VVV)

In Budapest this is happening according to streets and according to industrial plants. Here however the new AVH people are working with prepared lists. From the tractor factory of the Red Star on 20 and 21 March twelve workers were taken away. Three were executed under martial law and four were tortured and received such heavy wounds that they had to be put in hospital.

From one of the apartment houses at Moricz Zsigmond Place nine people were taken away by these joint Soviet-Hungarian units. The families of two of these received the notice of execution. One of the persons executed was a sixty-three year old lawyer who was in hospital during the whole time of the revolution, namely, from 1 October to November and could not possibly have had the smallest role in the revolution.

It is, of course, not advisable even to enter the legations of the Western countries. A mother of four children — Mrs. Tibor Kallay — went into one of the Western legations to get a preliminary visa which would allow her and her four children to obtain a Hungarian passport. She wanted to join her husband who was outside Hungary and thought that she could do so as the Kadar Government has officially stated that in such cases they would allow emigration. As she came out of the legation she was asked for her identity but was allowed to go. However, during the night she was taken away from her apartment to the Foe Street prison and there she was beaten for three days. She was asked by what illegal means did she maintain communications with her husband who was in the West. This unfortunate woman showed in vain her letters that came through the post but she was kicked to such an extent and beaten so hard on the feet with rubber truncheons that she could not stand for four days.

There is also the case of Vera Pek, a twenty-two year old university student, who wanted to join her fiancé and asked for a passport. She was beaten to such an extent that she lost her hearing. As the newspapers have stated, the deportations -- or, as the Kadar Government calls them "forced re-allocation of people" -- are again starting in Hungary. On the surface the orders seem to be much milder than the equivalent in 1951. According to these orders people over the age of sixty-one and mothers who have three or more children cannot be transferred to other places. However, it so happened in Budapest that a sixty-two year old man received an order of re-settlement. He should have left Budapest within fifteen days. He



(Witness VVV)

went to the police headquarters of the district and showed evidence that he was sixty-two years old and therefore could not be re-settled according to the order. The police officer took out a false birth certificate from his drawer which showed that he was only fifty-eight years of age and therefore was liable for re-settlement.

With these personal experiences and episodes I have tried to give you a picture of the atrocities that occurred in Hungary in the past and are even now taking place. Further news is being received daily in Austria and I believe that in order to keep the Hungarian question on the agenda it would be advisable for the United Nations to receive regularly news pertaining to the violation of human rights not only in the past but in the present and which will, unfortunately, take place in the future.

With my friends I will try to forward this information to you which will throw light on the events in Hungary. I have finished my statement and I should like to thank the Committee once more for the tireless and very valuable work that they are doing for my country, and to also express my thanks for allowing me to address you.

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I thank you for your very interesting statement. I think there will be some questions.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): The statement which the witness gave us was very complete and very interesting and I think we are all grateful to him for it. I know he will understand that one of the difficulties which we have faced all along, and one of the difficulties which we now face, is the problem of checking the source of our evidence and it is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, for the Committee just to receive communications from people and accept them as something which we should take into account in our report to the General Assembly.

My question to the witness is this: in the latter part of his statement he has given some interesting information about conditions which obtain in Hungary at the moment. He appears to be confident of the accuracy of this information and I would like him to tell us if he could the reason why he is so confident of its accuracy, how he has been receiving this information, and whether he is still receiving it? He will, I am sure, understand that he has to be satisfied with the



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(Mr. Shann)

accuracy of the information and then we have to be satisfied with it. This business of checking all the information that is brought to us is rather long and complicated and if he could tell me something about this I should be very grateful.

of the situation that changed in Hungary in the past and are even now taking place. Further now is being received daily in Austria and I believe that in order to keep the Hungarian question on the agenda it would be advisable for the United Nations to receive regularly news pertaining to the violation of human rights not only in the past but in the present and which will, unfortunately, take place in the future.

With reference I will try to forward this information to you which will throw light on the events in Hungary. I have finished my statement and I should like to thank the Committee once more for the time and very valuable work that they are doing for us and to also express my thanks for allowing me to present you.

On behalf of the Committee I thank you for your very interesting statement. I think there will be some questions.

Mr. Shann (Australia): The statement which the witness gave us was very complete and very interesting and I think we are all grateful to him for it. I know we will understand that one of the difficulties which we have faced all along and one of the difficulties which we now face as the problem of checking the source of our evidence and it is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, for the Committee to get reliable information from people and accept them as something which we should take into account in our report to the General Assembly. It is difficult for the witness to take in the latter part of his statement he has given some interesting information about conditions which exist in Hungary at the present time. It is difficult to be confident of the accuracy of this information and I would like to tell us: he could tell us why he is so confident of his accuracy, how he has been receiving this information, and whether he is still receiving it. He will, I am sure, understand that we have to be satisfied with the



WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): During the last few weeks we have been able to receive news from Hungary in three ways. Firstly, some of it comes from those who either are lawful visitors to the country or come out with a passport and a regular visitor's visa. Many of those people are willing to make statements because they do not want to return to Hungary. Having got out legally they want to stay in the West, and much of the news comes from them. Secondly, we receive news from people who come out to the West with some economic or official mission, and the first place at which they arrive in the West is of course Vienna. Their information naturally embellishes the situation in Hungary because they are representatives of the puppet government of Kadar. One can judge from what they say and from what they do not say, and what they say is the more valuable because they represent officially the point of view of the Kadar Government. Thirdly, news is received from the crews of Hungarian ships sailing on the Danube. If necessary I could mention names, those of course who do not want to return to Hungary. Those are the three sources from which I have had information of the events I have told you about; a person on an economic mission for the Hungarian Government who went to buy cotton, an employee of a Hungarian freighter, and an emigré who does not want to return to Hungary.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I do not think it is of any great relevance to give names in this case, but have you known any of those people in the past, are they people on whose word you think you can rely, and have you heard a sufficient number of reports from different sources about the same matter to make you satisfied that the information you are giving us is entirely accurate?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): As to the first case, that of Mrs Tibor Katai, her husband lives in Vienna and he received a letter written by his wife which was received through one of the seamen coming out of Hungary. This same fact I learned also from a personal friend of mine who asked for a passport to leave Hungary well before the revolution and who came out. She is a doctor who wanted to do some further studies in Vienna. As to the data concerning Soviet oppression, I learned this from a person on a commercial mission from the Hungarian Government,



(Witness VVV)

and I was also told by a member of the crew of a freighter, and by a third person, a man who went to the Hungarian newspaper in Vienna, Becsi Magyar Hirado, and whose editor, Szoelloesi, has appeared before this Committee.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): In other words, you have provided us with a list of information which you have collected from various sources?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes. I should like to add a few words. It is only that information about the period after I left Hungary that I have obtained from other people. What I have given you about the time while I was in Hungary is what I experienced myself or something of which I was an eye-witness.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): On what date did you leave Hungary?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): I left Hungary on 2 November and arrived in Austria on 3 November.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask some questions which are intended to illustrate the political development in Hungary. Was the election of 1947 a normal election after the normal length of life of Parliament, or was it a premature election demanded by the Russian authorities?

WITNESS VVV (spoke in English): These elections were demanded by the Russians and by the Rakosi clique. Elections had been held in 1945, and new elections should have taken place four years later in 1949. (Interpretation from Hungarian): In 1947 the Smallholders' Party had lost their overwhelming majority, and the Communists sought through new elections to fill the major role and to become the majority party. This they succeeded in doing by means of the blue slips which were distributed.



The CHAIRMAN: At the election of 1947 the Communist Party received 21 per cent of the votes with 1,100,000 votes. Out of those how many were the result of the blue slips?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): 520,000.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you explain why it was necessary to yield to the pressure of the Russians and the Communist Party to have these elections?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): The Communist tactics in Hungary were to try to give the appearance of acting constitutionally, and during this time, which was called the turning year, they wanted to carry out their aim by preserving an outward appearance of acting constitutionally. They wanted, however, to transform the set-up into a people's democracy. They were able to reduce the Smallholders' majority by compelling the leadership of the Party -- which, by the way, made a lot of mistakes -- to exclude some of its groups; the first was the Sulyok group with twenty-one deputies, there was another group of fifteen deputies, and another of eight deputies, who were excluded from the Smallholders' Party by Communist and Soviet pressure.

The CHAIRMAN: How are you able to estimate that 500,000 votes out of 1,000,000 were falsifications?

WITNESS VVV (interpretation from Hungarian): The figure was 520,000. The Government printing office printed exactly 1,000,000 blue slips, as the employees reported later. Of those, 400,000 were sent to the Social Democratic Party but these, upon the opposition of Riesz, who was then Minister of Justice, were sent back. Six hundred thousand of the slips remained in circulation and were divided so that 520,000 were given to the Communist Party headquarters and 80,000 given, upon the orders of Erdei, to the Peasant Party. The 400,000 blue slips which the Social Democrats sent back were burned about ten days after the election. The other blue slips, however, were used.

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

Witness VVV withdrew.



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

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Committee I bid you welcome and we would appreciate it very much if you would not take more than half an hour otherwise it will be impossible for the Committee to complete its work today. I understand you are said to be the only member of the Central Workers' Council who has escaped from Hungary, and I ask you to begin your statement.

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I would like to thank you and express my gratitude for being here. As far as I know I am the only member of the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council who is outside Hungary. My account will be brief and indeed I would prefer you to ask me questions. First of all, however, I would like to say something about the organization and working of the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council and I think it is necessary to say a few words about trade unions in order to distinguish between the two organs. What was trade union organization in Hungary, because there is no doubt that there is a great deal of difference between Western trade unions and our trade unions? How were officials elected? The leaders were elected by the Government under the direction of the party, and then the chairman of the committee in each plant formed a leadership from his own friends and cronies. The only election in which the workers could take any part was that of their candidate; only one candidate was put up and he was elected by a show of hands. As regards meetings, they held the sort of meeting they wanted without regard for the wishes of the workers. The work was very one-sided because the trade union only served the employers; it did not serve the interests of the workers at all.

There was no such thing as unemployment because if an employee or a worker lost his job he could go to work for the Building Trades Council which could use every available man. As to changing jobs, I will only say that this was possible but not advisable. The trade union was always on the side of the employers and did only what the party allowed. I have given you a general idea of the life of the workers and I would really prefer it if the members of the Committee would put questions to me on these matters.



(Witness WWW)

The work of the trade union in Hungary was too one-sided. As I see it, in the West there is the employer on one side and the worker on the other and between the two there is the trade union as a directing organ. With us this was not the situation. The employer and the trade union were collaborators and on the other side the workers stood alone and were made to serve the wishes of the trade union and the employers. In the days after the revolution the workers naturally turned away from the trade union and wanted to create something completely different, a body which would not close its ears to their complaints and their demands.

Before coming to the Central Workers' Council let us consider first the local Workers' Councils which were elected spontaneously from the bottom through real elections. In a certain department of a plant the workers would elect a delegate to the central committee of the plant, which in turn elected a chairman. Later the chairmen of the Workers' Councils of larger factories such as the Ganz electrical factory, ship-building factories, radio factories, etc., met and discussed whether it would be a good thing to organize a central committee in order to centralize the direction and the leadership. This was done in the last days of October and later the Imre Nagy Government called attention to the fact that even more Workers' Councils should be formed so that it is true to say that they sprang up like mushrooms.

The real work of the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council began in the days after 4 November by which time the armed revolution had failed. At that time the Central Workers' Council called upon the workers to refuse to work until their eight points, which I am sure the Committee knows about, had been agreed to and until we got a concrete reply from the Government as to the rights of the Central Workers' Council. This was the first thing we hoped to achieve from our negotiations with the Government. We had many discussions with the Government but always without result. Of course, being workers ourselves we maintained continuous contact with our fellow workers in factories and elsewhere, and the opinion of the workers in general was that the Central Workers' Council was not doing a good job because we were holding discussions with a Government we did not recognize. They were perfectly right in this but to whom else could we talk, with whom else could we discuss anything, when the economy of the country and everything else was in the hands of the Government? The Government simply declared that anybody who went on strike



(Witness WWW)

would receive no pay, but what could we do? We had to negotiate with them but the Government refused to take any notice of us. Kadar once asked us who we were. We told him we were members of the Central Workers' Council, to which he replied "Well, if that is who you are, prove it." How could we prove it, we asked, and he said we could prove it by seeing that work was started. We agreed. The factories started working again and all the workers turned up for work, and then we went to negotiate with Kadar again. He laughed in our faces. He said, "Everything is all right now. The workers are working and there is no trouble."

That is when the first 48-hour strike was started by the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council. This strike had an immediate result. The first, and unfortunately the last result was that they acknowledged and recognized us as negotiators. After that we negotiated continuously but without any result. The second 48-hour strike which began on 8 December really had no result either because at 6 a.m. on 9 December they arrested the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council; they liquidated it and declared all such organizations to be illegal.

I have finished my statement and I would like you to put any questions to me that you wish and I will be most happy to answer.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Could you tell me whom you represented on the Central Workers' Council -- who appointed you to the Council?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): The workers sent to the Council representatives elected in the plant. They sent me there to keep them informed of the movements, resolutions and decisions of the Council. When I reported to the Council my comrades put me in the information branch of the Central Workers' Council and that is how I got into the Central Executive Committee.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): We know that the workers sent you to the Central Workers' Council but I was interested to know which workers, what branch of industry or trade? What trade was it?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I was working in a mechanical equipment factory, heavy industry. It was a factory making measuring equipment for heavy industry where there were about 1,200 workers.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I understand that in each industry Workers' Councils were formed, and from those councils representatives were appointed to the Central Workers' Council. Were they appointed directly, or was there a further election by the workers themselves to determine who should go to the Central Workers' Council?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, in every industry the workers elected a Workers' Council, and the workers had a right to delegate representatives to the Central Workers' Council. Naturally, everyone knew very well that the stakes were high and many people did not want to take the responsibility of joining the Central Workers' Council. As we know, many members of the Central Workers' Council are no longer free. The workers elected what we might call a plant council which was given the right by the workers themselves to hold elections and to send delegates to the Central Workers' Council.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Was the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council representative only of industry in the Budapest area, or did you have any representatives on the Central Workers' Council of areas outside Budapest?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately our life was restricted to a very short period of time, so generally I can say it was only the Budapest area and its immediate neighbourhood, for example Csepel, from which delegates of Workers' Councils took part. Our desire and our efforts to broaden the Central Workers' Council to a national basis were barred towards the middle of November when a meeting in the great sports hall was to be held. We obtained verbal permission from Parliament to hold this meeting, but the so-called militia police arm-in-arm with Soviet troops kept us out and would not allow us to hold the meeting. This was to have been a meeting to try to bring in delegates of Workers' Councils from provincial towns, to sit down with us with the object of strengthening ourselves into a national workers' movement.



Mr. SHANN (Australia): You stated that the most important work of the Central Workers' Council actually began after the military phase of the revolution had failed. Do you remember the date on which the Central Workers' Council first met?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I could not give you an exact date because events were happening so quickly that it is almost impossible to remember the dates now. However I can give you one date, but that was not the first meeting. The first serious meeting where councils from larger plants such as shipyards and so on were represented was on about 6 November. That was after 4 November when the armed revolution had been crushed.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did the Central Workers' Council meet while Mr. Nagy was still Prime Minister?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, naturally it met. It was Imre Nagy who called upon the workers to organize themselves, and the sooner the better, but at that time there was no united strength such as was formed after 4 November when we saw we could do no more with weapons, but had to do something with strikes and negotiations, to work with our heads instead of with weapons.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did the Central Workers' Council at any stage express an opinion about the Nagy Government? Did it support the Nagy Government?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): There was so little time that it could not have had any support from us. The organization of parties took up so much time that the Government hardly had any time for us, and we did not have sufficient status to perfect communications with it.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The witness spoke about the eight point demands by the workers about which the Central Workers' Council spoke to Kadar. Could the witness please give us a summary of those eight points?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I am sorry I cannot give them to you point by point but I can give you the substance. The workers stood behind the Workers' Council and their primary demand was the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.



This was in all our demands. Continuing the spirit of the revolutionary youth and the spirit of 23 October we wanted to wipe out the work of the trade unions up to that time, we wanted Workers' Councils to take over the leadership of economic life, we wanted authorization by the Government of the Workers' Councils who would control negotiations with foreign countries on economic matters, and handling of the uranium ore and Hungarian exports, so as to have them paid for at world market rates. Further, and this was very important, a trade union elected by us was to be set up to work in collaboration with us to stop the pillaging and the oppression of the workers which had existed up till then.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): If I understand you correctly, all these demands are really of a general economic nature rather than concerning the interests of the workers. Did the workers have any reason to be discontented before the start of the revolution?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, these demands were all of an economic nature which indicates that the greater Budapest Workers' Council was not indulging in politics. As to whether the workers had economic problems before 23 October, I can answer in one word, they had tremendous difficulties. If the Committee wishes I can give details.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): Was the witness a member of the delegations which had contacts with Kadar?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): In the Central Workers' Council we never decided who was to go into Kadar to discuss anything with him. Delegates always volunteered to do this. We all had one aim and one purpose and before the delegate went in we discussed what should be said to Kadar. I went in to see Kadar three times, but many of us went in to talk to him on behalf of the Central Workers' Council.



Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Was the witness present at the two meetings he mentioned earlier? The first meeting to which I refer was the one during which Kadar asked the Central Workers' Council to prove that they represented the workers, and the second meeting was when Kadar said: "No dissatisfaction exists any more, work has been resumed."

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, I was a member of the delegation which was sent to each of those meetings.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Did the witness belong to any political party?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I was never a member of any party and I never shall be in my life. I only work with trade unions, and only with trade unions which really represent the workers.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): Did any connection exist at all between the Central Workers' Council and the political parties in Hungary since the inception of the Central Workers' Council?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): No, there was no connection.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia)(interpretation from French): On what date did the witness leave Hungary?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): On 14 January.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like you to give me some details regarding the standard of living and the wage scales. During the period when the trade unions were dominated by the Communists how were wages determined, for example? What were the wages? For instance, did your standard of living, as an industrial worker, decrease or increase during those twelve years?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Wages were determined as follows. When a new worker entered a factory he was brought before the manager who asked him questions concerning his type of work. He then informed the worker that he would work for an eight-day trial period. During that period the management considered his work, his proficiency, and examined the question of whether the worker was a party member and, if not, what was his relationship with the party, and whether he was a member of a trade union. They questioned him on these matters and his category was determined by the answers he gave. In the iron industry, for instance, the categories ranged from Grade 2 to Grade 8. In very rare cases -- and my own was one -- workers who had not belonged during the past three years to any party or trade union were placed in high categories. I was graded at the category 8 level, which was the highest, and received 2,500 forints a month. The management was aware that my technical qualifications were very good and were obliged to pay me that wage or else I would have gone to another factory, where I had friends, and where I would have been paid the same wage. I repeat, such an occurrence was very rare. A worker, either skilled or unskilled, who worked hard but was not active in Party politics received only a wage ranging between 900 and 1,700 forints a month. Briefly, the wage was determined on a personal basis either by the manager or the party secretary and was not equated with the proficiency or training of the worker.

As regards the standard of living during the last ten or twelve years, let us first consider the year 1945. From 1945 to 1946 there was considerable inflation in Hungary and we worked for practically nothing, in fact our wage was sufficient to enable us to buy one kilogram of bread. In 1946 the currency was changed, the forint came into existence and the standard of living rose. In 1948 the workers were beginning to feel that the situation might improve. In that year the great programme of nationalization started which included not only the large factories but also the small enterprises. Subsequently, wage scales gradually dropped until 23 October 1956. Now, how did this come about? We were not merely told that our wages would be lower; it was much more complicated than that. Competitions were organized. A fund was established and certain consumer goods were purchased, such as watches and blankets. These were put on display and labelled "first prize", "second prize" and so on. From the type of goods chosen it was



(Witness WWW)

evident that the standard of living was very low; workers were even willing to take part in competitions for such prizes. The work performed by the man who had won a prize during one month became the target for the succeeding month. Then, the work of the man who won the highest prize for that month again became the target for the next month, and so on. Therefore, the more one worked the less one earned because the target was always being forced up and no extra remuneration was received for the extra work. Prices continued their upward trend thus rendering the earning power of the wages less effective. For example, if a worker started to save for certain household goods — perhaps for a cupboard he had seen displayed in a shop window — by the time he had earned sufficient to make that purchase that particular object had been replaced by one of inferior quality, the price of which had already increased.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ-FABREGAT (Uruguay)(interpretation from Spanish): I have heard it said that among the demands made by the Central Workers' Council was a wish for participation by the workers in the management of the uranium mines. How did the workers envisage such participation? Was there to be an economic control? Did they want to prevent the export of uranium? Please answer my questions as precisely as possible.

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): We did not want the mining of uranium to cease. We only wished that it should be sold at world market prices, that is, to whoever made the highest bid. In other words, we wanted Hungary to receive the profits; the Soviet Union were taking away the uranium and making no payment in return. We knew that our production of uranium was not very great but it had a certain value which, had it been recognized monetarily, could have resulted in the improvement of workers' conditions in Hungary.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): The population of Greater Budapest is one and a half million?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): Of this what would you consider the labour population to have been, that is, those working in industrial plants?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): About 800,000 of that number I would say would be industrial workers.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many factories does that number represent, approximately?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): It is difficult to say. There is only one really large factory -- the Manfred Weisz factory at Csepel -- and then there are many smaller factories, although perhaps I should mention the large Ganz wagon and electric factories, the Ganz shipyards, and the various radio factories of Standard and Belojanis.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I only want a rough idea.

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I would say approximately twenty factories with full production capacity, although one must understand that what we in Hungary consider a large factory and what the West consider a large factory is something quite different.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): I understand that.

How many meetings of the Central Workers' Council did you attend before you left Hungary.

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I was present at approximately fifteen or sixteen meetings and the last one was held on 8 December.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): What was the average attendance at these meetings?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): It varied. Sometimes we only had ten and sometimes we had as many as eighteen, twenty or twenty-two. Some people might have been occupied with other work and unable to come. There was a



(Witness WWW)

general feeling of uneasiness at these meetings and this was due mainly to the fact that we were not completely united as we had not had enough time to become acquainted. All we knew of each other was that we had the same aims and purposes although we might differ in our opinions as to details.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): There was not sufficient time for complete organization?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): The Central Budapest Workers' Council had only about six or seven weeks and that is a very short time in which to work out a detailed programme. That was the reason why so many spies managed to enter our ranks.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): So even among those people who attended the meetings you were not sure of some of the members?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): No, we were not sure of all the members. It was easy for a man to say that he was Hungarian and a patriot but, unfortunately, some were not. At the last meeting I attended on 8 December the spies were so entrenched that they had a record on tape of the speeches made at our meetings and this was put at the disposal of the police.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): The trade union movement has been in existence in Hungary for a number of years, I believe?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, the trade union movement existed in Hungary and the movement was strong.

Mr. GUNewardene (Ceylon): I believe the Workers' Councils were constituted to take over from the trade union movement so that the political domination could be removed?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I would not say that there were political reasons for which the Workers' Councils were formed, it was mainly for economic reasons. After all, the trade unions are only an economic factor in the country. We wanted to play our role in the economic life and not in the political life of the country.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): Was there a distinction between skilled and unskilled labour in the matter of pay?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): There was a very wide scope. Generally, an unskilled worker, if he was a good party member and conformed to the party line, had unlimited opportunities spread before him, but if he was a good skilled worker and perhaps not a very enthusiastic party member he earned very little.

Mr. GUNewardENE (Ceylon): How many grades were there in the unskilled labour class?

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): The unskilled worker was paid at the appropriate rate for a certain category of work. For instance, if he did category 4 work he would get the corresponding pay for that work. The pay for category 4 work was three forints eighty-five fillers an hour and that was a piece-work rate.

Mr. SLIM (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): The witness told us earlier that the demands of the Central Workers' Council were of an economic nature and not a political nature, nevertheless, if I recall it correctly, included in the eight points was the demand for the withdrawal of Russian troops. What kind of effect would the withdrawal of the Russian troops have in the economic sphere of Hungary which made it necessary to include it among the eight points?



WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): In my opinion although the withdrawal of the Russian troops is a political question to some extent it is also an economic question. They oppressed us and were responsible for the poverty we suffered. Therefore, the workers demanded that for these reasons the Russians should leave our country and we should be responsible for the management of our economy. The Russians took over our forests and our mines and squeezed the last drop of blood out of us, and from this point of view I certainly consider it was an economic question. We wanted the Soviet troops to leave first of all perhaps for political reasons but, secondly, so that we should not have to support so many Russians. As you will realize their maintenance cost us a great deal and, therefore, to that extent it was an economic question.

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

WITNESS WWW (interpretation from Hungarian): I would like to make one request, if I may, and that is that this Committee should try to have an influence on general public opinion so that Hungarians outside Hungary can be permitted to take part in the economic life of the country they are living in. For my part, I would only like to say that wherever I go -- I do not know yet where I shall finally settle -- I would like to become acquainted with the trade union movements in the Western world so that if I ever go back to Hungary I should be able to organize our own trade unions on the same lines. I would like to thank the Committee for having heard me.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Witness WWW withdrew.



The CHAIRMAN: It is not quite definite when we shall be holding the next meeting. We hope it will be tomorrow afternoon but as the witness in question has not yet arrived there is a possibility that the meeting tomorrow afternoon will be cancelled. The Secretariat will inform the members of the Committee at their hotels tomorrow morning if it is cancelled and perhaps you can also telephone the Secretariat to check how the situation stands. If the meeting is not cancelled it will be held at three o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.