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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE PROBLEM OF HUNGARY
VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING (CLOSED)

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 12 March 1957, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. Alsing ANDERSEN

(Denmark)

*Witness X:
Get statement made to the press.*

The CHAIRMAN: The thirty-fourth meeting of the Committee is called to order. I bid the witness welcome on behalf of the Committee.

We know that you have been very close to the different events in Hungary for many years and that you have had many valuable personal experiences. We have learnt that through an interview you have given to an American paper. By the way, I do not have the name of the newspaper, but I would like to have it. I think all the members of the Committee have read that interview, so we know a good deal of your experiences. I feel convinced that the members of the Committee would be particularly grateful if you should be able to clarify the situation about Mr. Nagy as you have a very intimate knowledge of, and acquaintanceship with, Mr. Nagy. We hope that during your statement, you will be able to clarify the situation about Mr. Nagy during those days from 23 October to 4 November. In addition, of course, we would like to hear other statements regarding events of which you have been an eye-witness or in which you have taken part personally. You know that this is a fact-finding Committee so what we would like are facts. I would ask you to begin your statement ~~by~~ introducing yourself with some personal data so that members of the Committee may be quite aware of your personal status in the events.

WITNESS X: I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I shall begin with my short life story. I am now forty-two years old. Before the Second World War, I was assistant professor of International Law at the University of Budapest. During the war, I took an active part in the resistance and got into contact with the local Communist Party, so after the war, I became a Communist. The Communist Party sent me to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry where after some time I became the chief of the Political Law Department. I took part, during this time, in most of the international negotiations between Hungary and other countries, and in 1949, when the Rajk-process began, I was arrested and after one and a half years in police prisons, that is so-called police prisons, I made a confession so they sentenced me to ten years imprisonment. However, I was released during the first Nagy Government in September 1954. These years in the prison, and the events before these years, were enough for me - they were a good school for me, and influenced me not to be a Communist. So after my release, I began to work again in the University and I worked there as a lecturer until last October. I did not want to take political

law because I did not see any way out, but I had to take part in politics because during these years from 1954 until 1956 a fermentation began inside the Communist Party, and this Party was the only political form in existence, the only possibility for somebody with courage to explain his views, or in those times, especially in 1955, to attack the present regime. I was a friend, perhaps a close friend, of Mr. Nagy and the others who are now arrested with him. I think it is obligatory for me to tell everything about camps, and about prisons; perhaps I can help Mr. Nagy and the others, perhaps you can help him and the others.

Well, I think that is enough about me. If you have any questions I am willing to answer them.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we need to ask questions at this juncture, but we would like to hear your statement of your experiences in the political life of Hungary.

WITNESS X: I think I have to begin farther back, and not only with the last events, if you would permit because the roots are deep. These October events were not accidental. I do not know if you are interested in that.

The CHAIRMAN: If it is relevant to the events which we are going to study here and upon which we are going to make a Report, then of course we are interested in it. I would ask you not to give the whole political history since 1945, for instance.

WITNESS X: May I ask something: to what extent are you informed about Russian influence at this time, that is, during those ten years? Because the Russian exploitation did not begin in this year.

The CHAIRMAN: Anna Kethly has told in her statement about the economic exploitation of Hungary by the Russians.

WITNESS X: I do not want to speak about that, but about the political influence, for instance, because it is most remarkable. I will give an example.

The CHAIRMAN: You are permitted to tell us everything which you regard pertinent to the question. Also things of a more political character. Please just proceed as you like.

WITNESS X: Yes. Please interrupt me if you know the facts.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

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WITNESS X: One significant Soviet thing was the Rajk-process, for instance. When we were arrested, the chief investigators were Russians. The whole process was led by the Russian General who was the Chief of the N.K.V., and they openly **said that** they were the real rulers of our country. It was the first great disillusionment for us and this influence, this interference in Hungarian matters, was general in those times. General to the extent that, for instance, after Stalin's death, the changes in the Hungarian Government - in the Hungarian leadership - had their roots in Soviet policy. For example, the Soviet leaders had invited the Hungarian leaders, or rather gave orders to them, to come to Moscow where they simply told them that Rakosi has to go as Premier and Nagy has to become Premier. On this occasion when they were invited to Moscow, the negotiations were not negotiations only, but the reception of orders. If you wish, I can give the details.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, please. If you can give examples, then, of course, we are interested.

WITNESS X: In May of 1953, after Stalin's death, Dobi, the President of Hungary, Geroe, Farkas and Nagy were invited to Moscow and there Beria was the spokesman and they all met with Rakosi, Malenkov, Khrushchev and others. This information comes from Mr. Nagy and partly from Mr. Dobi. In this meeting, Beria told Rakosi that in Hungarian politics and economy, they destroyed the so-called Hungarian-Russian friendship and it was impossible to maintain their rules further. He asked them how they could imagine that only Jews were in the position in Hungary to lead the country and they were told that they had seen the tempo of collectivisation and that they had seen that collectivisation had ruined Hungarian agriculture. They asked the opinion of Mr. Nagy.

(Witness X)

Now about Mr. Nagy. Mr. Nagy was against collectivization in 1948 and 1949, so he was ousted from the Central Committee of the Party and he got a seat in one of our universities. Mr. Nagy always said he was against collectivization so they told Rakosi that although he had the opinion of agricultural experts he was acting otherwise and would have to give place to Mr. Nagy. So Mr. Nagy became Prime Minister.

I have told you these events only as characteristic of the influence - which I think was more than simply influence - of which I spoke during the first régime of Mr. Nagy. If you are interested...

The CHAIRMAN: Do as you like. Tell us whatever you think pertinent and correct to give us the best possible information on the development of events. Please do just as you like.

WITNESS X: Perhaps I will speak Hungarian.

The CHAIRMAN: We have excellent interpreters.

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Imre Nagy, when he took over the Prime Minister's portfolio, first of all wanted to stop obvious and open illegalities. It was for this reason that he started the revision of the criminal trials, stopped the ordering of internments, opened the gates of the internment camps and stopped the so-called internal deportations - that is, the moving of civilians to the rural areas. He greatly lightened the burden of the peasantry by stopping further collectivization and giving them an opportunity to come out of the existing caucuses. Naturally these events evoked a reaction from the Rakosi group. In the first months Rakosi went to Moscow and complained of Nagy, saying that he was preparing a counter-revolution in Hungary. I would like to remark here that naturally these are not personal experiences of mine; I heard of them mostly from Imre Nagy himself and from correspondents in Hungary, because I was still imprisoned at that time.

(Witness X)

The central point of the Rakosi attack therefore was that he, Nagy, was preparing a counter-revolution in Hungary. According to Rakosi, the people of Hungary could not be governed otherwise than by whips. There were undoubted signs that Rakosi did have some supporters among the Communists -- among the whole Hungarian apparatus; firstly the Party apparatus, and the Party was always the more important; and among the Government apparatus, which was only secondary. The Party apparatus then turned against Nagy and his policies and from the first was directed against his actions as Prime Minister.

As I said in the interview already mentioned, Nagy was practically alone. There were five or six people grouped round him vis-à-vis the whole apparatus, and he could not do much. He gave orders and instructions but naturally he was unable to achieve the execution of his instructions. He evoked tremendous courage among the peasantry and all the Hungarian people with this new era. Firstly, because of the great confidence in his person and secondly because of the appearance of some possibility of the creation of a freer means of life for the people. It was this fact that made Rakosi and the whole Party apparatus most angry. The real struggle started during the Rajk trials when he declared that all the people in prison had to be freed because they were innocent. Rajk said, "How can you imagine that these people can be freed? The world thinks they are either criminals or madmen, but if we let them go, people will think they are innocent." Geroe was the Minister of the Interior at that time. Thus Nagy tried to achieve some easing of the burden. But he did not succeed in achieving any lightening of the burden of the prisoners. In December 1953, about six months after his premiership when the political prisoners had been in prison already for five years, they succeeded for the first time in sending some news of themselves to their relatives and friends.

Camp A further development made the freeing of innocent people even more difficult, as the Committee has perhaps read in the report referred to; Moscow wanted a few hundred, or perhaps even a few thousand, innocent people freed in 1954. I think it was in June or July that a visit was made to Moscow and the Russians again took up the question of what was going on in the Hungarian trials. Rakosi then replied that according to his opinion this was just something that Beria had said and Beria had told Nagy to let them out. He said he thought this was Beria's policy -- Beria was gone by then -- and it was in this way that they tried to stop Nagy. The Russians then declared that Nagy was right and these people had to be freed. They

(Witness X)

declared very decidedly that Rakosi was personally responsible for the arrest of these people since it was he who told the Soviet authorities that they were criminals.

It does not really belong here but it might interest the Committee if I spoke about the role of Rakosi in the Slansky matter. This is not really the matter we are discussing here but it is very characteristic. Rakosi to the end had controversies and arguments with Slansky and he had difficulties with the higher Soviet apparatus. At the beginning of the 1930's, when Rakosi went into prison and his Communist Party membership was suspended, the Soviet Union had to have some excuse to give an impetus to Communism. For this reason several Communists who were living in Moscow asked Stalin to reinstate Rakosi's Party membership. This was at the time of the second Rakosi trial, and it was in order to start an international campaign on Rakosi's behalf which would improve the international Communist movement. Rakosi agreed to this at the time but later, when Rakosi was taken to the Soviet Union, they did not show any great confidence in him. There were rumours in Moscow that Stalin had declared of Rakosi that he was deeply under English influence and was untrustworthy. The fact is that Rakosi did not inspire great confidence in Moscow and did all he could to regain their confidence.

That is why the trials were not as bloody anywhere else as they were in Hungary, and that is why the terror was greater in Hungary than it was anywhere else. One phase of this was the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia. Slansky had old arguments with Rakosi and when he saw that he had a better position generally in Czechoslovakia and that the Czechoslovak Government also had a better position in the Soviet Union, he started intriguing, and the Czechoslovak leaders started intriguing.

(Witness X)

He met somewhere on the border with Siroky who was then the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, I think, and Siroky and he tried to have Slansky declared a traitor as Slansky was delivering weapons through Hungary to other countries. In any event he said they had testimony that Slansky was a traitor, and there were documents proving that Slansky had done these things. These they got from Noel Field (or they said they had) who had been arrested in Hungary when Siroky was not willing to start the trial against Slansky. Rakosi then complained in Moscow against Siroky as well as Slansky. The Czechoslovak leaders with Siroky at their head, afraid for their own position, started the Slansky matter, the basic accusations of which were that these were trumped-up charges. That weapons had been delivered was fact; this was a matter of common knowledge that Czechoslovakia could have been sending weapons. This was just a slight excursion as to Rakosi's role in the Slansky matter. As the events happened, and Rakosi's policies again came to the fore in Hungary at the end of 1954 Nagy had practically no more actual role in the Hungarian Government. In the beginning of 1955 they again went to Moscow, where they complained of Nagy, saying he had ruined Hungarian economic life by straying from the path of emphasizing heavy industry, and taking up loans abroad. It was at this time that the Soviet Union brought back the emphasis on heavy manufacturing. They called on Nagy to admit his mistakes, that he had neglected the heavy industry manufacturing, and that this caused great harm to Hungarian economy. Nagy, as he later said, was willing to admit that he had caused Hungary economic troubles by taking up expensive loans abroad, but he stuck to his conviction that forced manufacturing of heavy industry would ruin Hungary, that there was not enough work for steel and coal at their rate of production. Steel factories and iron works would be useless in these circumstances. He was willing to admit he took up foreign loans, and with these he raised the standard of living and light manufacturing, but he did want to make it clear, even publicly, what state the country was in.

They were not going to accept this. On the other hand they simply had him resign. As a result of the resignation Nagy became seriously ill, I think he had coronary thrombosis or some kind of heart trouble, and became disabled. In March 1955 he was relieved of his Prime Ministership on Soviet instructions. Suslov came to Budapest and personally gave the order. There are reports that he himself personally drafted the order taking Nagy's Party membership away from him. This was in 1955.

(Witness X)

Naturally, these events did not pass without leaving a mark on the country. There was a freer current in the political form, and this naturally could only bring about the weakening of the Communist Party. There were many Communists who, albeit very well-intentioned, were standing behind and supporting the Communist Party, nevertheless many of these people left the Party. Naturally they could not resign their membership; they would be in danger of their own life for that, but they tried.

I do not wish to deal in great detail with this time, because I believe the former witnesses have already spoken about it. It is therefore only on general lines that I would like to speak. However, I would like to let you know the atmosphere in Hungary. There was a kind of freer air that came along. I believe firstly the released political prisoners were not afraid of any kind of reprisals and therefore started thinking much more freely. It is interesting that the economic deterioration in the country, the difficulties of everyday life, the increasing speed-up in the work did not create such a great unrest in the country as the situation of the political prisoners. Many people who had been ready to believe that the book by Koestler, or the narrative of Kravchenko were only Western propaganda, on the basis of our statement after listening to it and the events we went through, realized where they had got morally. In many people in Hungary a spirit had awakened to stand up for their ideas, chiefly Hungarian writers and the Hungarian University youth.

Starting in the summer of 1955, and until the fall of 1956, the voices demanding freedom were becoming stronger and stronger. Firstly, they estimated generally the difficulties around them --they criticized the general situation -- then they started criticizing individuals themselves. It was not yet possible to know whether this would be anything serious or not, but beginning with the criticism against Rakosi and Keller by the intelligentsia the wave was spreading, and the workers took it over. I do not want to go into details of these times, but if there are questions, I will be delighted to answer them.

This was the atmosphere in the beginning of October. Firstly, there was the re-internment of Rajk, then the Polish event. In Hungarian history this was the second time that a Polish freedom movement had been the spur for the Hungarian people to ask for their own freedom. It was thus that October started. The

(Witness X)

events of October, which I would still like to relate on questions of principle, and not merely experience, were not a problem of a counter-revolution. The Hungarian propaganda is oriented towards the idea that this was a counter-revolution, but the revolution of October in Hungary managed to be called a revolution in every respect. The purpose and the aims were definitely revolutionary. I believe the Committee knows these points and knows the demands of the Workers' Council, the demand for freedom of the press, and so on. All these demands are clearly revolutionary and not counter-revolutionary. However, there is no doubt that in the times following November, namely during the new occupation by Russia, all these new achievements were withdrawn, and the Workers' Council was functioning in name only; there was no freedom of the press and therefore the counter-revolution had then really started in Hungary. One has only to look at the emigration of 180,000 people, 90 per cent of whom are workers and peasants, not counter-revolutionaries -- you cannot call those who had revolutionary aims counter-revolutionaries. We have negotiated with many Workers' councils, we have also negotiated in that period with intellectuals' councils, but there was not one demand which could be called counter-revolutionary.

(Witness X)

I am not a Communist. As a matter of fact, throughout the years I learned to be anti-Communist, but I should not like to harm the Communist aims, and I say to you frankly that if there had been a counter-revolutionary demand I would have left my post, because I have really reconciled it with my own convictions. Workers were coming by dozens from the countryside saying, "The factory in its entirety is behind the government. We are not afraid of reactionary elements, and if you want we will be protecting the factories". I should like to add that amongst the leaders of the old bourgeois parties whom I met during those weeks there was not one who even questioned the basic demand, namely agrarian reform and the nationalisation of the big industries. Together with Imre Nagy everybody said that the possibility should be given to the small people if possible to create better living conditions through private enterprises.

One should really note who is being arrested as counter-revolutionaries by the Government. They are workers, students and the flower of the Hungarian intelligentsia. Writers such as Gyula Hay were arrested. He is known throughout Europe as a dramatic writer and his plays have been performed in western Europe. He was a Moscovite and in 1954 turned against the Moscovites. It was he who read into the radio the last SOS of the Hungarian writers on 4 November. He is at present in prison. Zoltan Zelk was arrested. He is a poet who has been a Communist for 20 years and who turned against the Communists in 1955. He has been fighting since 1955. He wrote a national anthem for Communism and Stalin in 1951, and turned against Stalinism in 1955, and since then has been fighting valiantly not as a counter-revolutionary. Newspaper writers, those newspaper writers were arrested who in the period between 1949 and 1954 wrote only what the party wanted; these writers who realised since 1954 their error and had tried to correct it. Many of them were willing to go to prison. I would like to cite one characteristic name, Miklos Gyimes. A few days before my escape, namely around 15 November, he visited me. He was already then living clandestinely and knew they were looking for him. I asked why he was not fleeing as the border was still open. He answered, "I have written so much nonsense, I have written such stupidities, so often against my friends, and against what I now find is the truth and honesty, that I find it my duty to stay at home as long as I possibly can to enlighten the people, and I am expecting to be arrested". These are the people who are now called

(Witness X)

counter-revolutionaries. It is of course a sad thing that nothing is done in their interest from here. That is the atmosphere I wanted you to know about. If the Committee has any questions I shall be delighted to answer them.

As to the other part of the question, namely the Russian intervention in Hungary, I would like to limit myself to the concrete events in which I myself participated. After the statement by the Russian Government of 30 October we believed, because of that statement, the Russians would withdraw their troops. I believe the Committee knows that statement of the Russian Government. Subsequent events, however, proved that the Russian statement was made only in order to mislead the Hungarian Government. Fresh troops were poured into the country. The troops which were withdrawn from Budapest but stayed in Hungary withdrew to the outskirts of Budapest and committed atrocities. Budapest really continued to look like a besieged city.

On 1 November, in the morning, Mr. Nagy, the Prime Minister, called to him the Soviet Ambassador Mr. Antropov, to whom he made the facts known and to whom he said that should the Russian troops not be effectively withdrawn from Hungary, and if the new reinforcements were not withdrawn to their former positions, he, Mr. Nagy, would denounce the Warsaw Pact. Ambassador Antropov stated, when leaving, that he would inform his Government and give an answer. At noon he answered by telephone. I was present at the telephone conversation. He spoke Russian and Mr. Nagy immediately repeated it in Hungarian, and I myself wrote down the answers. I cannot remember the Russian statement word for word, but I can give you the essence of it: "The Russian Government maintains fully its declaration of 30 October. It is ready to negotiate a partial withdrawal of Russian troops, and for this reason, and accepting the proposals of the Hungarian Government, they ask for two Hungarian delegations to be sent, one to discuss political questions of principle at a place to be named by the Hungarians, the other to be a delegation composed of military only to negotiate on the territory of Hungary and the purpose of which would be to solve the purely technical problems." Mr. Nagy's answer was that he did not find the explanation of the Soviet Government to be satisfactory: "At 10 a.m. it was stated by the Russians that Russian troops continued to come into Hungary. This is contrary to their statement of 30 October, and for this reason Hungary will turn to the United Nations." At 2 p.m. Mr. Nagy again called

(Witness X)

Ambassador Antropov and informed him of the following: "Our military experts have determined it as a fact that new Soviet troops have crossed the border during the last three hours. The Soviet Government, belying its own declaration, is trying to re-occupy Hungary. For this reason, effective immediately, we are withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact". The note pertaining to the subject was prepared by me at that time and sent to the interested Legations and Embassies.

Parallel to this we again took up with Prime Minister Nagy the question of a declaration of neutrality. As the Committee has probably read, Mr. Nagy during the time he was under house arrest in Hungary sent several notes to both the Russian and the Hungarian authorities. In these he made a review of all Hungarian problems including the difficulties of economic and political life. In one of the greater studies he brought up the question whether it would not be advisable to declare the neutrality of Hungary in the same way as that of Austria. During the course of the last few years we have talked about this particular possibility. The events of 1 November moved us as a last possibility, and not having the time to discuss it with the great Western Powers we felt we must draft a proposal of neutrality, hoping that thereby we could halt the forward movement of the Russians and ensure democratic development for the country. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the Cabinet accepted the declaration of neutrality and at 5 o'clock Prime Minister Nagy again called in the Russian Ambassador, Mr. Antropov, and informed him of the new steps.

(Witness X)

In the meantime, the Ministers and Ambassadors of the Western Powers were informed by us. Naturally, they were not in a position to give any meaningful answer.

When this neutrality declaration was made to those present the first to address himself to the problem was Mr. Kadar, the present head of Government, who himself also was supporting this proposal of neutrality, and, as a matter of fact, it was with a tear-filled eye that he turned to Antropov and said "I know that this statement of neutrality means the end of the Hungarian Communist Party, and means also the end of my life because I really grew up with the party. But I am not only communist but I am also Hungarian, and if necessary, I am going out with my bare arms to fight against your tanks, because should there be a counter revolution in Hungary it would be due to you and to your tanks". This is what was said at five o'clock, and at ten o'clock that same evening he went over to the Russians!

During the following day, namely, the 2nd and 3rd, the Russian troops continued pouring in, and the Russian Ambassador gave the explanation when we asked him, and upon our insistence, -- he said his government wanted to reassure the Hungarian Government that it did not have any enemy feelings -- that it was only a question of the usual withdrawing operations, and that of course the withdrawal of a greater number of troops meant, of course, bigger troop movements.

On 3 November, in the morning, we received information that the Soviet troops were coming into the territory of Hungary and were already 150 kms within the territory; that they had taken possession of all railway stations, and that they let go all the upper personnel of the railway stations, and that the whole problem of communications was in their hands. There were no more Hungarian trains that could circulate between Szolnok and Nyiregyhaza. According to information, over the frontiers that same afternoon, more than 3,500 military transport and material came into Hungary.

In the afternoon the Russian negotiating committee arrived. The days preceeding this were filled with an exchange of notes. We sent several cables to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We made a proposal to the Russian Government concerning the withdrawal of their troops and the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact and proposed that these should be dealt with by a meeting, a delegation, to be held in Warsaw. This delegation should be a political delegation in Warsaw. This was really the proposal of the Hungarian Government. This would deal with the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact and the neutrality question. As to the other problem, namely, the technical one, that should be discussed in Budapest with the Russians.

On the 3rd, Mr. Antropov told us that the Russian Government were accepting our proposals; that they could not yet name the members of the political mission but that they are already sending the list of names of the military delegation with the request that the two delegations, namely, Russian and Hungarian, should meet as soon as possible and discuss the technical details of the withdrawal of Russian troops.

I forgot to mention something that might be important. In the afternoon 1 November Ambassador Antropov informed us that the Soviet Government is withdrawing their troops but in that case we should withdraw our complaint to the United Nations. He did not, however, ask -- neither he nor the Russian Government -- that we should withdraw our neutrality declaration. We agreed to this that in so far as the troops were being withdrawn we would send a new cable to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and we would desist from complaining.

I am now returning to the events of 3 November.

On 3 November we received the Soviet answers to the negotiating committee. We, ourselves, drew up the list of our delegation and as far as I remember this negotiating committee met around 11 or 12 o'clock in Parliament. The negotiations lasted four hours. The Russian demands were composed of 40 points. Thirty and some other points were purely technical such as, supplies, and other technical matters. However, they had a few political demands, such as the official farewell to the Russian troops and the re-establishment of the destroyed Soviet war memorials.

At 4 o'clock the two delegations separated, the Hungarians saying that they were going to examine the questions, and saying also that probably there will not be any great difficulties, and upon the invitation of the Soviet authorities they accepted that the negotiations be continued at 10 o'clock in the evening at the headquarters of the Russians in the outskirts of Budapest called Toekoel.

That was the last time I spoke personally to Prime Minister Nagy. He asked how far we could trust the Soviet promises, and what reception did the neutrality declaration receive in the West. We, at that time, had already received the answers in the Ministry. The Western envoys expressed their personal happiness but were unable to assure us of any official support. I said, in answer to the question of the Prime Minister, that I did hope that at the last moment the United States would at least start negotiations with the Russians.

(Witness X)

In our judgment the Soviets were at that moment in a rather weak position. The Soviet troops on the territory of Hungary did not want to fight. We had several admissions in front of us made by Soviet soldiers lying in Hungarian hospitals from which we learnt that they were brought in sealed railroad cars from Rumania, and were told that they were to be thrown into battle against fascists in Berlin, but on the next day they are in the territory of Hungary, in the streets of Budapest, and they are to fight here. There were several Russian soldiers who in hospital related that they thought they were to fight against United States parachutists because they were informed that such parachutists had been dropped in the territory of Hungary. There are some doctors out here in the West -- as a matter of fact in Denmark, I have a close acquaintance who has received such statements from the wounded Russian soldiers himself.

On the night of 3 November the Hungarian delegation went to Toekoel, on the outskirts of Budapest, and as is well known, were made prisoner. At dawn, on 4 November, I received a telephone message at my apartment from the Prime Minister saying that I should go to the Yugoslav Legation. A few minutes later I learnt that the attack against Budapest had started. I still tried to dissuade a few of my friends from entering the Yugoslav Legation. I did not succeed but I did not go however.

A few days later, I received new messages from Mr. Nagy who, at that time, was at the Yugoslav Legation. These messages were partly personal and partly of a general nature. The essence of them was that he would much prefer to stay on the territory of his country. If, however, circumstances took a turn for the worse, he would be forced to go to Yugoslavia. He was offered the possibility of going to another country; this he refused most determinedly. He did not want to go to Rumania nor to Yugoslavia. The situation at that time was such that I proposed to the Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires who came to see me that negotiations should be started with the Kadar Government with a view, perhaps to granting the wish of Mr. Nagy that he should stay in Yugoslavia. A few days later the Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires told me that one of the Acting Foreign Ministers was negotiating with Kadar and that Kadar was ready to guarantee to both Nagy and the people with him (about fifteen women and seventeen children) safe conduct home. I think it is well known that as they left the building of the Yugoslav Legation, a Russian armoured car drew up to the building and all of them, including the women and children, were taken to one of the Soviet Command posts. Here, outside Hungary, I received news - that is to say, that my relatives staying in Budapest received news - from the widow of Rajk who said that she was well, but in the same position as when we were together in a certain small hotel. These words "small hotel" are really meant to indicate the prison in which we were prisoners. From this there is no doubt that all these people are prisoners in Rumania. They write letters through the Rumanian Foreign Minister that they are not allowed to speak to anybody.

In view of the fact that the Soviet Government stated that all these people went of their own free will to Rumania, I wonder whether it would not be possible either from official initiative or from the private initiative of the Press, to propose a talk or an interview with the prisoners thus showing the world the facts of the situation.

Those are the broad outlines of the question about which I have personal experience and information. Naturally there are other small personal ties that keep me in touch with events and people. I do not know whether the Committee is interested in that. Should you ask me questions, it would be easier for me to answer.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that you have concluded your statement now.

WITNESS X: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask you a question. I understood you to mention a Hungarian doctor who is now living as a refugee in Denmark and who had told you about Russian soldiers who did not know they were in Hungary and thought they were fighting elsewhere.

WITNESS X: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Would it be possible for you to give me his name and address privately after the meeting through your interpreter?

WITNESS X: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I have another question which concerns the Russian, Suslov. As far as I remember he is, or was at that time, in charge of international relations on behalf of the Russian Communist Party and he was the man who was used everywhere where there were difficulties with a Communist Party, and so I think I am not mistaken in saying that when he went to Budapest he went to give orders to the Hungarian Communist Party on behalf of the Soviet Communist Party.

WITNESS X: Suslov arrived on 24 October in Budapest in the late afternoon. He negotiated with Geroe and others. They approved the Premiership of Nagy. I do not know if you are aware that the Hungarian Radio announced at six o'clock or seven o'clock in the morning that Nagy was Premier. He did not know about it. They announced Martial Law and other orders. Nagy did not know about it. He was practically a prisoner for five days in the Party Centre. We could not move him out. In those days the Suslov clique were in the Party Centre. I did not see Nagy and I could not go into the Centre. However, I had friends who had seen him there and it is typical that the old Central Committee wanted to maintain the Geroe rule to the last, and then Nagy said that he would resign if Geroe and his clique remained, and if he could not announce a general amnesty and a people's revolution rather than a counter-revolution. After these threats, Suslov told the Hungarian Central Committee that Geroe should be ousted from the

Government and the Central Committee. There was a meeting of the Central Committee on Friday, at which the Rakosi-Geroe clique were present, but without Rakosi naturally, and they were against Nagy, and when Suslov announced that they did not support Geroe any longer, they left. Some went to Czechoslovakia. Therefore, it was possible to take Mr. Nagy to the Parliament where he became free. This was on 28 October.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask you another question. We have heard another witness in New York who had the impression from his personal experiences in contact with the events concerning Imre Nagy in those days that there were some die-hard Communists of the old clique who advised Imre Nagy to issue the Declaration of neutrality and the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact because they were convinced that if he did so the Russians would, in that way, have a natural pretext for interfering in order to oust the Imre Nagy Government and establish another government more in contact with the Russian rule. Now I have read your interview and it appears that Imre Nagy discussed with you, already in 1955, the question of neutrality. According to that, therefore, the impression of the other witness cannot be correct and I would like you to give us some further particulars with regard to that question of the Declaration of neutrality and the Declaration of the denunciation of the Warsaw Pact.

WITNESS X: Well, I do not think it is correct. When, on 1 November, Nagy called me to talk over the Declaration of neutrality, he first wanted to put the question before the Cabinet meeting and to discuss it with the Communist member of the Cabinet and with the new leader of the Party because they were organising a new Party. Kadar, Muennich, Apro, Kiss, and naturally Donat and Losonczi were present at this closed meeting. These latter are now under arrest in Rumania. The first four mentioned are die-hard Communists. Well, they were not against, it is true, but they did not support it and they did not suggest the course to be followed.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the point.

WITNESS X: They were silent. I think Kadar supported the question before and in the late afternoon, but the others were silent, and they accepted.

The CHAIRMAN: So it was on the initiative of Imre Nagy himself, in your opinion, that those declarations were issued?

WITNESS X: When I could not reach him on 26 and 27 October I was able to send messages to him by his wife, because we were neighbours. His family -- his wife and his daughter and his grandchildren -- were living almost without food. My wife was able to send them something to eat because of course the shops were all closed at that time. But we had some food at home and were able to send them some. They had a telephone to the Party centre and sometimes it was possible to speak with Mr. Nagy although in the first days even his wife could not speak with him. I do not remember exactly but I think it was on the 27th that I was able to send a message that we had to prepare our neutrality declaration because it was time to negotiate with the Western Powers. His son-in-law, who was with him, said that Nagy wanted to talk this over with me as soon as possible. I do not think this Kadar gang wanted to propose anything. They were terribly afraid at that time and they did not dare to propose anything.

The CHAIRMAN: The Delegate of Australia would like to ask you some questions.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I would like to ask a few questions today, but I would also like to have the opportunity of asking some more questions later on after I have had a chance of studying the verbatim record of what the witness has said.

You will understand, Sir, that we are extremely interested in evidences of Russian interference in the domestic affairs of Hungary throughout this period, before, during and after 4 November. You have given us a general idea of the manner in which the Russians controlled the Hungarian Government in earlier days.

(Mr. Shann)

Could you give me perhaps a slightly more detailed picture of the manner in which the control was physically exercised — that is, the presence of Russians in Hungarian Ministries, the presence of Russians with Hungarian Ministers when they were actually carrying out their duties and, if you have any information, the manner in which the Russians reimposed their control of Hungarian governmental functions after 4 November when they returned?

The CHAIRMAN: If you would prefer to speak in your own language, please do so.

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): During the period 1945 through 1948 the Russian control could be felt but was not an open one. What I mean is that in the individual Ministries their physical presence was not felt but in the important problems it was not possible to make any decisions without them. To show you to what extent their physical presence was not felt, in 1947 for example, but their guidance and their intellectual and spiritual presence were there, I will give you an example.

In the spring of 1947 or 1948 the Air Attaché to the U.S. Legation made the following offer. The United States was ready to build an up-to-date airfield where all the trans-Atlantic aeroplanes could stop, and Hungary would be built up into a centre for air travel. I naturally asked why we had been chosen and he said quite frankly that their technical advisers had travelled all over Europe, that somewhere such a centre had to be established, and that circumstances were most favourable, from both the meteorological and the physical point of view, in and around Budapest. Even I could understand what this proposal meant, as we were very much behind and very much outmoded in aeronautical matters, and of course to become such a centre would also have strategic importance. The problem was that the personnel attached to this centre must be able to move freely in the territory of Budapest, although as a matter of fact the demands made by the United States were quite insignificant. They were willing to finance the building and there were very definite advantages for us because the running of it would have been up to a point in Hungarian hands.

(Witness X)

This proposal appealed to me a great deal and I went with it to Rakosi. He was not as antagonistic to the proposal as I had thought he might be, but he said: "Well of course, this is a terrible danger because hundreds of American spies will be able to enter Hungary and this is the way they usually work, so we cannot do it. Within six weeks there would be thousands of Americans spying against us and this would not be compensated by the revenue we could expect from this project." He gave practically the same answer to the Americans, to which the Americans replied that the number of personnel could be discussed. Then the American Legation in Budapest established a committee and started negotiating, and in a few weeks we arrived at a point where the number of Americans would have been twenty to thirty -- in fact, I recall that the final figure was seventeen. It would therefore have been Hungarian personnel who would have assumed the management of this air travel centre. At this point the proposal even appealed to Geroe and Rakosi, and we therefore prepared the contract and fixed the date for its signature. I believe the official luncheon was arranged for noon and at 11 o'clock Geroe called up, very upset, saying that it was unheard of that I (the witness) had dragged Hungary into such a position and that there could be no question of such a project.

After the year 1948, however, the situation changed and in every Ministry, and especially at the A.V.H. headquarters, Soviet technicians and advisers were installed. This happened first, of course, at the Ministry of Defence, A.V.H. and the Ministry of Industrial Affairs, and later on at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Communications. At all these Ministries Soviet advisers were appearing. At the Ministry of Defence they numbered about a hundred, at A.V.H. about twelve and in the other Ministries about five or six. No serious decision could be taken by Ministers without the opinion or approval of these advisers.

It is for this reason that I started my testimony with the fact that during the Rajk trial the supreme direction in Hungary was exercised by Soviet officers who were not even of very high rank. They would brag in front of us and say, "What do you want? It is not only in Hungary that this is happening, it is the same in Poland." We had a fellow-prisoner who had been a lawyer in Budapest and who was the uncle of Rajk. He said that at one of the hearings when a Russian major was present and a Hungarian was being heard, somebody entered the room and the Russian

(Witness X)

major said, "Please stand up and salute nicely because the man who is entering is a great man -- a much greater man than even Horthy was in Hungary." The man who came in was a Russian general and the Hungarian -- a medium-grade official -- who was giving evidence was revolted that this could happen in Hungary and that this Russian could be considered more important than a Hungarian chief of State.

I only tell you this as it is the sort of episode which gives you a good idea of the atmosphere which existed.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Do you know yourself of a return to this system after 4 November, that is, the return of the Russians to physical presence in the Hungarian Ministries?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): I do not know exactly, I had experience at the beginning, but this was not a completely personal experience. A group of foreigners were in Budapest during the revolution, who wanted to leave Hungary. Round about the 8th or 10th they went to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, where they were given the necessary visas in order to leave. They started to leave Budapest and were stopped at a Russian post four or five kilometres from Budapest. The Russian Commander looked at their papers and stated he could not let them go through. He said these were only Hungarian signatures, and they must please return to the Russian Command Post. They returned and went to the Russian Command Post, where the General in charge said this restriction had been justified, these were only Hungarian papers; they could not leave with these, and without the permission of the Russian Upper Command. Thus, the Seal of the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs was without value.

One of those wanting to leave was Prince Loewenstein, who is at present in Bonn. There was also Madame Strasser, now in Vienna, who got out with these people, who can also testify to this, and whom you will probably be hearing in any case.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You were on a number of occasions in the presence of Prime Minister Nagy; you were with him I understand on 1 November? I think it would be of interest to us if you could detail the occasions on which you were with him and tell us from your own first-hand knowledge of the way the Prime Minister felt about the way things were going. Was he confident that he would be able to retain the Government? Was he confident that the Russians would not return? Did he in fact have real control over the Hungarian Government after the time he got away from the Party Headquarters and got to the Parliament building?

WITNESS X (interpretation from the Hungarian): I should like to answer the last question first, because that will throw some light on the matter. Mr. Nagy

(Witness X)

really achieved the greatest popularity and confidence with his people when he liberated himself from the Communists and when he leaned on those few people who in the public opinion and in themselves were not Communists or not members of the Communist Party. In my opinion, he worked in full accord and unanimity with the other members of the Government.

I was present when Bela Kovacs, the leader of the Smallholders Party, who was a long time in a Russian prison, appeared for the first time in Budapest, and participated in the first Cabinet meeting. In the beginning there was rather a strained atmosphere between these two, but in ten minutes it had transformed itself into warm friendship, and my feeling was as though two old Hungarian peasants were meeting and really speaking the same language. As a matter of fact it took him some time to be able to overcome his sentimental ties with his former associates, for instance, with the Soviets. After all, he had spent most of his life with them, he believed there are crooks and there are other people, and that the Soviet Communist Party as such wanted to do something honest and clean, and even in Hungary wanted to behave well. However there came a day when he realized that all that he had been told was lies, and that in spite of all promises made to him, the situation was different; then he became really mad. There were occasions when it became embarrassing to be too absorbed with the Soviets. Since 1948 he had been conscious of the fact that the Russians had lied, and on many occasions he said to Ferenc Farkas that it would be better for him to be arrested, so as not to expose to the Russians his indignation. These events are not very significant, but they are indications of his position.

On another occasion he said he would prefer to denounce the Warsaw Pact. My proposal was that we should act according to protocol, call in the representative and inform him and then we would ask the representatives of the interested countries, and finally inform the Western countries. Then Nagy said "No, we have to tell the West, and then from the first everybody else will know it." It took some time to convince him, and make him accept my proposal not to provoke the Russians, because we were in a position where we should not provoke them.

(Witness X)

In connexion with the publication of the neutrality of Hungary it was the same problem. He said "Okay, I am in accord. I will call in Peter Mod and will inform him I am declaring neutrality because the independent Hungarian Cabinet has agreed to it, but first, I will inform the Western envoys." He stuck by this idea, and that is how it happened. The Western envoys were called in to the Ministry. It was characteristic of him that Peter Mod, who represents the Hungarian regime in the United Nations, and who was then a collaborator of mine, was the one who gave the news to the French and English Ministers. He was then supporting the Declaration of Neutrality fully, not merely by words, because he had written a memorandum in which his name and the names of several other officials of the Ministry appeared, asking that we promulgate Hungarian neutrality. As I said, what is really characteristic is not that he is a politician, but that he is an honest man. His great fault was fidelity, but when the break was made no political considerations could stop him.

What was the other question? In what did he have confidence? It was the last straw, the last possibility; he took decisions always just a bit too slowly. *October* For example, if we could have made the Declaration of Neutrality on 30 November this question would not have interfered with us and then our interests could have been served much better. It is not an exaggeration to say that, because the world would have taken a different direction. This is my private opinion, of course.

I do not want to give the impression that I am propagating war; it is my impression that in the atmosphere when the Soviets were on the defensive with a small country such as Hungary, when they were even defeated, not only morally but even militarily, — if the Great Powers could have sat down and negotiated, the Soviets would have been forced to make concessions not only on the Hungarian question but others, such as the Polish question, which anyhow will be taken up within a few months; so the solving of the Polish question will be much easier on the basis of the work of this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you satisfied?

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Quite.

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): As to the third query, namely, did Nagy have confidence that the Russians would not return, the answer to this is contained implicitly in my former answer. He hoped he would stop them with the Declaration of Neutrality. He did not have confidence in the hope that they might stop out of their own goodwill.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): We will return to that question in a moment. I am interested in your passing reference to the Suez Canal. Do you feel that what took place in the Middle East so diverted the attention of the world from what was taking place in Hungary, that the Russians were able to do in Hungary something that they would not have otherwise done?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes. It not only drew attention away from it, but had given a moral and physical support to the Russian intentions. My feeling during those days was that the Soviet political direction was ready to withdraw. I also felt it was the military leadership that created difficulties. The Soviet political leadership really was able to estimate the moral loss that was followed by actual physical loss. They took in the Asiatic countries with the Communist Parties of Europe. In crushing the Hungarian Freedom Movement, the Soviet political leadership saw they were hurting their own plans, especially in Asia, to a great extent, the more so as it was to be expected that the other satellites would follow suit. The military leadership was not of that opinion, but at the time of the Suez events, when reference could be made to the fact that even Western countries can attack the territory of another country, that morality is not the same for the big and for the small, the political leadership gave in to the military leadership, and did not estimate that the risk was still as great. I believe that is the argument they used to the Asian countries, and that is when they decided to crush Hungary in bloody revolution.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You did not quite finish answering my earlier question. I asked if you could briefly enumerate the occasions on which you were with the Prime Minister.

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): During those days I was very often with him. During the first three days, namely, until the 1st and 2nd, I did not have a private room. Mr. Nagy had two ante-chambers, and in one of these ante-chambers was my bed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could not be used as an instrument for us, because it was composed of A.V.H. officers and Stalinists.

(Witness X)

The majority of the personnel of the Hungarian Legations in foreign countries were not only in the pay of the AVH but actually officers of the AVH. In connection with the representation at the United Nations I have looked through the list of the Washington representation, where if I remember correctly there were sixteen people. Of these twelve were actually officers of the AVH. The Minister at Paris was a colonel, the Minister in Brussels was an AVH lieutenant. I remember these even to today, but there were hundreds of names and the data were there stating what they were previously.

During these days I was really dealing with a lot of things, not only with foreign affairs, but again I would like to give the atmosphere. It was hard work because delegation after delegation came and it was very important that we should talk to them, more important than to do paper work. Therefore, essentially I was with Mr. Nagy during the whole day. It was very seldom that we could speak with each other because people were coming and going day and night. The Cabinet was sitting, for example. A delegation came from the Borsod district; they wanted to speak to Mr. Nagy himself. They were ready to speak to someone else, but nonetheless they wanted to see Mr. Nagy because they wanted to look at him. Then foreign affairs became more and more important. Then we established a working group in the next office, and we found about four people who were reliable and could draft for us and who understood enough to be of help. Two of them were actually former employees of the Foreign Office. These four people were from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and we had typists and other smaller personnel.

On the 1st, in the morning, we discussed means of withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact. At about 10.30 Mr. Nagy called me in and told me what the answer of Ambassador Antropov was to our statement opposing the further inpouring of Russian troops. An hour and a half later he called me in again saying the Soviet Embassy was calling by telephone and wanted me to be present, because this was the answer of the Russian Government to our protest. It was then as I related earlier; they said they were maintaining their declaration of 30 October. In the meantime I prepared on a small piece of paper the project of the declaration of neutrality. We discussed it. He made a few drafting changes, and about an hour later when I had prepared the final text he called me in and then there was a Cabinet meeting. Previously he met the leaders of the party. Now the Cabinet

(Witness X)

accepted the proposal. I was there, and when in the afternoon Ambassador Antropov arrived himself, Mr. Nagy again called me in with the project; the Cabinet was again sitting and then I stayed only of course out of curiosity, I would have liked to hear what Ambassador Antropov had to say to the declaration. In the following days we were together several times. Formerly there was another instance when the foreign correspondent rushed into the room of Prime Minister Nagy and I was there during the conversation with him, or when more important delegations were coming. On such occasions he called me in. During these days, as it became public knowledge that we were dealing with the question of neutrality -- in Budapest nothing can be not public -- then of course delegations increased and other organs started discussing it, such as the workers and the students, and it was as a matter of fact good to see that it was the whole people who were interested in these proposals. It was about the 29th or 30th that we really spread abroad the rumour of possible neutrality, and then delegations started pouring in stating that they did want neutrality. That is how our life was together during those days.

After the declaration of neutrality there was an exchange of notes, telegrams started pouring in, and then I was every half hour with the Prime Minister, as I drafted the telegrams -- to Mr. Hammarskjold -- that had to be cleared by him, but he looked at them again after they were translated. The contact was frequent but there was no time for talk. Another type of contact that I had with him was when he was at the Yugoslav Legation. This contact was through the Yugoslav Chargé d'Affaires.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You referred a moment ago to the type of Hungarian who is in the Foreign Service. I would be interested if you could tell me whether Mr. Koss, who was previously representative at the United Nations, is in fact a Hungarian at all.

WITNESS X (Spoke in English): I do not know him personally. He was not in the Ministry that I was, but I know that he started a loyal Hungarian who married a Russian woman. His father was a prisoner of war from the first world war and his mother is Russian. He studied somewhere in Russia -- I think in Odessa or Tiflis.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I would like to ask about the question of the withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. Do you believe that it was legally possible for Hungary to withdraw unilaterally from the Warsaw Pact in the manner in which it was sought to be done?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): The Warsaw Pact did not contain any clause about its renunciation. I looked very thoroughly through the text that we had at our disposal -- it was characteristic of the situation that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not have a full text of the Pact, only the Ministry of War had the text -- and in these texts there is absolutely no express reference about renouncing the Pact.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Am I right in assuming that the basic reason in any event for attempting to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact was to give the Hungarian Government the right to ask for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Hungarian soil?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): No, the Hungarian Government did not have the right to demand the immediate withdrawal of any troops, but it had the right that the new troop reinforcements, sent outside of the framework of the Warsaw Pact, should withdraw.

(Witness X)

As a matter of fact, by virtue of one of the clauses of the Warsaw Pact, the foreign military units stationed on the territory were under the command of the Ministry of War of the country where they were stationed, therefore, the Hungarian Ministry of Defence could give the command for the withdrawal of the troops. But I should like to emphasize that we were ready to negotiate, and even ready to give weeks -- even months -- for a complete withdrawal, of course, with the understanding that the new arrivals would be immediately withdrawn.

The proportions were as follows; in accordance with the Warsaw Pact there were two or three army corps in Hungary and these army corps were defeated in a few days by the Hungarians. They were destroyed to the extent of 60 per cent. Children of twelve to fourteen destroyed effectively this Soviet military might. The other part, namely, the 4,000 vehicles that came afterwards, were illegally on the territory of Hungary. They had nothing to do with the Warsaw Pact.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Did you really imagine that the Russians would agree to the Hungarian withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact?

WITNESS X (spoke in English): If they had the opportunity to save their face they would have.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What sort of opportunity to save their face -- the withdrawal of troops, and that sort of thing?

WITNESS X (spoke in English): Yes. (Interpretation from Hungarian): They made it quite clear that the maintenance of troops in Hungary had not much meaning. Either they would occupy openly the whole of the country, in which case they could create what I call a cemetery type of order, or they would leave token troops, in which case they would be totally destroyed by the Hungarians.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): It seems to me more than possible that the public decision to leave the Warsaw Pact was the vital thing in determining the Russian decision to return to the country, or to subject the country to its direct control again, would you agree with that?

WITNESS X (spoke in English): Yes.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): There is an aspect, which you merely mentioned in passing, about Mr. Kadar. You stated that during these meetings Mr. Kadar was in favour of the declaration of neutrality, and of the other actions which were decided upon by the Nagy Government, and then you said at 10 o'clock that night he went over to the Russians. He is on public record -- in broadcasts -- as favouring the actions of the Nagy Government. He is equally on public record -- in broadcasts -- three days later, as denouncing the Nagy Government as a government of counter-revolutionaries, and so on, and denouncing the very decisions which he himself was party to, have you any explanation of the quite extraordinary change in Mr. Kadar's attitude.

WITNESS X (spoke in English): I never liked him. I had controversies before my arrest and after my release. After my release he said "Well, there was a gang in the party and they made it". He was against Rakosi in the first months. Then he got a position, he was First Secretary of one district of Budapest, so he began to speak for the party unity which is the old Moscow slogan. Then he supported Nagy but when Nagy was ousted he was against him. So I did not like him, but I remember on 1 November, when I came home, I talked to my wife and said that I was wrong about Kadar. It was about 10 o'clock and I told her the whole story which I explained here. I was impressed by him and I felt he was honest.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Somewhat similar changes of opinion can also, I think you will agree, be attributed to the public statements by Mr. Nagy himself? It is perhaps possible to explain these by the fact that from the 23rd until the 26th he was by no means a free agent, and he may have been making certain statements under duress, and that after the 27th, or including the 27th and until 4 November, he was able to express opinions which were really his own opinions. Would you say that that is the case, and what sort of control do you think he was subjected to when he was in the party headquarters until 27 October?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): On the 28th, or the 29th, in a public speech that he held from the balcony of Parliament, he said that in his name certain ordinances were read into the radio, ordinances that he either had not seen himself, or on which he had expressly written in the margin that he was against them -- for example, martial law.

(Witness X)

During the first five days when he was practically a prisoner at party headquarters he received only filtered information. At that time there were all kinds of pseudo-delegations who came to see him and who said that there were all kinds of counter-revolutionary people who were killing the communists on the streets of Budapest. Later on he said that he did not believe these rumours, but they came continually with such things. He just thought that in an uprising there are always revolutionary forces, and there are sometimes also counter-revolutionary forces, and in Hungary, in principle, there could still be a question of having such left-over forces from the other regimes, and when he noticed that it was really the honest elements that went out into the streets and fought in order to assure their freedom, then it is only natural that there should be some reactionary elements that might join them. It was even astonishing to me that no such thing happened. It would have been quite natural that it should happen after ten years. The miracle is really that they had never before achieved union and their unified longing for some kind of democratic way of life.

There are always excesses. There were A.V.H. people who were hung; there were people beaten up, but there were amazingly few compared with what happens on such occasions. On the third or fourth day even these stopped, and I was witness of the fact. Of course, there were no means of communication at that time but as I went from my apartment to Parliament, through one of the smaller streets of Buda, from the A.V.H. Centre a hand grenade was thrown from the upper floor on to the revolutionaries who were walking peacefully below. The freedom fighters took the man and the people were shouting not that he should die but were shouting that he should be taken before a tribunal. This was on the 4th day, and it is my conviction that within one week law and order would have been re-established. This is also the opinion of the military. I am sure that you have heard in this matter, General Kiraly, who was the organizer of the groups maintaining order, and from hour to hour one could see the improvement in the administration.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You made in your statement a reference to the sort of assistance which you felt might have come from the United Nations; you said in fact it is a pity that more help was not forthcoming from here -- I take it you mean from the United Nations? What sort of help did you expect from the United Nations, and what sort of help might you have expected from sources other than the United Nations?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): I was convinced at that time, and I still am, that if the great powers would have come out officially on the side of Hungarian neutrality, and would have started negotiations with the Soviet — I mean serious negotiations — then the Russians could have been stopped.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What about the United Nations?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): I maintain the same thing. The prestige of the United Nations in our eyes was, indeed, very great.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): But the United Nations did in fact, I think, lend its moral influence on the side of the revolution. Do you not feel that that had any effect at all?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): The United Nations lent their moral support at first and because of that we did hold out because we hoped that it would be followed up by physical help. I do not mean armed help, but I am thinking of something more.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What sort of "something more" have you in mind?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): On 4 November, the General Assembly put the extra item on the agenda; this could have been done on 1 November.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I would like to ask you a few questions based not on what you have said this afternoon, but on the interview you gave.

What evidence is there that Geroe called in the Soviet forces at 1 o'clock in the afternoon on 23 October?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): The Hungarian University Youth had announced on the evening of the 22nd, or the morning of the 23rd, that they would organise a procession towards the statue of Bem who is a Polish national hero, a general who helped the Hungarian revolution of 1848. Geroe, who returned at that time from Yugoslavia, opposed the demonstration. The next morning, the Minister of the Interior gave the order that as soon as the University students dared to go outside the territory of the Universities in groups, the police had to suppress them. A new delegation went to Geroe, led by the writers and particularly by Tibor Dery, but Geroe was adamant. Dery and the other writers did explain to Geroe that the students could not be held back and that they would go outside the boundaries of the universities. Geroe then announced: "Then I will shoot on them." The delegation then left. Another delegation consisting of the professors of the universities received the same answer. However, before three o'clock in the afternoon, for I do not know what reason, he gave permission for the demonstrations to take place. What I am going to say now is a hypothesis and not a fact. I believe that during that time a few of them had decided to allow these demonstrations and they made certain provocations to ensure that there would be some shooting and that afterwards Nagy and his friends could be arrested and held responsible for the fact that human beings had died in the course of these demonstrations. There are a few facts to support these hypotheses.

There were many A.V.H. in civilian clothes among the crowds of demonstrators; they were the loudest in shouting the slogans, and there were all kinds of barriers that were protecting the roads to the statue. Furthermore, the orders given on the radio, were of a provocative nature. I believe therefore that Geroe authorised the demonstration because he believed that with this excuse he could really remove the possibility of a revolution from under the Hungarian "Gomulka", - by that he meant Nagy. It is for this reason that the Soviet troops might have received orders early in the afternoon to march on Budapest.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What evidence is there for your statement that Soviet forces were on the move to Budapest on 23 October by four p.m.? What evidence is there for that statement?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately, there is no proof of this, but the Hungarian Mayor of Szekesfehervar said that at that time there was a discussion as to when the Government called in the Soviet troops. The facts also do prove this, as I stated in my interview, in the evening at 11 o'clock two of my friends saw Soviet tanks on the main streets of Budapest.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): What is your source for saying that the A.V.H. fired on the Hungarian army at the radio building?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Next to the radio building, in one of the University clubs, there was a meeting and my wife was at that meeting. She telephoned me from there to say that she had spoken with several eye-witnesses who said that the A.V.H. started to fight around the radio building and that the crowd would have returned home much sooner if they had not thrown tear-gas bombs amongst them and if they had not been continually egged on to resist. The events which took place around the radio building had, as a matter of fact, started by being unimportant. The students went to the radio building in order to have the fourteen points read and in order to stop the announcement of Geroe's speech so that Geroe would personally go to the radio building and give his speech, that speech which was made at 8 o'clock in the evening.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): In your interview you said that your only contact with Mr. Nagy between 24 and 29 October was on the telephone. Are you able to give any first-hand information as a result of telephone conversations with the Prime Minister about the relations between Mr. Nagy and Mr. Geroe at Party Headquarters from 24 to 26 October, and of Nagy's influence on the course of events at that time?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Unfortunately no, because the telephone communication was not direct. I called him several times and was connected with him only once and at the moment I stated my name, the communication was cut by the Party Centre. The communication I had with him during the following days was simply that I attempted to send him messages through his wife, as I said. In the beginning, even his wife could not telephone and for the first three days he was completely isolated. She once called him from the home of a neighbour and talked to him for two minutes on personal matters. On the evening of the third or fourth day, the son-in-law of the Prime Minister was able to see him and he related that his father-in-law was completely surrounded. He could not get to the radio building, he could not speak to anybody, and his telephone only rang when the Party Centre connected him. People were continually coming to see him to discuss matters with him, but he had no power to take decisions. The actual power was in the hands of the Government. Nagy did not even negotiate or speak directly to Geroe. As a matter of fact, he did not want to. His feeling in the beginning was that he did not wish even to sit down at the same table with Geroe or his friends. Later on, he modified this to the extent that he actually sat down and engaged in discussion with them.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You will remember that you made comments about the control of Radio Budapest - about the fact that the Controller changed things, as it were, and said that they were not going to tell any more lies. Do you have any direct knowledge of the control of the radio stations between the 24th and 29th?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, Jenoe Szell, who was the Government head of the radio, is a friend of mine. Before he took up his functions there, the radio was put into the hands of the Ministry of the Interior, as a matter of fact in the building of the Ministry of the Interior, and in essence

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(Witness X)

in the hands of the A. V. H. There was no regular speaker, no regular commentator, and no records came to the radio. They played the records that they found in the building of the Ministry of the Interior and the speakers were obviously under supervision. Some A. V. H. police officer just went to the radio and spoke.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): You will remember that the evidence that Kadar went to the Soviet Embassy came from his driver when he returned, I presume, to Parliament buildings. Did you speak to the driver?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): Yes, but I would like to correct this. It was not I who talked to him, but four of us. We called the driver into Geza Losonczi's room and it was there that he said that he went for Kadar with Muennich at 10 in the evening. There were very few cars and this was a joint car. The Ministers had perhaps five cars altogether. The driver received a telephone call from Muennich to go and fetch him. Muennich then ordered him to go to the apartment of Kadar, where Muennich went up and both he and Kadar came down a few minutes later. The driver was then ordered to drive to the front of the Russian Embassy and they left the car there. According to the driver they stood for a few seconds beside the car and seemed to be discussing something. Then suddenly they turned around and there was behind them a Russian car, a Pobeda, and they told the driver that he could go home. They go into the Pobeda, but the driver did not see whether or not the Russian car left.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): Now I understand, sir, that you had yourself something to do with the drafting of the Declaration of Neutrality. Could you tell me precisely how the Declaration of Neutrality was drafted, and can you tell me whether you were at the meeting of the Cabinet which considered the Declaration of Neutrality?

WITNESS X (interpretation from Hungarian): When, at noon, Prime Minister Nagy spoke to me and said that we would now announce our neutrality, I took a piece of paper and went into one of the empty conference rooms in order to draft some kind of declaration. I should have liked to have a look at the Declaration of Neutrality of Austria but I was not able to do so because I did not have access to Parliament and we were unable to bring it over from the Foreign Ministry because there was no car available. We were able to get hold of a few Viennese newspapers of the time and there I looked at the Declaration of the Austrian Government. However, our situation was rather different and these differences

had to be taken into account in our drafting, therefore my draft was really a kind of declaration of principle. When I was ready with the text I took it in, on the same piece of paper, to the Prime Minister, who changed a few words, perhaps two or three, in order to make it more ceremonious and formal in tone. We agreed at that time that he, the Prime Minister, would read this and would then add a few words of his own. I was unable to listen to the radio speech because that was when the exchange of cables and notes started, therefore I am not quite sure whether he did add those few words he mentioned or whether somebody else made a few comments after the declaration. I took the draft home as an historic document, but we of course burnt it when the Russians came back.

I took the typed draft into the Cabinet meeting. At that meeting Nagy first read it, then approved it and handed it to Tildy, sitting next to him, who read it aloud. Nobody had any remarks or any objections at that time. Antropov was already sitting there although he arrived a few minutes after the opening of the meeting. Before that, when the declaration was not yet typed, the other members of the Cabinet came into my room to hurry me up and to have a look at the text to see whether it coincided with their own thoughts.

Mr. SHANN (Australia): I have finished for this afternoon, sir, but I cannot promise that I will not want to ask more questions and I hope the witness will be able to come back at a later date.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes. It is quite evident, of course, that we cannot finish the hearing of the witness today but I can announce to the members of the Committee that the witness is able to stay here so that we can meet him again on Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Thank you, you are permitted to leave, sir.

As there is no other business today, we will adjourn, but tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock we will hear Sir Hartley Shawcross, who is appearing here on behalf of the International Organization of Jurists.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.