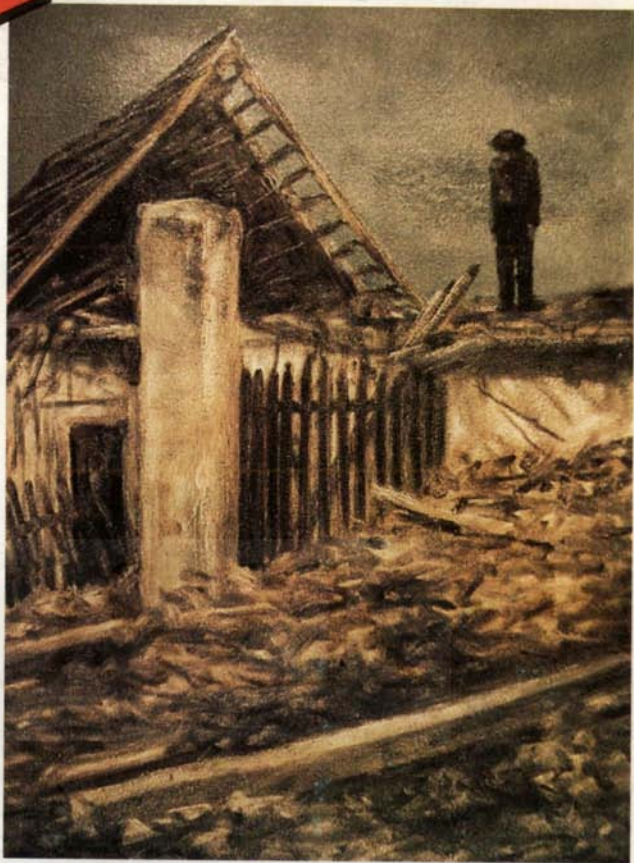


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LAJOS GUBCSI,
Ph.D.

FOUR DAYS THAT SHOOK HUNGARY

/Budapest 5-9 October 1989/

A split between Hungarian Communists and Socialists?

October 1989

Sándor Kisfaludy:
*"Is a better life or death
So close at hand:
Answer, pray, O Fatherland!"*

LAJOS GUBCSI Ph. D.

FOUR DAYS THAT SHOOK HUNGARY

A split between Hungarian communists and socialist?

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

The Hungarian Hymn

Though in caves pursued he lie,
Even then he fears attacks.
Coming forth the land to spy,
Even a home he finds he lacks.
Mountain, vale—go where he would,
Grief and sorrow all the same—
Underneath a sea of blood,
While above a sea of flame.

Author: Lajos Gubcsi Ph. D.

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The first 13 copies of this book are dedicated for personalities whose job influence Hungary's life:

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV President of the Soviet Union	ANDRÁS SÜTŐ Hungarian writer, Transylvania
GEORGE BUSH President of the USA	SÁNDOR CSÓÓRI Hungarian poet
MIKLÓS NÉMETH Prime Minister of Hungary	LÁSZLÓ TÓKÉS Hungarian priest, Transylvania
HELMUT KOHL Chancellor of the FRG	WILLY BRANDT Former Chancellor of the FRG
FRANZ VRANITZKY Chancellor of Austria	HELMUT SCHMIDT Former Chancellor of the FRG
MARGARET THATCHER Prime Minister of Great Britain	In the Memory of late IMRE NAGY
IMRE POZSGAY Minister of State of Hungary	

Please pay special attention to the letter of András Sütő from Transylvania published in this book.—L. G.

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MB 135. 133



1990

Heavenly Warning



László Tőkés: A soft-speaking outspoken, who served only one Lord.

László Tőkés from Romania is a true example of real-life martyrdom. Almost having to sacrifice even his life, he held on unflinchingly to pour hope into all those who feared that Ceausescu's regime could not be toppled and the Conducator would rather have all this nation perish than let go of his power. Totally unknown until then, the down-to-earth Calvinist pastor László Tőkés stood up to that power. He did that for his people. There was but one really immense power in Romania: that of his spirit. The ethnic Hungarians in

Romania had stood beside him since the beginning. When people in the Transylvanian town of Timisoara formed a human wall to protect László Tőkés's life on December 19, 1989, a murderous volley was fired into the crowd, claiming thousands of lives. László Tőkés almost died then, together with his expected child. Instead of them, however, it was Ceausescu's dead power that perished.

Of course, this book is not about Tőkés or even Romania, even though the painting chosen to illustrate the cover depicts a feature of Romania's earlier plight, the destruction of villages. Rather, this book is about Hungary. Yet, my first quotation is from László Tőkés's, aiming at providing faith to even those unbelieving souls made miserable by Hungary's present condition.

The quotation is from László Tőkés's Advent sermon broadcast by the Hungarian Television's foreign political desk.

"... It is a terrible feeling for the guards and guardians to be surrounded in the darkness with the noise of shooting around them, and in their fear they keep wishing they could survive this one night only, just this short night, and see the morning come, the morning when everything may change and everything can come true. Let me tell you without being personal that I also had countless such nights and it was not the Advent waiting any more but we have been waiting for Advent to come for a long time, in our hearts we have long awaited the waiting, as the Lord will come like the Lord must come, for we have His promise. The guardians at their posts—why not mention the child of these parts, the great Hungarian poet Endre Ady who says in his memorable poem, 'Look out at your posts, guardians, for life lives and wants to live.' "

"I did not start any revolution. I am not a revolutionary or a politician; I am a pastor. In a certain case I dug in my heels and I said I would defend the cause of the Church and my flock at Timisoara until the building of the Timisoara church was besieged and I was disarmed. With the help of God I kept my word and our church was indeed besieged and my wife and I got carried off with force. Well, that was my part. And it is a special grace of God to have started this whole revolutionary renewal movement in connection with my personal and ecclesiastical struggle..."

"... We have also a message for our brethren across the border, the refugees. A huge number of people fled from our homeland headlessly, driven by fear and humiliation to leave our beloved homeland Romania and especially the land of Transylvania. We must not leave our homes empty, nor must our church bells fall silent, nor must we allow weeds to take over our churches: we must not allow death and darkness to descend on the hearts of the flock's remainder. Please come home."

I wish to thank my wife, my daughter and my son, Lajos, for their patience, in the words of Louis XIV of France: "The first feeling is always the most natural".

To *the memory of János Kádár*, the untiring toiler of compromises, on 23rd October 1989, the day the manuscript was finished, when the series of compromises seems to have been exhausted. But this day is also the day of the proclamation of the Republic of Hungary. I dedicate this book to the memory of János Kádár with the respect I have always felt for him, even if I have *openly held, since 1982 that time had passed over his government.*

1982 was the first year of catastrophe: it was clear by then that the three-year plan of stabilization promised for 1979-81 *had failed*; that the old guard was clinging to power with the *restoration of György Aczél, István Sarlos, Béla Köpeczi* and others; and in the meantime, Imre Pozsgay was banished to the People's Front and his allies were scattered; and then, and later in 1983, it became clear that the *"second reform wave"* was being crushed; at the end of 1984, as a member of the Executive Committee of the CC of the Communist Youth Union, even though I was *alone*, I had *no alternative* but to declare before János Hoos, then Secretary for State of the Planning Office, and before the EC, that the plan drawn up for 1985 and declared to be the plan of the first year of economic upswing, was nothing *more than a political order for the series of celebrations in 1985*, the 13 congress, the fortieth anniversary of the liberation and the parliamentary elections.

János Kádár was always, symbolically, *synonymous with* the state of political affairs in Hungary. This was true when we lived dynamically and successfully, and it was true later, when he *expressed* and at the same time also caused our weariness, our loss of direction. *Let us rest in peace.* In the spirit of reconciliation. Let everyone remain true to his own self.

Budapest, 23 October 1989

Lajos Gubcsi

FOREWORD

BY LAJOS GUBCSI

I stated in my latest English-written brok, 1988:

"In 1988 a change took place in Hungary. There were personal changes at the highest levels of the party, state and central leadership through which power came into the hands of more competent, politically more able new leaders who are carrying out the new wave of reform: Parallel to this public discussion is growing rapidly, democracy is taking root in a wide strata of the people, and market competition among entrepreneurs is becoming stronger.

Hungary is again showing the way of progress in Central and Eastern Europe. The father of glasnost and perestroika, Mr Gorbachev, has stated several times how the often radical social and political changes in the Soviet Union are drawing from the Hungarian experience.

But Hungarian policy cannot be considered as complacent. The 18 billion dollars foreign debt, a scarcely developing economy, a 17% inflation rate, unemployment at our doorstep, the obsolete structure of industry, stalling CMEA-cooperation, dependence on western technology are all heavy burdens on Hungarian society. Nevertheless, the chances for breaking out of this are good, because Hungary is so deeply set in international cooperation, so integrated into European culture, respecting humanitarian causes to the extent that it can undoubtedly count on the advantages of international cooperation to help it out of the critical condition it has got into, mainly because of its own mistakes and because of unfavourable factors in international economic development. "As foreword, I'll cite some parts of interviews I made last year for my book, "After the bargain".

Those politicians are the main subjects of this book, but that of '89, too. Were they "more competent, politically more able"?

Miklós Németh

Born in 1948 into a peasant family. Graduated at the Karl Marx University of Economics. Lectured for six years at the university and then became Deputy Head of Department in the National Planning Office. Member of the Party since 1968.

From 1981 worked for the Economic Policy Committee of the Central Committee of the HSWP. Leading politician of the economic development program. Chairman of the Economic Committee and the Economic Work Team of the Central Committee.

In May 1988 the national party conference elected him to the Political Committee of the HSWP. Since November 1988 Prime Minister of Hungary.

“The attempts to break out of the present situation will disrupt the previously developed balance of interests since the changes affect the individual strata and groups of society differently. We must realize that differing interests are emerging in our developing political system more markedly than before and looking for opportunities to express themselves. Therefore we can forecast many debates and conflicts.

It is a common feature that no full social consensus can be expected since there will be unsatisfied and arguing strata whichever version we decide on, mainly those who will find themselves in a disadvantageous situation. Therefore it would be a serious political mistake to try to force a full consensus on behalf of the entire society. It would be similarly a serious mistake if we failed to make it clear to society that the country can break out from its current difficult situation in the long run only if we shoulder the present conflicts.”

Imre Pozsgay

Born in 1933 in Kóny. Candidate of philosophical sciences. Member of the Party since 1950. Between 1957 and 1965 held various posts in the

Bács-Kiskun County Committee of the HSWP. In 1968 he was elected Secretary of the Party County Committee. He worked as Deputy Head of Department of the Central Committee of the HSWP, then became Deputy Head of the editorial board of the journal "Társadalmi Szemle" (Social Review). In 1975 he became Deputy Minister of Culture, later Minister of Culture, then Minister of Education. Between 1982-88 he was General Secretary of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front. Member of Parliament. In May 1988 he was elected member of the Political Committee of the HSWP by the national conference of the Party. Since 29 June 1988 Minister of State, member of the Council of Ministers. Major Publications: "Socialist Society and Humanism" (1978), "Democracy and Culture" (1980). Candidate for President of the Hungarian Republic.

"For this very reason we must know the world, but the world must know us, too. So as not to lose our sense of balance, we must strengthen our national identity. At present, our economic performance is hardly a basis for self-respect; but we may have a firm basis for self-esteem if we implement a sweeping reform, create greater freedom and build a democratic socialism. A laboratory like this will again have a world-historical significance.

And instead of false self-complacency and empty-headed bragging, we may simply feel that the world would be poorer without us. We, Hungarians in Hungary, would reinforce the feeling in Hungarians throughout the world that it was worth being a Hungarian in Csikszereda, Ungvár, Galánta, Kismarton, Ujvidék, New York, Buenos Aires or Canberra... It rarely happens that the clocks of Hungary and world history strike in union. This is an exceptional moment. We must make clever use of the time. Let us not see Kossuth's observation come true this time: "There is a red threat running all through Hungary's history: the word late." Yet I suggest that we should search our souls now to decide on everyone's responsibility inwardly, including our own. Then we have come to terms with ourselves, we should seek out in the outgoing generation for what was great and respectable in it. This alone will increase our self-esteem and well-being. The task now is not merely political; it is historic. It will turn out now if our lot is to crush ourselves on our own barriers or to crush our barriers. The answer must be obvious. The debate of the party conference has confirmed our belief that we may become the vanguard again—and there will be a Hungarian renaissance."

Rezső Nyers

Born in 1923 in Budapest of a working-class family. He is a typographer by profession. Joined the Social Democratic Party in 1940. After the liberation, Deputy Secretary of the SDP in Kispeszt. Head of Ministerial Department in the 50s, then became Chairman of the National League of Cooperatives. Between 1951-56 studied at the Karl Marx University of Economics.

From November 1956 on the government commission for public supply. From 1952 member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In 1960-62 Minister of Finance. Between 1962 and 1974 Secretary of the Central Committee, between 1966 and 1975 member of the Political Committee. In the 60s played prominent role in reforming the economic system and in working out the new economic mechanism introduced on 1 January 1968.

At the time when the reform come to a halt he lost his membership in the Political Committee.

Between 1974-81 Director of the Economic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and since 1981 scientific advisor there.

The national party conference of the HSWP in May 1988 elected him to the Political Committee again.

Representative of Parliament between 1948-53 and from 1958 to now. Later, Chairman of the Committee on Commerce and Trade of Parliament.

Since July 1988 President of the HSWP, since October, President of the HSP.

“As far as I can see, there are two vigorous trends within the Hungarian communist movement. In between there is a significant stratum that finds it difficult to identify itself with either. One of these trends stresses that the primary task of communists is to unify political thinking and action essentially on the basis of the prevailing political principles. According to this approach, most of the present political problems originate from the lack of a united communist stand.

The supporters of this trend believe that the majority of the present problems arise from the fact that we communists have not yet given an adequate answer to a significant portion of the questions facing us. These answers are yet to be worked out. And this process of working out answers could create a new unity that might not attract everyone, but that would not matter.

It must be admitted that we do not know ourselves well enough. The trends referred to have not evolved clearly as alternatives to one another. There is

no clear definition of positions, we are still groping in the dark. One thing is certain, that we need a new unity in the given situation.”

György Fejtő

Took a degree in Mechanical Engineering at the Technical University, Budapest, taught at the university for two years. From 1972 worked in the youth movement, becoming Head of Department of the Young Communist League. From 1980 to 1984 was the First Secretary of the Young Communist League Central Committee. Between 1985-87 was the First Secretary of the Party County Committee in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. Since June 1987 Secretary of the Central Committee of the HSWP. Resigned in October 1989.

“We intend to establish forums for consultations, advisory bodies, which will provide adequate frames for discussing alternative ideas and for their sober consideration. But this needs mutual—and I emphasize the mutual—goodwill and intent. We should create a political culture for the constructive handling of alternative ideas. This is in the interest of all forces that genuinely seek renewal and development. But it is not in the interest of those who are seeking confrontation and a show-down, whatever their position. Even if on a narrow basis, there does exist in the country a definite hostility to socialism and the system. Under and over-estimating this circumstance would both be a mistake. There are individuals and groups which exclude themselves from dialogue because of their ideas and acts, no matter they actually declare. Previously they professed “the worse, the better”. Recognizing this as unmaintainable, they have recently changed tactics and proclaimed an alleged willingness to compromise by reference to “imposed geopolitical fundamentals and realities”. But their real views are characterized—less openly—by anti-communism and by making a fetish of bourgeois democracy and the multi-party system. They try to attack and disrupt in every possible field and they devote their main energies to discrediting the party and socialism. We have to make it clear that the law does not ensure legal room for manoeuvre for these individuals and groups.”

Kálmán Kulcsár

Between 1950 and 1957 worked in the judiciary and became member of the Supreme Court. Between 1957 and 1969 worked at Loránd Eötvös University of Sciences and at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He spent 1965-66 in the United States as a Ford Fellow. Between 1969 and 1983 Director of the Sociological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Party since 1970. Professor, full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 1982, becoming its Deputy Secretary General in 1983. Minister of Justice since June 1988. At present he is Chairman of the Hungarian Sociological Society, Editor of the journal "Social Research" and Vice-Chairman of the Hungarian Section of the Hungarian-Soviet Sociological Cooperational Committee. His major works: Society, Policy, Law (1974), Contemporary Hungarian Society (1980), Modernization and Hungarian Society (1986). Candidate for President of the Hungarian Republic.

"All reforms are distorted if they involve only one or another sphere of the society. So our reform will inevitably remain distorted, if it only involves the economy. As a point in case let me tell you that in the 1840s the German economist, Friedrich List, wrote on the Hungarian economic reform—as you know, we were undertaking reform at that time as well—and concluded that the economic reform in Hungary could only be successful if the system of political institutions and the whole society could be transformed. This is just as true today.

In the Hungary of modern times, even since political parties in the modern sense began functioning, with one exception, the dominant party has never been overthrown either by an election or by parliamentary action. In practice we have always had a "one-party system", even if other parties, as participants, were present on the political stage. Initiating now a transformation in this aspect most likely would generate political lability so deeply, that it would be impossible to handle the present difficulties in the economy and in the society. Such kind of changes needs more stable conditions."

Sándor Nagy

Born in 1946 in Vértés into a working-class family. Graduated at the University of Economics, later taking doctors degree in economics. Party member since 1968 . Between 1970 and 1973 senior lecturer at university. Since 1979 Deputy Head and later Head of Department of University and College Affairs in the Central Committee of the Hungarian Young Communist League. Secretary of the National Youth Committee for seven years. Since December 1984 Secretary of the National Council of Trade Unions and its General Secretary since June 1988. Between 1980-85 member of Parliament, member of the Presidential Council.

In May 1988 he was elected member of the Central Committee of the HSWP by the national Party Conference. From this membership he resigned in August 1989. Member of Parliament.

“Those who have been following the press and the various developments in public life, have for a long time perceived that at different levels of the political, economic and social leadership are people who have for a long time been insensitive to the changes that matured in the country over a long time period. This stagnation in the various levels of the leadership is being attacked by a small, but in its conduct and public actions, quite an active group which wants to change everything in Hungary, a group which professes super-reforms through the action of super-reformers, but it imagines all this in a way that is in contradiction to the historic traditions, the cultural and geographical features, the potentials of the country and the reality of the existing social and economic structures.”

(Mr Nagy's are totally right in December 1989. too.-L.G.)

Imre Tarafás

Took primary and post graduate degrees at the Karl Marx University of Economics. Between 1973 and 1986 employed at the National Bank of Hungary as Head of Department of Current Price Policy. From 1986 Head of Department in the National Planning Office, since February 1987 Scientific Secretary of the Hungarian Society for Economics. Professor, author of a book on international financial relations. A work co-written with Lajos Gubcsi "The Invisible Money" was also published in German. As a financial expert has represented the World Bank in several countries. Since October 1988, First Deputy President of the Hungarian National Bank.

"It may sound shocking but I am of the view that our economic policy in the early eighties, at the time of the liquidity crisis, was basically correct. The re-establishment of the external balance and then the minor reduction of our debts were the top priorities, preceding any other objective. Although the measures taken were extraordinarily harsh, prices and corporate taxation were significantly increased and, in general, domestic demand was reduced in an unusually firm manner, the target, the immediate and major improvement of the balance of payments was successfully met. It would have been hardly possible to set any other target with the threat of a liquidity crisis looming. For had we tried to squeeze out the transformation of the economic structure simultaneously with the improvement of the balance of payments, which would have been illusory in any case, this would have decreased domestic absorption to such a staggering extent that it could not have been fitted into the system of political balances of the past thirty years.

– Could the overall picture of this period be so unambiguously positive?

– Not at all. That is why I said that the economic policy was "basically correct". Of course, problems continued to accumulate as the economic structure remained unchanged for the reasons mentioned above, and it was quite obvious that this would take its revenge. In fact, we made an even greater mistake: economic policy did not attempt to restructure the economy, not even to the extent possible and still tolerable."

Ferenc Vissi

Educated at the Karl Marx University of Economics, in theoretical planning and analyzing. Taught at the university for three years, then section head at the National Material and Price Office and head of the Office's Foreign Trading Price and Fiscal Department. From 1977 on, he was dealing with the general problems of economic regulation at the Central Committee of the HSWP.

Nominated on 1 January 1981 as Head of Department for Economic Regulation at the National Planning Office. Became Secretary of the Coordinating Committee for Economic Regulation set up to draw up the broad range of steps needed to improve regulation.

In 1984 became Deputy Head of the National Material and Price Office. Lecturer on price-policy at the Department of Finance of the University of Economics. Author of several studies, his book "Economic Regulation" was published 1987.

Since May 1989 the President of the Price Office, State Secretary.

"True, we did this mindful of the fact that simulated market is still better than nothing or than the exclusion of the market forces. It was no wonder that the hope for results either failed to materialize at all or had been very limited. Half-solution is no solution in this case either.

Unfortunately enough, we are in a situation today when anybody can claim to be a 'reformer' who comes forward with an idea or, with the opposite of the very same idea. In our country debate ethics have yet to be improved. Prestige is a very big power and it will not endure personal insult any better than enemies.

I can tell from my own experience that professional debates—or differing views—are taken as a personal insult by those whose opinion is opposed and, in this way, we cannot expect even a minimum tolerance towards differing views.

To change the situation we must hold many, many public debates and in the course of these debates we can find out who is the reformer and whether it is the reformer and the economic management who are actually opposed to one another."

(Right! Nothing has been changed since 1988.—L. G.)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. IN PLACE OF A FOREWORD

Ever since I can remember, I have been against the settling of accounts. Only Danton, the revolutionary who died such a merry death, could declare cheerfully: "And show my head to the people. It will be worth the trouble". I rather agree with Leonardo da Vinci, the most honourable wise man of old time, who tried to make his people understand that: "The greatest and at the same time the smallest rule, is the rule over oneself".

However, I have always been in favour of the rendering of accounts, even if I myself, unlike my opponents, have not been one for calling others to account.

In this book too, my intention is merely to give an account.

What I have to say will undoubtedly appear subjective in many places, in tone, structure and choice of subject, and will be judged differently by different people. However, I have had to accept this risk. For I did not agree with Rezső Nyers—or with Károly Grósz who supported him in part—in what he said to the members of the staff of the Central Committee on the morning of 10th October, namely, that it is still too early to draw a balance of the congress.

I fear that the situation is precisely the contrary: everyone has drawn up his own balance. And those who are still uncertain, will be obliged to make a clear choice soon. Right from the outset, I held that this congress is a decisive turning point, but at the same time, because of the lack of guidance for the party and the congress, or rather, their guidance in the wrong direction, the party member delegates would be in such ethical and emotional uncertainty that they would owe responsibility first of all to themselves, to their own honesty and internal peace. They should not accept any uniform, any compulsory etiquette or rules. They should be sovereign. And this sovereignty should be total. Those who do not succeed in achieving this will be obliged to later on, if they fail to accept this, they may have to spend days and months in a state of schizophrenia and unprincipled compromise.

I made my own decision—at least as far as my congress mandate was

concerned—at 6.25 pm on 9th October 1989. I gave back my mandate to the congress. I was fully aware that this would inevitably impose certain decisions on me and on the new leadership too, regarding myself. And this necessarily affects my relationship to the Hungarian Socialist Party, and the relationship of the decisionmakers to me, as a former member of the HSWP. In 1970 I joined a party that was boldly new, the most modern party in Central and Eastern Europe. And for me, it remained such a party for 19 years. The fact that I do not intend to transfer my membership to the new party, and that I voted “no” several times in the course of the congress on fundamental issues cannot be attributed to nostalgia, or to emotional or bureaucratic pedantry. Quite the contrary. I did so because the compromises have gone too far. There was no radical separation. The distinction between the proposed platforms and political ethics had become blurred. The Presidium appeared to me incapable of functioning, which would lead to a further spread of the chief danger—and I never regarded this chief danger as being what would happen to the party, but whether the party would remain capable of guiding the country and society in this disordered situation which had been created primarily by we party members and above all by our leaders—in short, there was an ever growing danger that the country would drift onto a course of prolonged instability. The further blurring of lines at the congress, and the bodies and apparatuses remaining vague in profile, did not help in the radical clarification of the situation, the responsibility and the search for a way out.

SYMBOLS

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

It is a mere coincidence that I completed this manuscript on 23rd October. At all events, this is a *symbolical* day which stands for a great deal of things in the past, present and future. *It contains at once* all the main features of the history of Hungarian society. The radical manifestation of the force of the people. The sudden, inspired emergence of the people’s leaders, followed by their dramatic feltering and the internal dissension that this brings, and finally their downfall through outside intervention. And also, that *after this downfall*, the people never want to reopen the painful wounds, but always and at once resume their persistent work for survival, for the advancement it hoped once again to achieve.

I would have expected the congress and especially the new party leadership to make at least a brief assessment of the situation at the end of the day on 9th October and the beginning of the day on 10th October.

The people, regrettably, now use “pocket watches” and they often look into

their pockets to see where they stand. And if this is the case, I consider that the congress, the party and the new leadership were wrong in waiting for the solemn seconds of the noon chimes.

There is a need for an evaluation. And even if it is mistaken, it has the advantage that it *can be debated*. For, just as it is true that the whole course of our history has been accompanied by the word "late", it is also true, as Madame de Sévigné put it: "it is too late to change on one's deathbed". Of course, the wise saying of the Talmud is equally true: "Judge late, and after consideration".

It is my belief and experience that we live in a free and democratic country. So everyone can decide for himself whether the lady was right, or whether there is greater wisdom in the Talmud.

Although I waged a few struggles before and during the congress, I was able to remain calm throughout, given the possibility of individual freedom. Of course, you will sometimes find a more heated approach in this book. But I feel no anger, and I ask the same of those who feel affected by what I have to say. Let us take Shakespeare's advice, for deep anger bites far too deep. But we must also know that it is not fitting to stand before the reader, without names, hiding behind words and lines.

When I resolved, on 14th October, to write this book, I had to make a clear decision. Should I write? Or should I rather adopt, in our present fickle political practice, an approach of exceptional ethical rectitude, such as that of György Fejti who, with unwavering consistency, replied in answer to my question—and this is in line with the practical steps that he took after the congress—that he does not wish to make any comments because, in his present situation (which has been unexpectedly and undeservedly restricted—L.G.) he is unable to be of any help and he does not want to do any harm. For this reason, he requested me not to refer to him.

He is right.

However, our differing personalities oblige us to adopt different positions and attitudes. This is true for Károly Grósz, Rezső Nyers, György Fejti, Imre Pozsgay, Lajos Szabó the managing director, László Ádám the miner, and others. It is a good thing that it is so. It is another matter whether it is a good thing now. Only history will be able to give the answer to that.

Because, just as for Hölderlin, it will probably remain a mystery for us all, "how something is born pure".

There is no such thing.

Birth is accompanied by blood and sweat, just like life. We here in Hungary, are all in painful labour. In historical perspective, this congress is probably not more than a heaving sigh. The baby is born in the end.

Who will be the godfather? Will a Caesarean section be needed?

I would like to ask for your attention.

It is not a printing error that I dated the congress from 5th October. The pre-congress meeting was only a technical test in appearance. In reality, those few hours late on Thursday evening already contained everything in condensed form.

NERVES ON END

I have found with sorrow in recent months that our innocent citizens who have a natural desire for a peaceful and calm life, are having their nerves constantly assaulted and kept on end by a constant flow of commotion and agitation from political circles and the press. Why do they have to be deprived of their right to calm. Their everyday lives—our everyday lives—form an endless and unbreakable continuity. Does everything that has ever happened in this country count for nothing? Surely Leonardo is right when he says that “nothing is the absence of existence”. The partial information, the unspoken words and sentences further add to the internal unease. I would like to bring my readers a little closer to the state of being well-informed, to the truth that can never be attained.

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

2. BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING

(Machiavelli: “It is not possible to live according to the old order of things, and there is no one to bring the new law”.)

It is my duty to begin by clarifying a few points for the reader that have determined the direction of my movement in the past years and that also partly affected my possibilities for political action at the congress. In quoting Machiavelli above, it was certainly not my intention to convey the message that “there is no one to bring the new law”.

Quite the contrary. Hungary has done more in the past year and a half to lay the foundations of social democracy and for its dynamic expansion, than at any other time in the past century. And it has done more than its neighbours. The government guided by the HSWP and the Parliament which also

consisted of party members to 75 percent have adopted fundamental laws that make our development in the field of European political culture irreversible. New names, previously known in more limited circles and in other fields, have come to the fore among the representatives of democracy—in addition to and ahead of the recognized figures in the opposition groupings as well as in official bodies. The country has been able to see the names of Kálmán Kulcsár and György Fejtő, Sándor Nagy and Pál Vastagh, Ferenc Vissi and Imre Tarafás, Miklós Németh and Jenő Kovács in a different light. At the same time, due to a complex chain of many different causes, the names of Károly Grósz and János Berecz have unfortunately been written off, while Imre Pozsgay, another leading figure of the coalition of last May, been forced to wage a hard struggle. We have become acquainted with Zoltán Bíró, with Sándor Csoóri as a politician. We have been able to see János Márton and György Ruttner. And so on.

To clarify my position, I must begin at the beginning, among other things, with two letters and a brief conversation. Naturally, I have given a great deal of thought to whether it is right to publish my letter to Miklós Németh, and another letter that I wrote, this time after the congress, with the same text, to Miklós Németh and Imre Pozsgay. My insignificant person speaks against it. But their outstanding possibility and responsibility perhaps justify my sharing with the readers the remarks and requests I addressed to them.

“Dear Miklós,

Budapest, 26 th September 1989

Assuming that we will have the opportunity during the session of Parliament to exchange views in person on a vital concrete question of our political affairs (television, press), I take this opportunity to refer to a few matters in writing.

1. For the past month and a half or so, I have been openly and unequivocally arguing with people, from top political leaders to the different forces in the country (that is, from Imre Pozsgay, György Fejtő, Jenő Kovács, Csaba Hámori, Sándor Nagy, etc., to numerous county delegates' meetings and county leaders), to convince them that they should give you a vote of confidence for the post of party president too, until the elections. Of course, while continuing to act as head of the government. In this way, the party under your direction would unequivocally, in entirely renewed form in its leading posts and program, serve the cause of stability of the government.

Rather than listing all the arguments for and against, I will mention only one here: in all the democratic countries I know, the elected president of the leading party is at the same time the candidate of the party contesting the election for the top public office. In the case of Hungary, for the time being this post is that of prime minister. Since the president of the republic must be made neutral, this will be so in the future too.

Right from the outset I have agreed with your efforts to lead and organize the government in the direction of its sovereignty. And right from the start, I have not agreed with the fact that you have been restricted within the four-man team of the Presidium.

On this point our views are identical.

What we do not agree on, is whether this government can become independent of the party, and above all that it cannot become independent of the new, militant party. Quite on the contrary: the party consolidated in this way can be a firm support for the work of the government. The top leaders should have played with clean cards, but this did not happen because of the tactical manoeuvres on all sides, and as a result 1200 delegates are drifting to and fro under the influence of heated feelings and naive views.

It is still not too late even now.

The member of the four-man team with the best chance is the one who openly declares that he would lead the party, as its president. Since this cannot be Imre Pozsgay and the other two members do not have the capabilities needed for dynamic leadership, you should accept the leadership from this point of view too. And if you do this, you should stop hiding away from the idea, but strengthen these arguments to bring the delegates into a position where they must choose, even before the congress.

It is my conviction that if the trio of government-party-leadership-party membership (delegates) continue to follow different directions, the result will be chaos. At the same time, everybody is obviously waiting hopefully to see who they can support as candidate for party president.

I could raise many arguments in support of this: I mentioned to you in my letter that I wrote at the end of the summer that I wanted to speak to you on the question of "who should be the president". And I already had this idea in mind then.

I regret that you didn't give me the opportunity to put this to you, and as a result I have been agitating and organizing largely in the dark, from small town to county seat, from simple delegates to the highest-ranking leaders. But it is not only me that you cannot leave in uncertainty. I would be misleading you if I failed to tell you that the excellent, highly experienced politicians with good organizing and leadership abilities of our common

generation are also confused. You have remained aloof and are heading in a different direction in this respect. However, the new generation in the party and the government composed of highly qualified people cannot continue the state of dual power, because in the end both will be weakened and in addition—quite apart from the fact that I hope that you have good chances of leading the government during the period of coalition government too—conditions of prolonged social and political instability will arise, during which it will be impossible to recover, and perhaps even to manage the crisis. Apart from the names mentioned above, I could mention such politicians with individual character as Pál Vastagh, István Pálffy and others. With their capabilities, they could all take part in a broad national cooperation. This can be seen from the role they have played so far.

To sum up: we face a struggle in which one person should coordinate the work of the party and government, at least until the elections. All notions based on and striving for the “party neutral” situation of after the elections are false, in view of the fact that until then many things could act as destabilizing forces.

Such a party and government led by Miklós Németh could only work effectively and decently if it is based on a Németh-Pozsgay axis, complemented by the firmest government and party policy figures and managers of our generation. Such a cooperation cannot be organized in secret, surrounded by mutual promises and lack of trust. This can only be achieved if it is done openly and with personal guarantees right from the outset. For a lack of trust up to and during the congress can only give rise to ill-informed hysteria or a disintegrating party, to political figures placed in a pitiful situation and making mutual accusations. Up to the elections the immediate interests of the party must be subordinated to effective government work based on such a firm consensus, then in the last phase leading up to the elections the government must take measures that could place the new party in a favourable position in the elections.

Seen in this context, what I said in Zalaegerszeg in early September may take on a different meaning for you. Allow me to quote it in full: “So we must close the negotiations (with the oppositional parties—L.G.) that are being conducted in Parliament; we must show what results they have produced and where it is no longer possible to make more concessions. We must show that this government is still the government of this party, and it must serve its goals. Even if it is—fortunately increasingly—a government of experts. We must not allow the legitimacy of the legally elected government and Parliament to be questioned, and the people undertaking a public role in them to be put to shame”.

When I made these remarks, I had already been organizing for weeks along the lines traced above, unfortunately, with only myself to rely on. We are unlikely to find any consolation in the fact that in this extremely critical stage of our history, everyone had "only themselves to rely on", since no one was prepared to show in which direction he was seeking allies. This applies to you too. The result is the disintegration we can see today. Károly Grósz and Rezső Nyers will not be able to lead a *fighting party*, and I am sure there is no need to comment on that. I make no secret of this opinion and I am prepared to argue in support of it in any open forum, including the congress. Despite this, it is conceivable that Rezső Nyers will come to the fore again at the last minute as a "wise compromise", and I would also mention that in these unguided preparations, the name of Gyula Horn, for example, has arisen in a number of places for the post of party president.

It is painful to see that you are extremely sensitive to the different declarations made by your contemporaries who share your way of thinking, whether they are made by Sándor Nagy or Lajos Gubcsi, while you show hardly any readiness for their integration, even though you are in the best position for this.

2. It also follows from the above that this coalition must regain the support of a part of the press, or of the different press organs. I obviously do not need to go into the details of who controls the press. But allow me to remind you of the chronology and choreography—as well as of the deliberate manner—in which the press took advantage of the chinks in the tactical and political cooperation between Grósz, Berencz, Pozsgay—and Miklós Németh (that is their tactical struggles against each other), while at the same time various people climbed to leading posts over their backs, and then, one after the other created an impossible situation, first for Grósz, then for Berencz, followed by attacks on Pozsgay—and it is only hope that prevents me from saying that the same fate will eventually reach Miklós Németh too.

It gives me no pleasure, not even the satisfaction of self-justification, to say that for the past two years I have been telling each of them separately and with almost maniacal insistence that this was to be expected—and now it has happened.

Whatever the risks involved and the tensions it may cause, I consider it a matter of vital necessity to obtain the post of chairman of the television immediately (even without this, the attempt made by Mr. Baló will lead to the organization of an "independent" television station), at least certain new structural elements should be introduced in the radio's management, and either the Magyar Hírlap or the Magyar Nemzet (daily papers) should be won for this political coalition. Without this our defeat is guaranteed and

government can become uncontrollable. The press is the strongest and most effective force today. It is therefore in the position to create an impossible situation for everything and everyone.

I cannot avoid saying what is now obvious: I should take over the management of the television, even if there are cries "from the other side". That is their method. Do we and can we cry out our ideas when they have completely taken over what is the most effective medium today? And we should see quite clearly that not only are there forces of opposition there, but here on our side too, we have, at least similar, forces of support. However, it is imperative to change the disrupted proportions: today's television and press will defeat the party and the government, and since it is not providing a forum for the forces that have genuine mass support, or is restricting their scope of action to a role as mere extras, this exclusion brings the danger of prolonged instability. National reconciliation does not mean that we should tacitly legalize the conditions that have been imposed, in the manner of the SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats).

Miklós, these are questions of vital importance that I feel I have to raise. I have no ambitions for power, I have settled the question of my present and future in my mind, and if you consider that you are unable or you do not want to give a clear answer to what I have written here about the immediate organization of such a coalition and the candidacy for the post of party president on this basis, as well as on the post of chairman of the television, then regard all this as simply interesting reading matter. In this case I promise you that I will not impose on your patience with similar approaches.

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

Yours sincerely
(Lajos Gubcsi)

Although I am not personally familiar with Miklós Németh's position and his work as prime minister, I can imagine what it must be. He is obviously bombarded with a flood of ideas on how to save the world. And in the mean time there is the weight of the 20 billion dollar debt, Bős and Nagymaros river dam project, the Workers Militia, the gigantic budget deficit, the increasingly sceptical western creditors, the total economic dependency on both East and West, the inflation rate approaching 20 per cent and the problem of unemployment for which there is no solution even over the long term. Delegations and petitions every day. Therefore—and since I am not someone driven by great personal ambitions or forced to make a career—I quietly acknowledged to myself that I did not receive an answer.

However, on the day after the congress I wrote another letter, and since I had

shown the above previous letter to Imre Pozsgay too, because he was affected by its content, I addressed this one to both of them. This time I was firmly convinced that I was disturbing them for the last time, at least in the form of such correspondence. I too had reached a point beyond which I could not go.

"Dear Imre, Dear Miklós, Budapest, 10th Oktober 1989

In recent weeks and months I have made no secret of the fact that I saw hope for creating the core of a stable leadership in a Miklós Németh-Imre Pozsgay team provided with open guarantees* and accepted in this way before public opinion too. I added to this the names of the politically most prominent representatives of our generation, without whom, in my opinion it is not possible to bring together once again the disintegrated processes (e.g. György Fejti, Pál Vastagh, Sándor Nagy, Jenő Kovács, István Pálffy, ect.). It was my intention in my speech to the congress on 8th October to expound this opinion word for word, but my efforts concerning the open vote created such tension that I did not want this to affect the cooperation mentioned, so I did not raise the matter there on Sunday morning. However, at the end of a big international press conference on Sunday afternoon I read my declaration on this matter. I shall include the text in this letter, with the remark that my position was received by the world press, but the Hungarian press present there showed no response.

"Stressing the importance of open nomination, although of course, following my own train of logic, I have adopted the following personal position. The new party needs an entirely new generation at all points of party leadership. It is the principal obligation of the new party to ensure its government of its full support, because the most important national interest today is for the government to play a stabilizing role, seeking and building social equilibrium. The Hungarian political set-up will not tolerate an unstable new socialist party. And Hungarian society, which is showing strong signs of disintegration, will not tolerate an unstable government which is unable to produce adequate results. This means that the party can be successful in the months leading up to the elections if it gives its full support to its representatives in the government and Parliament, unlike the attitude it has

*The reader will probably be struck by the frequent emphasis placed in my approaches to our politicians on the notion of "open guarantees" for their agreements. The reason for this is that for forty years everything in Hungary was settled behind the scenes, among a few key people. As a result, the man in the street has had enough of fine words and promises. The winners in the coming elections will be those who have credibility in the eyes of the voters, not only regarding their future promises but also their past deeds.

shown so far. And in exchange, it will expect its government to bring its party into a good position before the elections, with its openly accepted, full cooperation. Since we are in a situation of crisis and disorganization, the state of disintegration that has existed so far between the party and the government could be ended by giving the head of the government the post of party president in this transitional period, as is the practice in democratic countries. As a result, together with the candidate for president of the republic, a genuinely new social and political force and leadership could come into being, grouped around Miklós Németh and Imre Pozsgay, to the benefit of the country. For if the party's social and even more its economic program remains as hidden as it has been so far in the congress, then the people can expect only one thing of us here: leaders of credibility who reveal the secrets of this program to the people, and then guarantee its implementation. We have been so busy debating our party affairs, that we have not yet addressed a word to the nation—although it is still waiting to hear those words, and as far as I know, it is waiting with great impatience." 3 pm, 8th October 1989
We did not address the nation later either.

Now that I am ending this role of unwanted advocate that I have played for several months (and even years), I note with sorrow that neither Imre Pozsgay nor Miklós Németh, for reasons best known to themselves, bothered to respond in any way to my ideas. In this way, their firm cooperation could not be manifested at the congress and presumably did not even take shape, even though such cooperation would have unquestionably drawn the support of the majority of the congress, and also of the genuinely new party too. They should have organized this not only to organize effective guidance in the party and the state sphere, but also to prevent the blurring of distinctions that marked the congress. As a result, the relations have necessarily shifted in the direction of a president of the type that corresponds to the situation.

It is obvious that in the past months entrenched groups, principally in Budapest and partly in the central party apparatus (to no small extent through their press contacts) decided in favour of Rezső Nyers and organized accordingly; this was achieved to a considerable degree by imposing closed list proposals on counties, or through forms of behaviour at the congress that collected signatures for Rezső Nyers, in both ways restricting the possibilities for a genuinely democratic decision.

While I esteem Rezső Nyers's character as an obviously moderate person, prepared to compromise and showing wisdom in his judgment, I nevertheless accept as a fully authentic assessment what he said about himself in the September issue of *Mozgó Világ* (Moving World) for Mr. Baló: "My mentality is such that I am not fitted to be a battering ram, to break down

towering obstacles under my leadership, by acting in an incendiary, inciting, mobilizing way; no I was not born for that. I am of use in other periods in the fluctuation of political life”.

I have agreed right from the start with this self—assessment of Rezső Nyers. It is a pity that he and his supporters were not consistent in this assessment. And the results of the three months of Rezső Nyers’s activity as president of the party, the ineffectiveness of the party leadership and the party confirm the correctness of this self-assessment made by Rezső Nyers.

I was therefore unable to accept the system of nominations that was manipulated from the outset and consequently the totally dictatorial election system. But that is my personal affair. However, the result of the election is a public affair. I hope that I will not prove to be right in my fear that the ineffectiveness of the oversized Presidium created in this way, and the National Committee that has still not been set up, the failure of the congress to show any concrete result for the community, the essentially unchanged structure of the four-men leadership team, that is, the internal tension that can be expected in it, could easily render totally incapable of functioning the political cooperation that is outwardly demonstrative but inwardly balancing precariously in the lack of a concept adopted by the congress and culpably neglecting economic, welfare and self-government matters.

Moreover, of the platforms that imposed compromise, it is only the Reform Alliance that can be regarded as a genuine platform, that has won justification for its existence in the past year, and with the role accepted subsequently by the Kósa Reform Block based on ethical foundations, it has trimmed the excesses of the reform circles. The other group, the Popular democratic platform, could have been a genuine one if many of us did not feel at the time that further organization was not really ethical in the disintegrating party, holding the view that the core of unity must be created first of all within the party. However, because of our self-restraining behaviour—our error—the different figures in the Budapest party apparatus who are not given to inhibitions imposed themselves on the genuinely popular delegates, mainly from the counties, making use of them practically overnight, for their own purposes and without any antecedents. This platform very rapidly split into two: the narrow circle of leaders acting in their name and the membership who were politically unprepared and therefore largely left out of the power trading. But due to a regrettable error, this small group was able to act against the strong Reform Alliance as though it represented the same force. In this way it imposed a groundless compromise on the reform forces, blurring differences. This platform can become a genuine platform that is truly popular and democratic if people of credibility are able to take over its

guidance. However, because of its lack of a sound foundation, for the time being this platform consists mainly of torn off roots and sunflower bending on an extremely thin thread. As a result it is unable to channel back to the masses of party members the potential strength of the new party.

Dear Imre, Dear Miklós,

On the evening of Sunday, 8th October, Comrade Nyers forced the issue of the operation of party organizations in the workplaces to the point of rupture, obviously directed against you, since your commitment in the opposite direction was obvious. Adopting the appearance of a simple speaker in the debate, he brought the congress to vote against you. That was the moment when, perhaps for the last time, representing the most progressive forces of the congress, you could have made an attempt to organize the new, genuinely structurally committed reform forces into a party. But you let this opportunity pass. You gave your names to a compromise of unforeseeable character and a Presidium expressing this was set up. I regret that this possibility was not utilised because of your lack of cooperation and the turn of events at the congress that held more and more uncertainties for you, and that the blurring of distinctions continues on the grounds of compromise.

I believe in compromises. I believe in the fundamental necessity of a left-wing coalition party on a popular scale. However, what I have said above also indicates that I consider the version that has been created to be fragile. I hope that I do not prove to be right. And I emphasise this once again because, with the—otherwise meaningless—attempt that I made for the past two years, I tried with obvious lack of success to create a national-popular-left wing leading political force, and in doing so I obviously overestimated the importance of my own arguments and person.

You know that I did not ask for and did not receive anything in the process. For this reason, while wishing you all the best in the new set-up, I am at the same time abandoning all my one-sided efforts made with an eye on the future, to set up such cooperation openly, with guarantees.

In view of all this, I shall not tie down your attention any more with similar attempts in person or in writing.

In the future, I can only extend help at any time and to anyone, if he openly and specifically ask for it.

Yours sincerely,
Lajos Gubcsi"

The first of these two letters contains a few sentences that may have aroused feelings of distaste in the reader on seeing them published. They were: "I cannot avoid saying what is now obvious: I should take over the management of the television, even if there are cries "from the other side". That is their method. Do we and can we cry out our ideas when they have completely taken over what is the most effective medium today? And we should see quite clearly that not only are there forces of opposition there, but here on our side too, we have, at least similar, forces of support. However, it is imperative to change the disrupted proportions: today's television and press will defeat the party and the government, and since it is not providing a forum for the forces that have genuine mass support, or is restricting their scope of action to a role as mere extras, this exclusion brings the danger of prolonged instability. National reconciliation does not mean that we should tacitly legalize the conditions that have been imposed, in the manner of the SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats)".(The events of the last two months underlined my fears. -L.G.)

RUMOURS

An explanation is needed to dispel any misunderstanding or obscurity:

1) In the different political and cultural fields of the Television increasingly strong closed cliques have been operating for decades and the circles from which they draw people to appear and make statements are also relatively limited, consisting of a small group. The Television, and especially the "TV News" and "The Week"—while also effectively performing its function of revealing the truth—gave a distorted and heavily imbalanced picture of the strength of the political and social circles it favoured. In this way it greatly magnified their impact. In the meantime, through intelligent manipulation, its operation is strongly destabilizing the government and party political forces that could still be, and need to be, guided.

Although there was occasionally talk in the past year to the effect that "you will be the chairman of the TV" I always regarded it as idle gossip, and dangerous as well because I am quite familiar from practice with the way in which news of this kind leads small, aggressive groups and individuals to rush and protest at the highest levels. I often had the feeling when I saw how my name cropped up—always quite independently of anything I did or said—that these rumours were created by the protesters themselves, to give them something to protest about and to keep my name in circulation with the labels they attached to it.

While I always rejected senseless gossip, for the first time in my life I myself raised the possibility of my chairmanship of the Television in my letter to Miklós Németh. Although I knew that the probability of this was extremely small, I felt that I had to declare my position openly and with a sense of responsibility, in view of the decline in standards and the weakening of the Television that were being caused by its incompetent heads. Since I have no messianic aspirations, I noted in my letter that I am not driven by ambitions for power and I have settled the question of my future in my mind, knowing when I wrote the letter in September that I would almost certainly not have a new job as of 1st November.

2) In speaking about the "disrupted proportions" in connection with the Television and, in general with the operation of the other press organs, I am referring to these narrow editorial and management groups that are taking over the press in its structure and are also exercising exclusive control over its highly respected workshop. In the case of television for example, I am referring to the obvious—organized—abuse whereby persons with management powers or in positions of management stand by and watch the shrinkage of the possibilities of the main team of several thousand, largely enthusiastic staff while, in place of central development and new funds for the headquarters that the staff should receive, and rightly expect, they are salvaging part of the funds, after laundering, into smaller studios and companies. They are still pursuing plans of this kind.

3) I do not wish to explain whether the Television is defeating the party and government: seeing the developments, everyone can decide on this for themselves. It is sufficient to ask where the party and the government stand today, and what support they have "received" in this from a few of the television's prominent cultural and political workshops, and from the top management. Or, to raise the question from another angle, what support has not been given.

4) While the representatives of parties holding bourgeois views are featured far more prominently than their real social strength on the television's second channel, as well as in the "News," "The Week" and the "Studio", organs and movements representing popular party, popular front, agrarian and rural interests and having genuine mass support, are barely given a place, not to mention the economic managers of large-scale industrial plants, the most outstanding, figures of economic life.

This is what I wrote about in my letter.

And I would add as a symbol that following the congress of the HSP, the chairman of the Television issued orders that the members of the central apparatus of the HSP (or the HSWP) are no longer entitled to enter the

headquarters on presentation of their identification, that is without special authorization.

I shall refrain from commenting on this, just as I shall not comment on the fact that the chairman of the Television speaks loudly of "national television", obviously with the approval of all the cultural and political management colleagues on whom he relies for support. (?)

And at the same time, it is widely known how firmly a few of them - especially the chairman—banished the popular-national ideas when they were working in the party apparatus, only a few years ago. And how quick Miklós Szinetár, one of the most striking examples of continuity in time, was to pin the label of nationalist on the most outstanding figures in television—or rather, after they were forced out of there and in their absence.

Nor shall I comment on the way Gyula Bereczky appeared with a wreath the size of a millstone—naturally behind the wreath, with calm dignity - in Heroes Square on the day of Imre Nagy's funeral. Even though Imre Nagy had little to do with the Television.

The organizers of the event were well aware of this. And they must also have know that a number of key heads of the Television and especially the chairman—all the chairmen—came from the party apparatus and certainly not in response to their electors. And so, of course, they did not receive an invitation for the sad occasion. And there is no need to comment then on how the Chairman had the imposing wreath carried by two program managers—otherwise well-known television personalities, János Horvát and István Wisinger—like two squires attending their knight.

Life itself will judge all this. Both today 's ruling party and the future coalition partners. For there are general ethical norms that are independent of party affiliation. And decency requires that they be respected. And the inside staff of the television will also want to have a say, one day, in whom it accepts as chairman of an institution that is the organization with the greatest influence in the country and perhaps the most complex in its structure.

It was because of these feelings that I decided to declare my intentions once, and only once, even if such a declaration could be misunderstood. The state of the Television is an eloquent expression of the general tottering.

P.s.: Life judged all this. The Television's leadership was obliged to resign in January. Everybody Bankruptcy—too late. A new stage of an old crisis. Who will be the President of the Republic?

II. TREATMENT "A"

SÁNDOR CSOÓRI:

GOOD WE WERE, GOOD AND OBEDIENT

Good we were, good and obedient,
like children hung with cherries in pedestrian precincts,
we did not tread on the grass, we did not lay mines
under the beds of dalias in the park.

Good we were, good and obedient:
when the odd stray dog was kicked or ill-treated
we winced for him, yes even in our dreams,
but would avoid the submission in men's eyes,
as if skirting the pools of blood at an accident...

Good we were, good and obedient,
ill fortune, clad in a skirt, flittered across
the aching bridge of our noses,
the past was fully fulfilled with us,
but we were still fondling the memory of war
as a grand ball with trumpets,
as if in our places a stuffed sack of ping
lay dreaming in bed, night after night".

(George Szirtes)

BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING

When did the change of direction in Hungary begin? At the end of 1986 when the Central Committee of the HSWP was forced to adopt a resolution giving its first, very cautious and modest analysis of the pile of ruins created by the Congress of March 1985, even though the CC never went as far as to call this a mistaken path? Or in January 1987, when Károly Grósz declared to the

stromy acclaim of several hundred artists: all the members of the Political Committee are responsible for the decline, for the lukewarm tone of the CC resolution mentioned above, for the increasingly disordered state of affairs in the country - but those who have been members for only twenty months do not share the same weight of responsibility as those who have been members for twenty years of this body that makes decisions against which there is no appeal? Then, in early 1987, this appeared to be such a bold challenge that the listeners caught their breaths for a moment before bursting into thunderous applause.

Where should we begin the analysis then? In the summer of 1987, when Károly Grósz became the prime minister and the smashing of the monolithic power of the old guard began? The question then was whether Károly Grósz would be able to achieve a break that makes people forget that he too worked for decades under the leadership of the old guard, even if with an independent character? Should we begin our examination in the autumn of 1987 when the new prime minister won enthusiastic approval in parliament and at the subsequent international press conference with his new style, his outspokenness, his open discussion of facts that were entirely new? After all, the heads of the Hungarian National Bank, Mátyás Timár and, above all, János Fekete, had been declaring up to the autumn of 1987 that our debt was 7-8 billion dollars. And then Károly Grósz told the whole world—even if only indirectly—that there had been a falsification of the facts: our debt was close to 50 per cent higher than what had been previously admitted, and the situation was extremely tense. How was this announcement received by the heads of the National Bank of Hungary who had done everything to touch up the figures? And how was all this received by the deputy prime minister, József Marjai? They all shared responsibility for the size of the loans and the way they were squandered.

So Károly Grósz broke with the figures of the past. But he did not break with the persons, who had not only stood behind the figures, manipulating them to various degrees, but who had actually created the situation.

(Looking back, it now seems incredible and an almost insoluble mystery why there is no talk at all today about the responsibility of Mátyás Timár and János Fekete, or of the former minister for finance, István Hetényi, or of József Marjai and others. And why our press, which has become so good at muckraking, even if it is sometimes not so enthusiastic about checking the concrete facts, is silent over these and other persons. And perhaps there is a reason why, with such patient treatment, in his speech in parliament in the spring of 1989 János Fekete was led to indulge in self-criticism, not of himself, but rather castigating the government. No, not the present

government, the earlier one. In which he was one of the leading figures, constantly praised by the Hungarian and international press. In the midst of the criticism being expressed today, is it enough to go no further than the mention of János Kádár's name? Who put the reports on his desk? And with what aim? The present should give an answer to this so that we can draw a clear dividing line. The new generation will not tolerate this heritage, which can also be linked to individuals and which is being imposed on it. Behind János Kádár, the symbol, we must seek those whom he symbolized and who cheerfully steered him in the direction of goulash communism. Who were the builders and commanders of the "most cheerful barracks" in the Eastern block?

It is not the purpose of this book to seek an answer to all that.)

The world passport has made us citizens of the world, while the financial bureaucracy and the inertia of commerce have sent us out into the world, free people in ragged trousers. And we are coming back loaded with all the baubles of the West. We have plundered the state coffers that were totally unprepared for such an assault. I remember the depressing scene of late 1988. A line of Trabant, Warburg and Skode cars, 30 kilometres long, queued up on the other side of the Hungarian-Austrian border on their way home, and like motorized camels of Central Europe they crept forward under their precariously balanced load of Yugoslavia's Gorenje deep-freezers.

THE BEGINNING

Károly Grósz's dynamic leadership as head of the government strengthened in late 1987 and early 1988 but was not accompanied by drastic changes in the top positions. All his attempts were defeated by the bureaucracy. Already at the end of 1987 one of the leading figures of the Hungarian banking world, in a position of responsibility, told an official audience of Austrian foreign affairs and external economic experts assembled in Vienna, with no small degree of malice that for the moment Grósz (Big) was still a big figure, but in a year's time he would be a very small one. And among others, the top financial management, the terror of the budgetary bureaucracy, acting in the same spirit as this statement, did everything in its power to sour any sense of achievement over the results of his efforts. Károly Grósz was naturally responsible for that situation. And for his failure to carry out a complete change of generation. He was content to appoint a few slick technocrats. He had no insight into the sluggish, lazy, deadening movement and figures of the second, third and fourth lines.

And before him, like a stone wall for almost a year stood the top party leadership, by then totally incapable of action but still wishing to exercise its power day by day with the old methods, the Political Committee which, at the end of 1987 and even as late as February and March 1988 was still busy finding ways of imposing the appropriate party rules to call Imre Pozsgay *back into line* after his "un-party-like" action at the gathering in Lakitelek, in sowing the intellectual seeds of the Hungarian Democratic Forum.

Spring 1988. Winter is dragging to a dreary end. Although the key figures of the prospective new leadership that is awaited with hope have long been on tense terms of rivalry with each other, many people hope to see a Grósz-Pozsgay-Berecz team, backed up in the *second line* by such figures who have shown great ability in political organization as Miklós Németh, György Fejtő, Sándor Nagy, perhaps Mátyás Szűrös who by then was hard-pressed but who had a clear view on some issues. In the economy young men were forced to watch from the sidelines, like Ferenc Vissi and Imre Tarafás, or the little-known foreign exchange expert, Imre Boros who had been relegated to the background by János Fekete; or the new rector who was preparing the radical renewal of the teaching of economics, Csaba Csáki; and perhaps the artists who had launched the last unsuccessful attempt in 1986-87 to break down their isolation, Sándor Csoóri, Imre Markovecz, Ferenc Kósa—and countless others. The party bureaucracy was still enormously powerful and closed at all points. Once again, but for the last time, it successfully defeated the last modest but determined attempt by the new generation, the "*great reform generation*" to take over the leadership of what was even then the most modern but undoubtedly declining party of Central and Eastern Europe.

A NOISY SPRING. ANNO 88

Let us quote the few lines from Sándor Csoóri's volume of poetry "Waiting in the Spring" (which appeared in 1983) which is most subjective expression of the mood of this period - 1988 - which Csoóri perhaps sensed in advance, and certainly projected long before it came:

SÁNDOR CSOÓRI:

"MEMORY OF SNOW

Winter sometimes changes its mind
and snow begins to fall
desperately, in thick flakes, as if winter
were afraid it might not last the night.
Best thing to do at such times is to disconnect the phone,
the doorbell, mull some wine on the stove,
pore over old letters,
and go back over your whole life also
as if it had never happened.
As if no gun barrel, no want
on eye had ever been fixed on you,
no ragged hand had reached out for yours,
and all that was politics, love, booming bells awaited you again beyond an ocean.
Best thing to do at such times is to imagine that you can still cry when
you've lost your head,
and that on Doomsday
you can stand in a light shirt, light jacket
beyond smoke, taverns, cemeteries,
staring down a country in grand decay,
your head filled with the memory of snow,
snow, snow falling like plaster silently peeling
From a cathedral wall."

(William ay Smith)

The main question of 1988 was whether the party conference imposed at the urging of the ever louder rumbling from the people would succeed in overthrowing the tired and untrained, gray old leadership; and who would lead this decisive battle? This question was also the more justified since the most outstanding members of this 55-year-old generation all had different strong points—but ones which did not complement or were not harmonized with each other. And of course, they also had weak points. There was a dividing line between them, on which the old guard had long been building, to divide the strength of the new line, its strongly national character, the considerable mass basis of its individuals. Would the Grósz-Pozsgay-Berecz trio united in a coalition; and with what content; and with what guarantees; and with what teams? And would they be sufficiently bold? And would there be people who would still accept, like Sadoveanu: "The sword does not sever the bent head".

I. BUDAPEST SPRING

A vital question for not only the country but our generation as well in February 1988 was *whether a new leadership would at long last declare itself and take over*. The party conference of May 1988 was still to come at that time. It was in the *ethical* interest of the various members of our generation to *help* with the preparations and endeavour to bridge over the occasional wide gaps between the approaches of the future leadership's individual members. Rather than seductive personal persuasion, such mediation can and should be conducted along the lines of program that, *beyond creating an election coalition among them (which seemed to be a pipe dream even in the February-March period) would also provide guarantees for a future governing coalition*.

Since the *very beginning* of 1988 we had known that the old guard was no longer acceptable, having lost the people's trust and following. Meanwhile, the country was sliding towards an abyss and the press was *reinforcing the sense of doom*. The January 1988 issue of "Mozgó Világ" presented, consistently and thus probably deliberately aiming at deepening the sense of crisis, an image of a totally broken nation and land of Hungary, doomed to fail in all respects. The magazine said *no more than that*. Our question to the spirit of "Mozgó Világ" was: shall we now retreat or move forwards?

Who, then were the persons who could show the *way out*? The *names* below were far from being obvious in the beginning of 1988, with the helm of politics still firmly held by János Kádár, Károly Németh, Ferenc Havasi, György Aczél and others. It was difficult to complete the list and especially to replace it with the following one: Károly Grósz, Imre Pozsgay, János Berecz, György Fejtő, Miklós Németh, Sándor Nagy, Mátyás Szűrös and later, when the process was near completion, Csaba Hámori whom, according to the rules of *fair play*, I had to inform in his capacity as First Secretary of the Communist Youth Union's Central Committee, the organization in control of our weekly.

The *sequence* of these names was not random. It seemed obvious that Károly Grósz might be the leading figure of *this* team and later of the Party as well. But we would approach him not to avail if we did not bring him first of all the *supportive statements* of Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz who should declare that, *along* the lines of the rallying outlined by us, they would put aside their strong differences of opinion and the very diverse factors of their characters. And naturally, we could go to the Prime Minister of the time only if we had the *similar* agreements, promises and program-oriented

commitments of Miklós Németh, István Horváth, György Fejti, Sándor Nagy (and we hoped to bring in Mátyás Szűrös as well). In point of fact, Mátyás Szűrös had his doubts concerning these talks conducted mostly in secrecy and indeed, he stayed out of them. We informed him post facto, following the party conference held in May).

What was the line of thought for which we were seeking acceptance and for which we wished to gain the consent of Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz *in particular*? I would rather not recall here how we regarded the insufficiency of the old leadership. Let me add: it was far less simple than that, for there were those who thought János Kádár, György Aczél and Károly Németh would still play a *leading* role at the party conference. Later, at the end of March Károly Grósz supposed (and that was the only point over which we disagreed during the conversation in his Parliament office) that the party would *still* need János Kádár as No.1 leader, mainly because his person meant a guarantee for both our socialist allies and Western partners now that Hungary's economy was in deep trouble. With *imposing* honesty, Károly Grósz also stated that he did not know any politician, *himself or anybody else*, capable of achieving the respect enjoyed by Kádár, and such a change would take *years*.

So *what* was the connecting link that we *offered*?

1.) The group of leaders indicated above would *put aside* their personal reservations towards each other and *create an alliance*. *Not only in promises but on the basis of political and economic programs*, by stepping forward *in public* (and we insisted) rather than in *behind-the-scenes* secret conversations, they would guarantee the contents, durability and purity of their alliance. That public appearance had to take place in early May. And since we knew that Political Committee members and Central Committee secretaries must not attend any major public forum *without prior announcement* (and we also knew that our action *had been reported* by the appropriate persons to the appropriate persons), we suggested to hold a "Magyar Ifjuság meeting" at the conference room of the rector of the economic university. (M. I. was our newspaper). The event would be attended by the above team of politicians and we would invite 60 to 70 "listeners" representing in our opinion Hungary's intellectuals who would participate in the dialogue and, like a computer's memory, *record what they hear and recall it later*. Csaba Csáki, the enterprising rector of the university, was quite willing to house such a "meeting".

(Indicating now that in Appendix I we are publishing the list of intellectuals compiled by ourselves—and please note that we were far from meaning those Budapest-based representatives of intellectuals regularly invited for decades during party congresses by György Aczél to attend friendly chats with János Kádár—I was also to *apologise* to the bearers of those names. For, as it will turn out later, the meeting did not take place after all, so our list remained private, reflecting *our intentions rather than* the assent of those concerned.) When Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz, later others, and finally even Károly Grósz had *accepted* this criterion (that is, our insistence that it was not only an election alliance we expected them to create but also a co-operation in controlling Party and government on the basis of a solid and clear division of work) we could assume we were representing the *nation's interest*.

To each of them we stressed that even our generation would remain *broken and divided* if they went on practising the *same discord* on the principle of “divide and rule” as the *previous leadership*. The *young generation* thus needs a focal point which sustains their faith that if they undertake to participate at full steam in the work facing us for the next decade or two, they can contribute to overcoming the crisis and later to the country's advancement. *This is why we believed* so fervently that, understanding this, the above group of leaders would rally.

2.) And if they did so, our *second* offer to them would stand, too. We were of the opinion that, apart from their narrow management teams, they should not bring their *individual* staffs of sometimes enticingly sweet-mannered people who previously had been good mainly at holding their bosses *apart* and supporting them in their battles against each other, displaying little expertise in how to forge the leaders into a *joint* force.

So we suggested that, with the help of ourselves and others of our generation, at lightning speed they should form a 600-800-1000-strong force of highly qualified members of the young and middle *generation* (that is, people in their 30s and 40s) who would not only carry out a generation change but also surpass their predecessors *structurally* (we gave special emphasis to that) as well as *professionally*. *Harmonized by those very leaders, capable of co-operating at every point, they would provide a control basis behind the leaders. And the members of this control basis would know where their fellows were working on what. Moreover, they would all be able to form circles of influence around themselves, multiplying the numbers and force of the second echelon's leadership team.* The names we brought up included Imre Tarafás, Ferenc Vissi, Péter Balázs, Imre Boros, István Pálffy, Jenő Kovács, Imre Nagy, Ferenc Glatz, Sándor Szórádi, László Varga, and many

others. Rather than going on with that list, we apologise to them for using their names without their consent.

We also added that this structure must be so *comprehensive and obvious*, that, for instance, a provincial council chairman in Zala should know about the plans of the National Theatre's manager—I might have used *any other* symbolic example but we happened to mention that one then.

3.) Third, we said: if this able mass structure lines up behind the leaders' visible coalition and program, it must be shaped in such a conscious way, as to provide *a readjustment of proportions by its composition in those fields where certain narrow interests had an almost exclusively powerful monopoly of influence. We had five such monopolised spheres in mind: the press; the foreign trade and international finances; such important workshops of domestic economic control as the National Bureau of Planning, the National Bank of Hungary and the Ministry of Finance; the ideology workshops controlling the interpretation of social processes; and finally, the controlling bodies of art and culture.*

We suggested a *readjustment of proportions* since we thought that, should the above spheres maintain their almost *exclusive power* and their very well organized, systematically and minutely "*harmonized*" groups *in top positions* remain interested in defending and protecting their *own* needs and interests, then the leadership pivot mentioned in Point I would for a very long time remain unable to see things *in depth* and make decisions *for the nation's benefit*.

The above politicians received all these proposals with more or less sympathy and assent. Some of them, including Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz, actually *entrusted* us to start building bridges between them on that basis. Others were more cautious, saying such an experiment might bring little results in their opinion. Those showing such caution included, for instance, Sándor Nagy, György Fejtő, Miklós Németh and, *towards the end of April* when he first *heard* about our *almost completed* scheme, even Csaba Hámori warned us to be careful.

It was obvious that, for some of them, the whole business was rather unpleasant in a way. The lack of enthusiasm in some cases was perhaps partly due to their aversion for each other, the rigour of party discipline in the leadership or the frustrating experience of the previous years.

Nevertheless, we were enthusiastic, for *nobody* said no to us. Even Károly Grósz dissented only in the problem concerning János Kádár's *replacement* and in that the first and most important of the five areas suggested by us was for him the shift of proportion in the *external economy*, rather than that of

the press. *Finally*, the last objective of our talks and mediation was to make *everyone* accept Károly Grósz's absolute role of leader and coordinator *until* the May party conference, including the condition that he could stop the organizing of such a team at any moment *before* the conference; the prospective leaders (Grósz, too) also undertook to start governing the country and party in a *clearly formed division of work rather than such centralization around one man*.

On March 31, 1988 when Károly Grósz honoured me by allowing me to report to him about the results achieved *until then*, he *gave me his consent*. Following that, we sent each of the future leaders that list of 60-70 names (and for us as well as for these leaders a co-operative's president and a factory manager are also intellectuals, and so are a small town schoolmaster and a physician) with the note that we *would hold* the "meeting" in May.

The most important negotiation, a *coordination meeting between Károly Grósz and Imre Pozsgay* took place in mid-April. Do not misunderstand me: I am well aware that it would have taken place even without our help. This meeting may have been the most important guarantee for the will of the *nation* (Pozsgay) and of the *party members' delegates* (Grósz) to flood the party conference in May. (And so it happened. With the almost identically long bursts of applause following their speeches, Károly Grósz and Imre Pozsgay could rest assured in the knowledge that the country's most representative political force was *behind* them.) But let us return to two more thoughts.

First: some of my readers may have fleetingly thought by now that we organizers and myself personally were hunting for *future* gratitude in the shape of top political posts.

Please silence that thought: *reality refutes it*. In fact, as far back as in early February when our planning and organizing work had not yet started but we were already inhaling the disturbing influence of nihilism pouring from "Mozgó Világ", Prime Minister Károly Grósz asked Central Committee Secretary János Berecz and Communist Youth Union First Secretary Csaba Hámory who supervised my work as editor-in-chief for my transfer to him, offering me the post of Deputy Minister of State. And both of my superiors made supportive statements to both the PM and me.

On March 31 when he received me in the Parliament Károly Grósz started our discussion with his natural heartiness, reminding me that he had requested my transfer as deputy of the future Minister of State... and before he could go on, I politely *interrupted* him, *asking* him not to continue, as this subject was not and should not be on the agenda now, as it would disturb what I

intended to say. And that was a grave public matter which should have nothing to do with my career, as misunderstandings might arise if it did. We left it at that.

Second: I left after two hours of talking in the reassuring knowledge that there would be a pivot.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

The Budapest Spring in 1988 *blossomed quickly*. The events came in fast sequence: part of them *behind* the scenes in the Political Committee, and the rest in the *hearts* of almost all citizens of Hungary.

The latter wanted a change. In *late April* Károly Grósz signalled that it might not be necessary to hold the "meeting" *after all*, as our domestic and foreign affairs were doing *well*. I do not know what he meant by the latter. But I know about the former: János Kádár, György Aczél, György Lázár and László Maróthy had signalled already *before* the May party conference that they did not wish to be nominated.

And the warm breezes of May took care of the situation of *other* members of the Political Committee.

True, Sándor Gáspár remained Sándor Nagy's boss in the trade unions for a month or two. But Miklós Németh, Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz became members of the Political Committee. And though György Fejtő received a rather narrow secretarial authority, even then it was clear that the legislative initiatives intending to create the basis of a modern *constitutional state* were concentrated *in his hands*.

Things seemed to be all right in every respect. The people's wish was fulfilled. Never in the past forty years had *any political leadership been given such a peaceful and forward-looking historical chance*.

2. SWELTERING SUMMER, AWFUL AUTUMN, COLD WINTER, TENSE SPRING

Rarely does history offer such a great chance as it did in May 1988. A leadership consisting of new, dynamic and well-prepared men was *brought forward on the people's shoulders* like King Matthias had once been elected on the iced-over Danube by the lesser nobility in defiance of the aristocracy. And we can add: *however* great János Kádár's power had been, *however*

tightly he had held almost everything in his control, *however* many of his tired creatures, so characteristic of his period, remained at different high posts, and *however* late the change had come—even then *we must suppose* that János Kádár passed his power on with tolerant wisdom. And even if he had been reluctant at one point or another, Károly Grósz had sufficient power and political *skill* to make it obvious that he was the No.1 in Hungary. We also believed Károly Grósz would get rid of the forced and anti-democratic merger of the functions of Prime Minister and General Secretary of the party before the end of 1988. It was *more or less public knowledge* that he would resign as Prime Minister in favour of Imre Pozsgay.

Public knowledge, however, turned into *private secretiveness* relatively quickly. Three weeks after the May victory, at one of the first important sessions of the Political Committee, Károly Grósz suggested *three nominations for key political posts*. His candidates were, to say the least, surprising—and he had not cleared them with the key people beforehand. Rector Tibor Czibere of the Miskolc University took the post of Minister of Education; Bruno F. Straub was staying with his grandchild living in the U.S. when he heard the news that he was to be Chairman of the Presidential Council, and István Stadinger, an almost totally obscure Deputy Chairman of Budapest's Municipal Council would become Speaker of the Parliament which would, obviously within weeks, radically grow in influence. The rest you know, too.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

With no *venom tooth* to be removed so far, all right then, one was *implanted* in a most unusual operation, should somebody have missed it. It was only a question of time to see now what groups would be formed within the Political Committee and, clearly in minority there, *where, in whose company* and by what means Imre Pozsgay and János Berecz would make camp. Pozsgay's case did not need hard thinking: he had an extremely strong mass basis, especially outside Budapest. János Berecz, however, may have been rather hampered by being in charge of an area where he could hardly have liquidated the heritage of György Aczél's three decades. Perhaps he decided to leave it untouched. Well, for the moment at least. Thus all the leaders soon got involved in the *endless and Byzantine* game of *adapting* themselves to the situation of the moment.

Preparing for battle, the individual groups took *action stations*. The *press* seemed to be the best and most efficient means for all three of them. This is why all three served as springboards for dozens of often incompetent press

chiefs to find key posts - of course, one by one—while those press leaders who had earlier insured themselves by leaving the service of party and state in time and, rapidly finding their way to the other extremes, intended to get their Stalinist management practices forgotten, could look forward to a *long period of calm*.

Having for a year invested *incredible* energies in performing the duties of Prime Minister (and it was hardly an easy task to speed up György Lázár's slow-paced heritage), Károly Grósz set out with similar dedication to broaden Hungary's *international* contacts. He knew he needed that in order to be accepted both at home and abroad, vital for *widening his scope for manoeuvre* in the leadership. But he also knew honestly that *Hungary had no alternative*. *Not only* because he *must have known* that the national debt of \$11 bn announced by him in autumn 1987 was in fact substantially more than that, and our debt service would require further billions from the international markets. He speeded up his mainly Western-oriented diplomatic activities probably also because he knew that if he built a thousand links between Hungary and some new regions as well, the country would cease to depend—helplessly—on the exclusive nature of our Eastern connections. And certainly he had to know that if Hungary wanted to follow its independent paths in domestic and foreign politics, *it could not count* on help through the Eastern link in trouble either.

Shaped under the direction of János Berecz, then Mátyás Szűrös and Gyula Horn, our international sphere of movement *widened to a considerable extent* through Károly Grósz's labours. But why it was necessary to "liquidate" the HSWP CC's most talented and pragmatic department, the Foreign Affairs Department in the process (sorry for using the word "liquidate", it is an obvious exaggeration), well, so far I have been unable to find an answer to that. A possible answer, however, might be indicated in Károly Grósz's practice of many years: he is overfond of surrounding himself with his own cadres. And that makes others *alienated* from him en masse. Why did he need a "national security council" of his own?

Why was the unknown Gyula Thürmer a better choice than the well-known Csaba Tabajdi or Imre Szokai? And here is László Major, having always worked in *foreign affairs*, at first a journalist, then analyst, then ambassador, possessing excellent talents but no experience in domestic and especially party affairs: what made him a suitable candidate to lead the powerful CC Bureau as well as form and fill the new and most responsible post of the party's spokesman?

We could supply such examples ad infinitum. But all that was not only

Károly Grósz's fault. János Berecz and Imre Pozsgay were building their fortresses in similar ways. *The battle had started.*

It would be nice to forget the major and minor *nightmares* of the second half of last year. We could somehow get used to having Károly Grósz driving a BMW (like he did in West Germany) and, however painful it was to see him thus, he was still happy with the publicity stunt. But why did his staff members not warn him? Were there people who did? And once we did (for we did), why did our warnings remain unheeded?

Even if we got used to the BMW, *we could hardly* do so concerning the excesses of Károly Grósz's trip in the summer of 1988 to America. The trip's organizers probably knew *how to win popularity in the U.S.* And that was important, since we were hardly trusted there at the time, and obscurity cannot attract foreign capital. *So the Grósz image must have worked well out there.*

But here at home?

It was impossible to get used to seeing him eat hamburger with U.S. Ambassador Palmer—and of course the *servile* TV crews and photographers following Károly Grósz around and *basking* in his reflected light did their very best *to make us at home shocked at what we saw: the multitude and character of awful situations.* No real tears were shed upon the visit to the aunt unseen for decades; and the call on *Mr Soros* at his Long Island home was hardly worthy of a Hungarian Prime Minister and party General Secretary. *And even though that is the way abroad, it is certainly not the way in Hungary. Some of us were already saying that his entourage included the press manipulators who, aided by their editors at home, were deliberately administering an overdose of domestic propaganda, to make us not only satiated but outright fed up with the sight.* We might say the *press* is to blame for that. True, but a *politician* is also responsible for *what kind* of a press coverage of himself he allows. Possibly *these* were the moments when the most powerful press workshops, *unauthorized and unwarranted* but taking advantage of the *vacuum* created by incompetent politicians, started taking total control in shaping public opinion.

From here our steps will be considerably bigger. Failure (and fight) was inevitable now.

August—an incomprehensible, hasty and extremely damaging meeting with Ceaucescu at Oradea. Certainly it can be justified by the old stereotype, "We tried everything". But how should the world interpret that phrase?

How Ceaucescu?

And most of all, how we Hungarians, over there and over here?

Autumn. Slow *drift* towards the idea of a multiparty system - differing from the resolution of the party conference in May but, of course, as the inevitable result of the democratic process initiated by the HSWP. It took place *in such a way* that even the leaders themselves were found unprepared, let alone their followers or the masses of Party members. Therefore, a strenuous competition started in early autumn—which one of them can more convincingly commit himself to a “pluralistic” society?

In reality *only* Imre Pozsgay’s earlier record held a clear promise of such an attitude. But now everybody was scrambling to overtake everybody else.

And the masses of the population and party members *did not comprehend what* this, often really dissonant, noise of opposition was, coupled with the radical advance of some people, creating through the *press* the *impression* that there were new and enormous forces present on the stage of politics and most of the population were siding with the opposition, while no governing institution: Parliament, government or HSWP was legitimate.

An ideological and political scare ensued.

And in November that scare grows *into fear*. Sports Hall, Budapest. Ten thousand party activists listen to an unexpected address by Károly Grósz on behalf of the *party*. *His* public image is irreparably tarnished by the phrase he uses in flashing the threat of “white terror”. His political *comrades* do not want to be his fellow sufferers any more: they are quick to signal (and right, too): *they have nothing to do with what is happening*.

The break of the leadership is complete now.

Prepared partly in the West in recent years, the highest-trained *elite forces* of the opposition set in motion. They feel a vacuum rising—and that is in their favour.

A *hopeless* spring in 1989. The Political Committee resigns. It is impossible to understand why *none else* but János Berecz is dropped. He certainly made numerous errors, there is no doubt about that, and he can also be formally blamed for the activity of the *press*, now undisputably weakening the party and strengthening the opposition. But practically the *same* blame can be put on Károly Grósz, Imre Pozsgay and, later, Miklós Németh who comes increasingly to the fore in his post as prime Minister.

ACCOUNTING OR RECKONING?

Why just János Berecz? And why so *shamefully*? To make him wander alone for half a year in the twilight zone of politics, suffering meanwhile the uncivilized Hungarian political custom: while his star was bright, there were many to live off him, whereas now that he started downwards, the same people even pushed him. *And washed their beautifully clean hands.*

The “trio” of leaders (which actually became a “quartet” with Rezső Nyers seemingly joining Imre Pozsgay, the leading figure of the increasingly strong reform circles) has *long ceased to be either a trio or a quartet*. Everybody plays a different instrument, even if they cannot really play one or the other of them. And each has his individual audience, eager with curtain calls. Such audiences are also good to applaud the others into silence. That is another new democratic custom à la Central Europe. Political gaiety, en route to crisis.

Essentially demolished as the first political victim by the autumn of 1988—having been offered for demolition by its leading figures - the Communist Youth Union quietly dies away and is turned in April into an obviously phantom-like organization.

An excellent *pattern* of modernization, isn't it.

And the party remains silent, not even noticing perhaps that it is not only loosing its youth organization but also gives the nod to the disorganization of our youth, that is, to the loss of that social power.

And now—why just *now*?—the party leadership follows the “modernizing” youth association in its quick reaction. The party leadership also *toys with patterns*. They have long ceased to ask for grassroots party members' opinion. Imre Pozsgay has a solid base in the reform circles. Rezső Nyers has one in the government's inner circles that *prepare* economic policies. János Berecz has his in Szabolcs-Szatmár county and, influenced by sycophants, he thinks he has one in the press, too. Miklós Németh's base is a style of government that increasingly endeavours to break with party constraints: he trusts in that style's visible mass support and popularity.

Meanwhile, nobody notices the landmines.

During the summer of 1989 the new government produces fantastic achievements, effacing the memory of the unexpected blow to shopping tourism and the unpleasant case of the motorway fees fallen through in April. Miklós Németh is an undoubtedly *strong* Premier. But is he *cautious* enough?

And *why* doesn't he rely to a far greater extent on his own generation and those *even* younger? Why does he also rely on only his immediate aides? The press is on *his* side now and on that of Rezső Nyers whom Miklós Németh respectfully refers to as his *mentor*.

By midsummer the contest between Grósz and Pozsgay has escalated. The *chief responsibility undoubtedly lies with Károly Grósz*, for it was him who *did not keep his word* concerning the harmonized division of labour. And in his incredibly tough and speedy campaign Imre Pozsgay almost defeats Károly Grósz. His political intellect far exceeding that of others makes it evident that Imre Pozsgay can expand his influence from any position, even from apparently beaten ones: with the reform circles' open support *forces* the extraordinary Congress to be convoked which, already then, obviously means Károly Grósz's *resignation or replacement*.

With the battle having intensified to new heights by midsummer, we learn *mostly* from the pages and electronic battalions of the *world press* (!), from Bonn, Rome or elsewhere, *which leader thinks what* about our country and party. Imre Pozsgay's "message" sent via Radio Free Europe is *most unfortunately* timed. Károly Grósz also does his bit, expressing his—probably rightful—*incomprehension* at hearing such news from abroad. *But he is already in a position of defeat*.

And then another "message" arrives *from West Germany*, sent by Rezső Nyers this time, saying that *neither extreme is good*. The solution *must be sought in the centre*.

One or two days later *HE is the Centre*. President of the Party. *Primus inter pares*—but already then it can be added: he is *primus* rather than *pares*. And as a frame, apparently to *harmonize* each other's views and *unify* the party's leadership, a clearly unviable freak is born: the Presidium. This quartet is good only for its members to mutually keep an eye on one another. In return for driving the equipage, Imre Pozsgay is nominated by the party for the future post of President of Republic. *Too early* and based on bad compromises, did he fall into his own trap or was it put before him by others? Either way, the equipage was not working. Nor was the Central Committee. *Political ethics goes down and gets counted out*. Conducted by János Barabás, most of the press and the organizing team of the party administration is lined up behind Rezső Nyers—on the pretext of Congress preparations. The *only* person escaping criticism in the press and enjoying general respect is Rezső Nyers. Imre Pozsgay's *media image, intact until then*, suffers the *first hairline cracks*. They are still invisible, though...

If we can say that, beginning with spring, the "democracy of disintegration" started in the last three months of Károly Grósz's tenure as General Secretary,

from July onwards, we shall see that this trend continues even faster under the Presidency of Rezső Nyers. From Károlyi Grósz's clear behaviour we could *at least always* know where we disagreed with him. *And that is quite a lot.*

Though the party *should prepare* for general elections, for at the time they were known to be scheduled for *autumn*, the leaders are watching *each other*, sending their by-election candidates into battle armed with slings, *letting them down*. And all those candidates are knocked out in the first round. *This is* when, *exactly half a year after* the Reform Circles' first nationwide meeting presided over by Rezső Nyers and Imre Pozsgay, the former sounds his *clarion call*: "I came not to electioneer...." at Kecskemét. This trumpet now is good *only for what* the formidable and brave Magyar tribal chieftain Lehel's horn was used in AD 955: we cannot really tell if the horn did *indeed kill* the German ruler—but we know for certain that its end *broke off*.

The plague of the lack of political ethics is beginning to turn into a social disease. Managing director/President Ádám Angyal becomes the first secretary of the party in Budapest largest worker's district while his workers are on strike in protest against the planned sale of the shipyard island. At the same time, Ádám Angyal creates a school as well: *he is not mad to give up* his supersafe job with the multiple functions of managing director and president; *he seems to be coming with the new songs of the new times*, in the name of NEW: a *modern* politician, he takes the function of party leader in the XIIIth, the most vintage workers' district, as an unpaid community assignment. And the poor inhabitants of Angyalföld are supposed to be *even happy*: the press obligingly helps them. *This is how* in the citadel of the working class, in János Kádár's favourite and beloved district, a sharp *president/managing director*, most skilful and educated albeit painfully involved in a housing scandal documented by the Budapest Committee of People's Control, becomes party secretary by the way.

And it is only a matter of blind chance that János Barabás becomes a delegate to the Congress *right here*. I can imagine—for I almost "heard the workers' satisfied murmur—what an honest, elementary (or "grass-roots", as I put it elsewhere in the book) demand" of the workers of Angyalföld it was to be allowed to "elect" the Central Committee's new secretary immediately.

While dictating these lines, from the sirens I can already hear the booning of the above-mentioned two gentlemen.

Want more? In mid-September, when the banner of the Pozsgay-led Movement for a Democratic Hungary is unfurled, *János Barabás is also present*. As the still insufficiently informed readers can learn from the large

picture in the “Népszabadság” of two days later: János Barabás is sitting and explaining something to Imre Pozsgay who is *learning attentively towards him*. It was clearly an *accident* that the photo found its way to the “Népszabadság”. Likewise accidental was the text under the picture! “Consulting in the interval”. Who? Whom? What? Who’s who?—this is the *authentic* Hungarian way. Upon seeing this picture what was the thought of those who created this democratic movement *along a clear ethical line*, under Imre Pozsgay’s leadership, following *months of struggle*? Pushed from middle level to the top in half a year, CC Secretary János Barabás is present everywhere. He is also the Centre. This is what he thinks and this is how he is also built up.

But there are ethical problems on the *other* side as well. From Imre Pozsgay’s team, Csaba Tabajdi uses rather harsh language concerning Károly Grósz in an Italian paper. And next day, when the Hungarian papers publish the article’s translation, he is having his holiday in Greece—far away, for a month. Is that decent at a time when it is obvious the only question remaining is when can the weakened Károly Grósz resign under civilized conditions? And the courageous press this time is ready to take action! Referring to or just *using the name* of Csaba Tabajdi, the press is merciless to Károly Grósz and his rank. *If only* he had accepted our advice sent to him even in writing in September 1987 when he was at the peak of his work: he should be careful with the press which *sings his praise* on the top and will *humiliate* him when the tide turns. This is the *favourite* ethical game of *narcissistic* little journalists and/or powerful editors—in a country of *broken* ethics, living the darkest hours of its political and economic crisis. Hurray! Humiliate everybody—who is already weak enough. And there is still no one to say: *stop here*. No wonder: the new press *barons*, President-Managing Director Sándor Demján of the General Credit Bank of Hungary, or the head of the Springer Publishing Group, or probably Mr Murdoch in the future will enjoy the *top politicians’ support* to *buy* and gobble up a chunk of the Hungarian press and its workers. This is another marvel of Central and Eastern Europe. I remember the *outrage* in Austria last summer when a German press concern wanted to (and later indeed did) buy 40% of the shares of the Kurier concern.

Wasn’t it János Berecz and Károly Grósz in Hungary last summer who - also on behalf of the Party—*paved the way* for the head of the Axel Springer Co. (a not particularly well-ringing name in the FRG as far as press moral is concerned) in our country, *providing* for him the “unselfish” participation of Sándor Demján, President-Managing Director of the General Credit Bank prosperous with its interest rates of 20-24 per cent?

Later *János Barabás* was to become a *radical reformer* as the Congress was approaching. *Ádám Angyal* turned out to be a people's democrat, and *Csaba Tabajdi* granted an interview every day in the last two months. So did *János Gönci*, an obscure apparatchik until then, from midway during the Congress. A syndrome.

A funny *grimace* of fate and, of course, a lucky *result* of our everyday *democracy* is that radical political ambitions are *no longer* justified *automatically*. *Csaba Tabajdi* will remain an extremely talented political analyst and courageous advocate of his views. But perhaps he *recognized*: he is hardly the person to lead a movement. And I think *Ádám Angyal* will also return soon to where he rose from: the world of economy. *János Barabás's* hope to become *ambassador to Moscow* was also *unlikely* to be realised, after the Reform Association said no to his name at the Congress and he failed to clinch a nomination on any ticket. The USSR's *capital* would probably be more pleased with an authentic person—and our citizens organized to represent political interests (i.e. the Parliament) later made their choice according to authenticity.

And thus we have already entered the *lobby of the Congress*, wearing different ethical armours, bearing different political ambitions and different binding mandates.

But before speaking about the events of those four and a half days, allow me another word or two concerning political ethics.

That is, about *György Fejtő*.

And *I can do that*, as he is *no longer* my superior. And I *must* do that, since at the Zalaegerszeg conference of Congress delegates I used a somewhat hasty phrase in connection with him, saying that *György Fejtő* was regarded by the party's leaders as a "*roadie*" - meaning that he was undeservedly let down in the tough talks with the opposition several times, and no one complained when the press (and the opposition through the press) were toying around with *Fejtő's* political dignity and authority; and now this phrase of mine was used by different media organs ("*Népszabadság*", "*HVG*", "*Vasárnapi Hírek*") to keep on toying....

Well, *György Fejtő*: with the Congress approaching he felt that *this topsy-turvy time was not his time*. Until the very last minute he *worked* 14 hours a day. Putting his personal impressions *aside*, he *fought* all along to have *Imre Pozsgay* nominated as the candidate for President of the Republic. He did nothing in order to ensure his own future. At the Congress he endured *undeserved political solitude*. He did not signal, "Here I am, too". Then, on the day *after* the Congress ended, he announced that the fact of his failure to get elected meant *for him* that he must not work in the new Central Office.

After all, without an electors' mandate his work would not be efficient. And I can only add that probably no one did anything (or not enough) for him before and during the Congress. Never mind, they thought perhaps, one problem less. After all, there were such excellent names arising as members of the Presidium to be elected, as... but I would rather not list those names here. *It would be unworthy of György Fejü* and I know he would never forgive me. Probably he did not even know that during the first half of the Congress his name was, on the basis of solid arguments, there on the list of those to be elected. The time is out of joint: O cursed spite.

Let *me* also add: I am convinced that *his time has come*, albeit it is *not yet* fully visible and there are those who *do not want* to notice it. We are looking forward to times when, following the low tide coming after the flood of the wave of political swindle, performance can be *measured* again. *When* one must work. *When* the work should be done "slowly and nicely, as stars walk across the sky, that's how it's worth". Today we *still* live in the time of falling stars, as if it *were still August*, the intoxicating, and we hardly notice of the dignified, never changing stars.

Talking of stars, let me quote the good old Leonardo da Vinci: "Those gazing at stars shall not tire."

It is a pity that György Fejü is reluctant to speak *about himself* or *his work*. It would be useful. He is certain to be the worst hit by his solitude. On the other hand, it causes a pang to others.

* * *

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

3) BROKEN MOSAIC PIECES

Speaking about stars, allow me to recall some weird episodes from the last weeks' displays of political dilettantism: a kind of broken mosaic pieces.

The *scramble* to remove red stars from the tops of public buildings (e.g. at the TV headquarters whose present chairman was, until three years ago, the

toughest slaved river of the press for many years in the Party's Central Committee).

The *speed* with which the Workers' Militia is scattered.

The *insults* suffered by those, even receptionists, who are unwilling to sign up for the new party, the HSP, after October 31, driven sometimes into nervous breakdowns. Those remaining in the party headquarters will have as many square metres of space per person as the inhabitants of Buckingham Palace.

The *speed* at which the troops guarding the party's central building are made to change into *civilian clothes* from their uniforms symbolizing respectable dignity—as if politicians did not know that in any decent West European state *such buildings* are guarded by armoured patrol cars. And *while* these people, dedicated soldiers all to the core of their being, are denied their proudly worn uniforms, those responsible forget to tell them that *now* they can behave as civilians even when they are requested to grant short interviews to the press. For they have *no* permission to do that. They must not even speak about what a feeling is now to wear civilian garb, and whether they envy or not their comrades guarding the Parliament two hundred yards away in dress uniforms.

A young man from the countryside, known to be an extreme radical, Imre Keserü, who had attracted much publicity in the reform circles, could say without fear before hundreds of his fellow delegates at one of the sessions of the Congress: we made a compromise in which we managed to get rid of the bloody-handed murderers among us, true, but we failed to draw the lines concerning who can be members of the party; and how should we get rid of the rats among us now? I hope Imre Keserü will *not* alarm the national press again, like he did last spring, if he receives unsigned letters *once again*, after what he said. *I would be content to see him apologise* to the *inhabitants* of his own town—and to every decent adult, *in writing, in the press* which, in spring, provided such space for the news of the “death threats” against him and probably will provide a forum now for his apology as well. Until I can read in just so many words and so many papers as then, I will regard Imre Keserü to be a battering ram rather than a reformer. In whose hand, I wonder? Let us not sow winds now that the *storm is already here* in the Carpathian basin.

In early summer, not long after I joined the Central Committee (but had not yet been actually employed there), I was bitter to recognize: the chance of holding elections before the end of this year was fading, even though that was my first condition on joining the CC. My other condition was that the election preparations and struggle should be directed by György Fejtő of the

politicians. Thus, two weeks after my informal entry I sent a desperate letter to the CC officials in charge. (By that time, my “fans” in the press had sent about a dozen “letters” to Károly Grósz’s office at the CC in a self-assured spirit of denunciation, but remaining all along under the cloak of *anonymity*. It is easy to report on people that way—but I was used to it by then.) So, after such a lot of bitterness, here is my letter seeking hope in May 1989:

“Concerning my assignment in connection with the HSWP’s election preparations, I would like to return to my earlier suggestion made in January 1989 still as editor-in-chief, according to which effective preparations can be made for the elections if the following aspects are taken into consideration:

– The staff working on the preparations should have the freedom to professionally involve *independent* experts (that is, not party apparatchiks).

– The HSWP’s election success is, in my opinion, the key element of our country’s political *stability*. There is as yet no definite political decision pointing that way, while the *opposi- tion* parties are already working their reservations and decisions of refusal concerning this year’s elections. In that situation we should have a clearer decision than I we have today. Such a decision by the HSWP should necessarily be sovereign, made by the group of the HSWP’s representatives in *Parliament* following a CC resolution. That decision is to contain the *identical and visible* standpoint of the HSWP Political Committee’s different prominent leaders, since the present *lack of unity is an election liability*.

– Therefore I *repeat* my suggestion that we should establish a *manager office* focusing exclusively on the elections and working on an independent legal and financial basis—thus it can be regarded as an accountable enterprise operating freely in preparing for the elections, its technology and methodology, naturally and exclusively serving the interests and under the control of the HSWP.

– This enterprise would employ experts: social psychologists, election psychologists, linguists (that might be an exaggeration), journalist managers, altogether about 10 people who, employed to work full time, would even risk everything in endeavouring to perform the job in a professional way. My negotiations so far regarding the freedom to establish such a staff of experts in the premises of the *Central Committee* have *not* yet been successful. That, obviously, might be my personal failure as well. It seems to be likely, though, that an independent staff can be organized to perform such a task only if the members are all professionals undertaking the job as full-time employees. My opinion at the moment is that the methods of calling people in or providing temporary assignment cannot be successfully pursued. Thus, in my judgement, the *current* set-up—of course I mean only my own role—is not

a promising one. This is why I returned to the earlier suggestion indicated above which, if I am entrusted, I would undertake to elaborate until June 15.

– Until then I am asking for permission to do this work in my *previous* post of editor-in-chief. On that day my work contract would be terminated, after which I would have to take my holiday as stipulated by the laws of employment. I would gladly spend even these two or three weeks on performing the above task, in case it is needed. In this way my work contract there would expire from July 1—and the new contract would come into force here, only as proposed above.

– There is no doubt in my mind that I can pursue this activity exclusively for the HSWP that will have remained and is to be maintained *homogeneous*. *This* is the party I joined, and there is no other political solution possible for me. The election battle will clearly be as tough one and it will have to be fought in a professional way: for the HSWP.”

So that was the case in May 1989.

October? Homogeneity? HSWP?

In May I did believe in the power of homogeneity. But what became of that homogeneity a short four months later? Didn't Imre Pozsgay pay too high a price by undertaking in the summer to participate in the four-man Presidium whose makeshift and forced character had been obvious from the very beginning? And were his partners—rivals—who, in return, announced that Imre Pozsgay was the Party's presidential candidate, harbouring only good will in doing so? For what did time tell? In the summer of 1989 Imre Pozsgay's authority was absolute and undisputable. In late summer the attacks began. And writing these words now, I am asking anxiously: what did the new situation created by the November 26 referendum bring for him? And at what price? Was he aided or hindered by the “rally” of a shady content at the Congress? It is still a mystery.

III.

TREATMENT "B"

1) WHAT I WILL NOT DISCUSS HERE

Now that our imagination takes us back to the congress halls, I would like to warn you in advance that I *must leave a number of mysteries unsolved*. Partly because I do *not* have precise information yet. Partly because in other cases I might be accused of *personal* bias. And partly even because in the closing phase of the Congress I decided *not only* to return my mandate—but *also* to leave the party. I cannot yet *solve* the problem of how the Budapest-based leaders of the group organized during the Congress with the name of "people's democratic platform" could get the signatures of hundreds of their non—Budapest fellow delegates. *I still do not know why only* two nomination meetings were organized for those who, having given their signatures, probably desired more than that. I do not know the reason for this platform's leaders putting Csaba Tabajdi and Gyula Horn, two of the reformists' leaders, on a kind of *COCOM* list; and *I do not know what* runaway forces caused the incident in which, in the last hours of night and daytime the world-renowned Minister of Foreign Affairs, a recently increasingly original figure of our country's reformist forces was paired off with the not world-renowned János Gönci on a "*one or the other*" basis, forcing the issue until Rezső Nyers had to make an agonized decision. And *why did all that pain him?* And where did the Budapest "leaders" of the people's democrats hide László Iklódi, the agricultural co-operative president who, as a *genuine country* man, was the actual founder of this platform with his experience of 60 years? *Where* did the Bárd-Gönci-Krausz "city trio" sink *his name* during the secret negotiations? And *how* did the name of First Secretary Sándor Kiss of Heves county *disappear*? He is also well known to be a dedicated advocate of his thought and, not at all incidentally, it was Heves county that supplied the backbone of the unexpected *recruiting campaign* urged by the Budapest members. How come that hundreds of delegates, the bulk of this platform, learned only in the *last-plus-one-moment*, during the *closed* session of the Congress, that *their* (?) candidates for the presidium were Csaba Hámori, Béla Fábry, Lajos Menyhárt and Béla Katona?

And *what is true* of the news that on Monday night Miklós Németh conducted a lengthy negotiation with Ambassador Palmer of the U.S.? As did Rezső Nyers later, according to rumours? What did the Party's President have in those hours to talk about with the American ambassador, while well over a thousand delegates had no idea on what and whom they should vote for?

And is it true that, on Monday morning, having tired of the punishment to his prestige meted out by Rezső Nyers during the debate on party politics in the factories the *previous* night, Miklós Németh rose to his feet at last and put a stop to the "Budapest folksies" (organizing themselves behind Rezső Nyers) sending one *ultimatum* after the other, unlegalized by their members?

What kind of a Congress is it that is forced to leave all mediation to twice half a dozen men in the *most important* issue: the process of nominating and choosing the leaders? And why must it then accept at the closed session *that it can no longer make any change*? Again at the closed session, why must the Congress accept the *reprimanding*, domineering manners of philosopher Attila Ágh from *one* side and editor András Bárd from the *other*, two unexpectedly strengthened political "leaders"? Angry they were, for there rose a hubbub at the closed session which did not want to recognize the binding compromise that they had stitched together at the secret talks and later legalized by Rezső Nyers! *This is world politics in Budapest—with many self-appointed candidates.*

2) FRAGMENTS OF A CHAIN OF THOUGHTS AT ZALAEGERSZEG

The *questions* that took me to the country township of Zalaegerszeg on September 9, 1989, *were the same* that led me through all the stations of my 8,000 miles trek made in the month and a half preceding the Congress: is ours a *down-to-earth* party, is its crisis *grave*, can it still *rely on* what it counted on: the *countryside*?

On that day at Zalaegerszeg I was elected to be a Congress delegate. The unexpected honour was mainly due to a 9-point program speech (see Appendix 2). I would like now to emphasize some key phrases, which were at that time *hotly debated* among the party membership. In those very days, following the announcement made by Imre Pozsgay, a political and ethical struggle was in full swing on whether the party could *remain in the factories*. And there was the other issue: can the *letter W* be left out of the HSWP's name? What I had to say there rang similar to what the worker delegate József Fiziker was to put so clearly later at the Congress.

"I feel like the black in South Africa who, closing his eyes for a moment feels white and then, opening his eyes, is faced with the harsh reality. As for me, I also want to represent the blue-collar workers, those *workers* who are *confused* today concerning their situation, interests and identity, searching for something to identify themselves with.

What do these workers want? An urgent and basic change. *They want equal opportunities rather than charity.* They want a policy in favour of enterprises, so that they can see the opportunity of their advancement ensured. They want a stop to privileges and possible new privileges. It is not an advantage, a label of some kind that they want—just a decent living, objectives to aim at and the appreciation of their own role in implementing them. They seek an identity in communities able to serve their interests shaped together, rather than in mechanisms force on them from above. *They want order and democracy* but not the kind of order and democracy *dictated from above.* They want a new party of left-wing thinking which can serve as a basic guideline if it *revolutionizes all generations*, not wounding the interest of either the young or old people in doing so. I propose the Congress *should apologise to the honest, diligent and talented people of Hungary for what happened previously*, if the leaders of the party have failed to do this. I am deeply convinced of what even a note warned me this morning: *we cannot make a living by beating our breasts.* There is one thing we must know, though. We must take the mentality of this age into the movement—and, I believe, it is a moral duty of this new party to take on the values of the movement. You see, the gravedigger is being buried today, but then, workers never wanted to be gravediggers. They wanted to march together with those whose aim was to create a human world here on Earth.

Let me pass on to you the opinion of a 76-year-old party member: his idea is worth considering. He sent me here to tell you that everybody should honestly do *what they are good at*, and it should not be political considerations, connections and different advantages that send people to leading posts.

A party, being on the left, must tell *not only what is pleasant to hear, but also what is true.* The nation in my opinion is not yet prepared for the change facing us, and I must confess that, beside the many fine objectives I would much rather put a strong emphasis on making sacrifices, since no success can be achieved without further sacrifices. I also think—and the labour movement also teaches—that it is *not the workers' demands* that we must satisfy: *through hard and consistent work we should show them what they should demand.* Thank you for your attention."

I thought at the time and still would like to hope that the HSP will remain a

workers' party, meaning "workers" to be the people who contribute to the public good by means of hand and brain. In that respect the point is not an ideological debate but the appreciation of the *community* man, and that perhaps there will be such men in the future's party as well.

During my trek in the country and seeing the last year and a half of the party, I was *increasingly* sad to realize how *artists, scholars and other outstanding* but politically moderate personalities were squeezed out by all the elbowing in politics and the press. Meanwhile, I also increasingly felt how utterly undeserved a development it was in which *leaders of large-scale industrial works or agricultural co-operatives or vital service companies, all employing thousands of people, were getting squeezed out of both public life and the press that not only reflects but also creates that public life.*

That was a *gravely unjust* practice, and the situation has not changed *since then*, either. While we could hear the opposition members *most favoured* by the press several times a day, often complaining in *those press forums* about their *having no press forum*; while the press was dominated by people like Péter Tölgyessy who was hardly known even in his own profession half a year ago, or the FDA or YDA leaders who are clearly enjoying foreign financial support channeled through the Soros Foundation; while they were being made "heroes" at Prague's Venceslas Square; while János Kiss or Miklós Tamás Gáspár of the FDA were being turned by the press into personalities of national importance, similarly to Reverend Gábor Roszig, a HDF and YDA member whose victorious election campaign received national significance in the press—and while the HSWP members invited to participate in television or radio debates often happened to be of the less credible and colourless debater type—well, *in all that noise there was not a word on the leaders in the sphere of production.* The leaders of large industries, the people organizing life situations for others *practically disappeared from the arena of public life.* Except, of course, *those who just happened* to be active in selling out the nation's property, the company entrusted to them, enhancing their personal wealth as well as that of their foreign partners.

As I did earlier, on the eve and the first day of the Congress I tried, supported by my fellow delegate journalist colleagues who undertook to help, to promote the interest of major industrial entrepreneurs and the people in their charge to appear with adequate force at the Congress *at least.*

The attempt failed. Maybe they, and those of them who we approached with that purpose, disappeared in the same current as the journalists intending to undertake their support did in these four days. They disappeared because the factional infighting and the pitiful political bargaining behind the scenes threw many unknown, in many ways insignificant, people to the surface—and

their itch for public appearance, their rather megalomaniacal desire to see their names in print, *silenced* most of the economic leaders almost immediately. Not at all accidentally, in this senseless chaos scarcely a few words were uttered on the economy or market policy, and some narcissistic and bombastic *bluffs* concerning a market economy made the *emptiness* resounding and deepened the *chaos*. Thus the lean message of the draft preliminary Program Declaration (App. No. 4.) did not put on an ounce of weight. In this way, those in charge of preparing and leading the Congress remained faithful to the long previous months' style: they produced a shortage again. A program was *lacking*. No wonder in that situation: the government keeps saying that it will turn into an *experts' government*.

It is hardly surprising in such a situation that István Bihari, one of the best-known managing directors in the country, demanded the floor only in the second half of the Congress and finished his address just *as early as late* he was in holding it. This is what he had to say:

"The economy and economic policy have been so neglected at this Congress that I felt: speaking for two minutes about it, I would do more damage than not speaking about it at all. Thus I abandoned the thought of speaking about it. However, let me summarize the gist of what I would have said in a half-minute tale which goes like this:

The poor man was allowed to request three things of the good fairy. And since his clever wife was not beside him right then, he asked for "democracy, constitutional state, socialism". (That was the triple slogan of the Congress.—L.G.) And the good fairy said, "I will grant your requests". But the poor man remained poor all the same."

This much—at the Congress of *punch lines* (and the accompanying applauses) *replacing programs*, at the Congress that excited and at the same time dampened emotions.

In the chain of thought that I was mandated at Zalaegerszeg to represent, a special mention was made of the fear that some managers would "sell their kingdom for a horse", which should not be allowed to happen. At this time it was already common knowledge that there is too much irregularity. But nobody dared to express that truth, as there was and there still is a grand sale conducted legally or legalized through the loopholes in the laws. And the embarrassed silence in that matter was also caused by the fact that it was none else but the party and its government and Parliament that facilitated such quasi-legal property sale and similar attempts for such renowned figures of Hungary's economy as Ádám Angyal, Sándor Demján or the lesser known managing director of the ÁPISZ Company, András Kardos and others. And *can it be coincidence* that in the frame of these transactions it is not huge,

modern production lines and plants of new technology that are flooding the country but Hungary's best-established factories, those of world-class names, that are thrown on the market at bargain prices. There is not a lot of Hollóháza china in the world and the Zsolnay china is no D-class product, either. Not to speak of Tungsram which, owing also to its dimensions and international enterprises, has been known since pre-WW2 times as well as Ganz.

And *all that was left unmentioned* at the Congress. *Those concerned* kept silent about it with natural shyness. And the *delegates* either did not see what was happening or did not want to doubt what they heard and believed: that this process was oh-so-very *modern* and *market-oriented*.

The conference at Zalaegerszeg was *divided* on that question. There were some managers of great influence present who tensed up at this chain of thought and felt it as an intervention. The majority, however, sensed that this secret process might bring about a *high fever*. There was a local woman manager who asked, on the basis of what had been said there, for help to *break away* from the parent company in Budapest exploiting them.

(After Zalaegerszeg, some country dailies honoured me by publishing my article "A property sellout?", timed to appear just before the Congress. Their helpful intention did not cause much of a stir in the mud—but later, perhaps, in the long run... /See Appendix 3/). The Congress, however, was united—in not tackling this problem field. Which means there is no interruption in what I mentioned as the closing thought in my above article: "*In spite of the breakdown, sales are proceeding unhindered*".

Part of the mandate given me by the Zalaegerszeg delegates was also what I explained about Hungarian *villages*, the *painful* neglect and contradictions of the conditions in the Hungarian *countryside*. In connection with that, I travelled up and down the country, from Kakasd to Kecskemét and Sopron to Debrecen in the month and a half before the Congress. Although in the "*Magyar Ifjúság*" we had for years endeavoured to represent the different *rural* forces and settlements of Hungary, it was clear now that a large majority of our country dwellers live under gravely *difficult* conditions and are *impatient* in 1989. And that may easily bring about the "Where will the thunderbolt strike?" syndrome, unless the interest of the countryside becomes—still in time—an organized and unified penetrating force, *either* at the HSWP Congress, *or* in the Parliament, *or*—best—at both forums.

Beginning with summer, "Countryside Hungary" was increasingly becoming an empty slogan, a *political lemon squeezed out* by many hands. I received some *professional initiation* from the new, partly young and both professionally and intellectually prepared leaders of the Ministry of Interior.

And from the people of Sopron I received the realization of *political* striking force. *In what?* In that if we want in reality to represent the interests of the countryside in the political high season of September-October, in the busy legislation, then we must meticulously draw up and send into the battle, like a Trojan horse, *the idea of self-government.*

There should not exist a situation in which the cause of self-government will start *only* in the *late* 1980s and, even then, *not* with an explosive start *from grassroot level.* Self-government is personal freedom, a creator of the conditions of everyday life, a vehicle of direct democracy, a locomotive and also voice of natural material interest, all at the same time.

It would be.

If it existed.

But it does not. And though the government has honestly set to work, it does not seem to have realized that today it is hardly capable of giving anything to the people of the countryside any more, so it should, *in legislation as well as through their financial freedom, give them the opportunity to organize themselves.* But the ministers in charge have probably retreated before the resistance of the much-respected - or even not respected—leaders of powerful counties. Thus the process has slowed down. And though there exists a clear concept on the regulation of self-government, its discussion takes place so slowly as if it were still the hearty 1979 and not the crisis-ridden 1989. This is why it had to be urged at all costs, at all possible parliamentary and political forums. Self-government in my opinion is, above all, the *local* self-government of settlements and, within that, primarily that of *villages.*

It is *now in 1989* that the problem has become especially acute. *Lightning strikes, different fruit crises, weakening motivation to produce* show that the interests of the peasantry are *insufficiently* represented by those who should do so. Like the government and the party. Fast-moving life moved beyond the Central Committee's agrarian theses in minutes, and in a *downward spiral*, at that. In the Party's draft Program Declaration the countryside was squeezed into *a few lines.* And though the last CC meeting of the HSWP decided (rightly) to bring forward its independent opinion on self-government and thus, *in the very last minute, show itself* to the countryside, the industrial and agricultural producers of townships and villages, to all those who had contributed to averting economic and political troubles even in the worst crisis years—still, the Congress *let down* its so far most massive supporting force, the *countryside.* Even though there were some enthusiastic, committed comments.

The grouplets of *platform-dictators* created such an excited and agitated mood that the issue of self-government was *removed* from the agenda scheduled for the morning session of October 9. Those leading party workers who had earlier stood behind the idea of self-government, had used up their arguments on the previous days and, in the reassuring knowledge of having made their comments, allowed a decision-making opportunity *to slip by*.

Let me remark immodestly: when the Presidium of the Congress suggested that the issue be removed from the agenda, I asked for the floor and, disregarding the annoyance of those who were rather tired of my desire to speak, asked the Congress to still discuss the issue which had a decisive power—right here at the Congress. (*Off record, before and during* the Congress, I told my friends, allies and all possible partners, as a warning, that if the HSWP Congress did not deal with that issue, it would not only *walk out on its flag-bearers* in the countryside with its *present* council chairmen left in an awful position as well as the talented mayors of the *future*, but at the same time it would serve the opportunity on a silver tray for the strongest opposition party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, to come forward with the issue of self-government at their congress on October 20-22.

Thus it would be the HDF to *call* the flag-bearers, the mayors to the forefront of their local troops. For in both town and village the *winner* will be the one that offers the population the right of self-government faster and supported by guarantees.) The HSP Congress *stepped over* the right of self-government. In turn, self-government *will step over* the HSP. The choreography of political dance is that simple.

Finally, I also mentioned at Zalaegerszeg that, amongst the political scrambling and economic slide, almost no one *gives any thought to women*. No matter that, beside men having to work 14-16 hours a day and forced to earn a living, women also must do the same amount of work in order to *hold together and support* their families.

I have always been a dedicated advocate of the thought that the endurance, patience and cohesive power of women *exceed* those of men. Perhaps this is also why women live longer. *Life needs them more badly*. Of course, however, I am not an expert of the female sex, so let me quote a world-famous scholar and author, Evelyn Sullerot:

(*I do not believe* the truth of Fontenelle's statement: "A woman can do as she likes even to the most aggressive man in the world, provided she is very *clever*, beautiful enough and hardly in love." But since I do not believe in such a great power of women, I can quote the above author without scruples in my firm belief *that women should be given more power in public life*: I know they will be able to use it well, *abusing it much less than men do*.)

“Women should make a bigger profit *from the bargain* conducted on what those roles should be that, giving up their exclusive rights, they would share with men, and what roles should remain clearly theirs. Thus they could achieve more than the occasional social support of doubtful value: *power in public life*. To achieve that, first of all they should adopt the *male model of conquest* in which aggression plays the chief role. That is, they should discard their *femininity* which is *peculiar to their nature* according to *common agreement*, even if not in reality. It remains to be seen, however, whether the interchangeability of roles *will not* have the result of less aggressive and performance-oriented values spreading *in the world of men*. Naturally we cannot tell whether the less violent societies to be thus created *will be fit to survive*. But then, *what is the life span* of today’s work-centred, technocratic and violent societies that are still at the height of their power?” And my question is: in today’s Hungary, *who speaks about women? About their function of creating equilibrium?*

3) ECHO I.

The extraordinary character of the Congress was also expressed by the attendance of a thousand journalists in order to ensure full openness both at home and abroad. Thus there was quite a lot at stake: the *currently most influential and best-organized*, that is, the *greatest* (in the good sense) *political forum and power in Hungary* had the stage of the country and the world to play its role given (forced on it) by objective and subjective constraints. *To play?* In what meaning of the word?

The sympathy shown for many years in the *world press* towards the Hungarian experiment is indisputable. Even our worst pains did not discourage their support. And it is precisely this good intention that gives them the right to always openly criticize us. I know—I know very well that in recent years in Hungary the ability to criticize and self-criticize has reached the limits of totality. And yet... We were not satisfied with this inner ability; rather, we always quoted the Western press, often in a servile and *provincial* way, to *support our prevailing* political line. This inclination of narcissism has provided, almost free of charge, the Western press with the right of evaluation and judgement since the turn of the decade. Meanwhile our domestic press has frozen, remaining in the squeeze of the rigid political structure: the cowardice soft editors and, often, the lack of individual professionalism. *Only* the best-educated, deep-thinking, consolidated leading characters of journalism displayed their ever-growing intention to *prepare*,

even at risks, the radical change. (Naturally the editors, financed mostly from foreign sources, of illegal publications, were far in advance of the rest in that field.)

Then beginning with the summer of 1988, this *inner inhibition and love of comfort* in the official journalism started, with increasing force, to *change over into its very opposite*. First and most of all the "Reform syndrome", then the "Hoax-phenomenon" showed that the limits in journalism and its ethics can be pushed outwards endlessly. (These above are to papers)

Suddenly everyone in the Hungarian press became most courageous. Journalists of *no earlier weight* passed judgement every day. The representatives of the above-mentioned distinguished journalism, seeing that they could not take over the manners of this *free—for—all, retired* quietly and in dignity or were *isolated* by force.

While I speak about the press several times with a critical edge in this book, I mean not this fine group but the previously mentioned "warriors". And of course those—incompetent—dictators of press management whose activity in the past decade was such a shame of Hungarian journalism. Not denying the role of Hungarian journalism in creating openness so radically, I do not want to deny either that *the foundations of our democracy were laid first of all by the quiet, then increasing rumble and dignified public-revolutionary current, widely rolling, of the people, followed by a change in the style of the government and the HSWP which intended to express the people's wish*. May 1988 was first—only later did reform in journalism occur.

The excesses of the mass media have become *unrestrictable* by now; not only because journalism was the *first* field (or *second*, after the economy) that the leadership, having fallen apart at almost all the means, became incapable of controlling; it took place also because, *after passing a limit*, journalism can no longer *resist* its inherently natural exhibitionistic *desire* or its everyday position of *practical power*. This power has a sweet taste, even though press is never organized to exercise power, nor to control it alone. There is *no democratic basis* for such a striving of the press. Nobody chose his colleagues, editors, handlers. As regards their personal attitude, this bunch are also a *result of the trend of selecting the unfittest, just like every - thing in this country*.

And let us note: it was *in the highest echelons of the press* that there was the least purification, concerning a generational change, professional suitability or ethical standards. The task of *drawing up the limits* for the press in the natural power struggle—the vacuum—must go to the people, its chosen representatives and public affairs.

In performing that task, however, *special* attention must be paid to the fact

that, for the moment, *Budapest* is the *absolute centre* of the Hungarian press, just as it is the centre of the *narrow and closed structures*, monopolies and lobbies of *foreign trade* and banking, *ideology* and *cultural management*. It is a super-structure that, directing its operations from its downtown Budapest centres, exercises *control* through its staff and pressure groups over the *decisive fields* of Hungarian social life and foreign connections. Whatever twists and turns took place in the last two or three decades, they *never* lost their grip on the key fields. At most, they gave them *new* names. At most, they retreated in *one* field only to become stronger in *another*.

It always goes like that in a vacuum. In such circumstances the best-organized lobbies get hold of double, triple portions of power and clinch monopolies!!! The question is only whether they but only use of this vacuum or actually create it. Perhaps they do both at the same time. Having accidentally (and of course, also deliberately, in an organized fashion), filled in and then deepened that vacuum created in the prevailing situation, the press and especially its Budapest centres of communication have simultaneously acquired more power that they are *either qualified or fit* to handle.

Why not? Because the people, bearers of their own *sovereignty*, have practically *no influence* on the work of the press. Broadcasting every second of the day, sending its publications by the million out in the street, the press *comes* before everybody else in its operation, both in time and space. This is why it enjoys such an undeserved advantage that neither the social processes nor the pressure groups representing them, both taking longer to shape, can keep its work under control. They have more or less choice: *accept what there is and the way it is—or if they fail to recognize the way it is, then they can even spare the trouble of having to accept it*. Therefore, in today's unstable situation, the press works *seemingly without any risk*.

I sincerely hope, however, that the most ethical and best-qualified, sometimes outright brilliant members of the media (10-20% of Hungary's journalists in my personal opinion) can see: *here and now this involves a RISK*.

Until this self-purification takes place, we will pay special attention to the opinions coming *from abroad*, giving perhaps a *greater than necessary* emphasis to them, in protest against our domestic lightweights and disbelievers.

In the spirit of the above chain of thoughts, let me quote now an article published in the October 2 issue of Newsweek, perhaps the most expressive bell rung in the days preceding the HSWP's extraordinary Congress. The title sets the mood (so much for our schizophrenia—L.G.):

"The Party They Love to Hate

Hungarians are eager to turn out the Communists

Leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party can justifiably claim to be more committed to reform than their comrades elsewhere in Eastern Europe. So far this year they have abolished press censorship, abandoned plans to build a dam on the Danube in the face of protests by ecology groups, reclassified the 1956 revolt as a "popular uprising" instead of a "counter-revolution" and dismantled the Iron Curtain, allowing the exodus of East German refugees. Last week they also concluded three months of negotiations with opposition groups to prepare for free elections scheduled for no later than next June. But instead of gathering popular support with such measures, the Communists have found themselves on a downward slide—with danger signals flashing everywhere.

When delegates gather for the Communist Party Congress in Budapest early next month, they will have plenty to argue about. Why is the party losing nearly 10,000 members a month? Why have voters in four recent by-elections chosen opposition candidates? Why is the mood of the country swinging against the Communists to the point where party strategists now claim that they will consider anything more than a 25 percent showing in the elections a success? Reluctantly, they are recognizing that the public is less inclined to give them credit for recent reforms than to avenge themselves for the accumulated grievances of four decades of political dictatorship. "No democratic government has been stupid enough to remain in power for 40 years," laments István Degen, the chief of staff of Communist Party President Rezső Nyers.

To escape from the doldrums, the Communists are likely to shake up their leadership again. They also will attempt to recast their image, projecting themselves as social democrats to increase their appeal. While hard-liners like Róbert Ribánszky of the Marxist Unity Platform argue that the party is committing *hara-kiri* by abandoning old dogmas, the reformers insist that only more innovation can improve their standing. "They have to convince the population that they have broken with the past," says Justice Minister Kálmán Kulcsár, who is overseeing the legal logistics of the transition from authoritarianism to a multiparty state. To that end, the party reformers hope to engineer the emotion of General Secretary Károly Grósz, who is now written off as too conservative, and to make Nyers their undisputed leader. *Vociferous* protests. The Communists are well schooled in ways to keep power. Taking advantage of the weaknesses of an opposition which is split into nearly a dozen embryonic parties, chief Communist negotiator Imre

Pozsgay was able to conclude the political talks on seemingly favourable terms. Despite vociferous protests from two opposition parties that denounced the accord, the country will hold direct elections for the new office of president before the parliamentary elections. The Communists believe this will give Pozsgay, their declared candidate who is far better known than any opposition leaders, the decided edge—and a power base outside the new Parliament. “This is potentially very dangerous,” argues Miklós Haraszti of the opposition Alliance of Free Democrats, who wanted Parliament to elect the new president. (After the referendum November 26, everything changed. (We have no President—L. G.)

Pozsgay also refused opposition demands to disband the workers’ militia, the party’s paramilitary unit, and to provide a complete accounting of the party’s vast financial assets. Instead, he announced a cutback of the workers’ militia from 60,000 to 40,000 men and a decision by the party to offer \$33 million to finance the election campaigns of all the parties. But former underground publisher Gábor Demszky has revealed that the Communists have been busily transferring their assets—resort hotels, garages and other facilities—to private companies with names like Next 2000 and Allegro. The object is to transfer the facilities into ostensibly private hands before a new Parliament can divest the party of its holdings. “They are trying to preserve their privileges for the next 2000 years,” he charges.

On the defensive: As a result of all these disputes Pozsgay is no longer universally accepted as an unblemished reformer and Communists of all stripes are finding themselves on the defensive. “Hungarians are fed up with the Communists and everyone who is connected with Communist politics,” says Viktor Orbán of the militant Union of Young Democrats. Continued economic stagnation and declining living standards have only added to this disenchantment. According to government statistics, real wages have now dropped to their 1973 level.

If the reformers emerge as the victors at the Communist Party Congress, they hope to bolster their chances of winning a slim plurality in the elections or at least to become a more acceptable coalition partner for the moderate Hungarian Democratic Forum, the strongest of the opposition parties whose candidates have swept by—elections. They are also counting on nervousness about the Kremlin’s reaction to protect them if they fare badly. “Would it be realistic in this geopolitical area to build a government without our party, even if we came in last?” asks party strategist Degen. The Communists do not expect to come in last, but the hypothetical question betrays their growing jitters about a process they no longer control.

Andrew Nagorski *in Budapest*’

4) OCTOBER 6. THE MARTYRS' DAY. CONGRESS OVERTURE

On October 5 we held a preliminary congress. The aim was to try the new technical facilities. Undoubtedly, those in charge of preparations made supreme efforts to make the technical side serve the Congress *at world standards*.

I consider the evening session of October 5 to be *part of the Congress*. We went over the future agenda. Anyone with experience in politics will know how many skilful tricks, proving to be *decisive* later and having *irresistible* political force, can be built into the agenda by the organizers and those in charge of preparations. The agenda is the backbone of a congress, its *nerve centre*.

Owing to the uncertainties of the previous weeks and months as well as the literally historical responsibility, our nerve endings felt rather raw. *Vital* questions were decided upon here, sometimes in *a matter of moments*. For example, several groups of county delegates and the dozen journalist delegates failed in their intention to *block* the appointment of János Barabás, a CC secretary of recent date who had played a *decisive* role in *preparing* the Congress, to become the Congress's spokesman—just as an example, I would add that, despite their firm resolution, they *could not even try* to voice their standpoint at next day's agenda debate of Friday morning. It was partly due to the fact that most delegates were inexperienced in such agenda procedures. As it happened, the Friday morning chairman did not call for a *vote for each name* of the dozen committees including that of the spokesman. Instead, in one sweeping gesture he had all the names voted for together, in a matter of seconds.

The preliminary congress of Thursday evening had also a function of letting off steam. And though it may not have been intentional, in the days to follow a lot of people would painfully feel that the letting off (of the steam, I mean) was most "fruitful".

Which expert of influencing the political and social atmosphere would not know that if *once*—at the rehearsal people- have voiced their instinctive, well-rounded, honestly clear opinion, then at the official forum, in a *real-life* situation, they would be too shy to repeat their message and thus hold up their fellow delegates?

This feature was well demonstrated in the contrast between Thursday evening and Friday morning. On Thursday, fiery debate accompanied a number of items on the agenda, lasting well into the night. At the official session on Friday, the firm chairman János Gönci rushed off the agenda

debate *in half that time*. Thus the comments that were still weighty on Thursday remained mostly unspoken on Friday.

On both occasions one of the main questions was whether the Congress would accept the President's method of a closed list for *nominating* the future Presidium or it would rather demand *open, democratic, individual nominations in plenary session*, without having most of the delegates excluded.

On Friday morning, waiting for Rezső Nyers's address, we were *tired* but full of hope. (Incidentally, on that day Imre Pozsgay attended a wreath-laying ceremony honouring the Arad martyrs, the generals of the 1848-49 revolution of independence executed by Austria.)

After a troubled period spanning several months, especially following the four-man Presidium's election in July, *everybody right fully expected* the President to deliver a *firm and open analysis*, one that, navigating along *safe points*, would orient the delegates towards clear resolutions at least now, at the beginning of the Congress. Are we going to hear a program speech or rather a solemn, ceremonial opening address? Here is **Rezső Nyers** on the morning of October 6:

"...it is both the right and task of our Congress to make a decision on the party of a new character. We should reach a consensus in the spirit of dismantling the so-called state socialism that applied democratic centralism in practice and in its place we will set out to build the order of democratic socialism. It is not a small risk that we take by doing so, since in our society there are also advocates of democracy without socialism. And they will also enjoy the opportunities provided by the constitution. We must accept that risk. Actually, we have no choice in this any more. But again and again, we will have to be able to struggle for the ideal policy of democratic socialism. The new party in my opinion cannot be a communist party. Not only because communism as a social formation is not on the agenda nowadays, but mainly because this new party must take up workers' interests on a far broader social scale than a communist party would. The new party cannot be simply a social democratic one, either. Because it cannot remain exclusively on a basis of day-to-day "realpolitik": it must also have long-term objectives.

The new Socialist Party must seek the still unshaped synthesis that can grow out of the new encounter of the traditions, values and practices of social democracy and communism, the two branches into which the socialist movement split. The new socialist party may strive for contact in two directions, in the world movements of both socialism and communism. It should maintain especially friendly and allied connections with the reform-communist parties both East and West. A special role in that process

will go to the relationship with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which is implementing a reform policy. It is desirable to build up close and friendly ties with the Socialist International. Also with the numerous socialist and social democratic parties. We consider the formation, strengthening and effective operation of a European Left to be of historical importance and intend to participate in it. The reborn party should appear as a people's party at the elections when it gives its objectives a full national dimension, establishing a common denominator of the socialist-oriented objectives of the different social strata. The party as a movement, however, should decisively and above all function as an expression of employees' interests: that would be the right thing to do in the interest of those broad strata of employees whose fate and future will depend to a great extent on solidarity, on unity in a movement. The party movement must accept and proclaim the idea that the spheres of physical and mental work have identical values and interests that must integrate into each other. Beside that, we should build upon the alliance with self-employed workers, small producers and small entrepreneurs by taking up the interests of these strata. Our political approach is centred upon the problems of common people. Let us regard the reform movement developed within the party as a positive expression of vitality. Let us utilize its courageous stand in favour of reforms. What approach must we exclude if we accept the principle of democratic socialism? We must exclude the approach of those who regard democracy as only a means of class policy rather than the life form of social co-existence. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" approach and the democratic centralism that eliminates arguments within the party cannot live under the same roof with democratic socialism. We must also exclude the approach of those who, wanting to base the policy of reforms upon a kind of messianistic faith, want the party to become a formation devoid even of democratic socialism. Finally, we must exclude the approach of those who did or do want to abuse their positions by representing their personal interests and use the party essentially as a tool for maintaining their power.

Comrades! From this moment on, the fate of the Hungarian socialist labour movement depends on the resolutions of the Congress. Our influence is not negligible from the aspect of the nation's future. Let us make our decisions in the knowledge of our responsibility. Hereby I open the political debates of the Congress."

Since the delegates—and the Party's leaders—arrived at the Congress in the most diverse moods and also with diverse ambitions; and since it was obvious that the people would not give the party any more chance to make an

ambiguous decision once again, that is, take the people in; further, since in the months leading to the Congress it became clear that the 1,200 delegates were wavering helplessly, feeling the terrible burden of their responsibility; and since it was also clear that the party's leadership was lacking a concept, and it could not be seen at all what the party intended to do in order to ease the citizen's heavy, everyday burdens; and since, on the other side, it could be clearly seen that the party's leaders were fighting each other hard; in view of all that, the President of the party should have delivered a major program address. Everybody can judge for himself, now or in the future: was the above quoted speech like that?

If we did and do have sufficient self-control, we could be certain that the Congress was not at all representative of the whole society. Less than that, it did not represent even the mass of party members. Most of the delegates were elected one or two months before the Congress and in a number of districts the organizers discarded the new, democratic method of delegating representatives by direct elections. It was also obvious that, even if they could or wanted to participate actively in directly electing their delegates in these two months, the electors were full of tensions and frustration as well as the awareness of the decline pre-programmed even by the leadership and the possible defeat in society. In his capacity as President of the party, Rezső Nyers had made a statement during the summer, hinting at a possible opposition role in the party's future.

It is possible for a leading mass party gathering even the best members of society to join the election struggle by forecasting that it would go into opposition—and if its leaders do forecast that, regarding it to be modern and liberal, then why do they not immediately clarify the political and economic as well as organizational strategy and tactics that they want to pursue in opposition? Why do they not openly prepare their members for the dramatically unaccustomed new situation after four decades of power?

In the weeks preceding the Congress and, unfortunately, even afterwards, there were a huge number of *turncoats* among those who, in cases as leading employees of the party, *are not only responsible* for the past but even their *present and future depend exclusively* on their hanging onto their posts in the administration. An increasing number of them started saying aloud, "What an awful thing that party state or state party was!" while forgetting what privileges they enjoyed at hunts, in infrastructure and so on. In the very last weeks they stepped forward as advocates of now the workers' cause, now the People's democratic platform (which latter hardly existed at the time), now as radical reformers. Servants of the organization *even before*, the great turn did not affect their (minuscule) sovereignty. *Is a great turn possible at all in*

this way? They have not taken their coats yet—but turned them whirling with a flourish. Certainly, although the leading apparatchiks of the party could—and indeed did, in large numbers—attend the reform clubs and later the Reform Association founded before the Congress, they were still unable to exercise their influence, mainly because of the *shortcomings in their mentality*.

The dedicated, struggling team of reform clubs *was not happy* with such people's transfers to their ranks. But they were neither firm, nor organized enough to say no to transfer requests. As long ago as in the time of the Kecske-mét Reform Workshop, that is, in the spring of 1989 it could be seen that the *party administration's* leaders of different levels had become reformers just as *unexpectedly* as had the persons who, abusing their power in the *ideological and cultural administration* of the past decades, had inflicted serious intellectual and ethical damages. One of them could even perform the somersault of becoming an advocate, at Kecske-mét and even late, of the workers' interests, being hardly disturbed by the fact that all his life he had stood apart from workers. Or perhaps they had stayed away from him. But *let us return to the Congress hall*. On the basis of registrations according to platforms, everything was still in a fluid state. The Reform Association had a clear majority.

It could be also noticed, however, that while the youth, the representatives of the agricultural sector, the advocates of equal chances for the countryside were quietly organizing themselves into platforms, a group of the young and middle-aged employees and leaders of Budapest's party administration were stepping up their mobility on Friday, the first day of the Congress. It was good to see how they contacted those non-Budapest delegates *who did not intend* to join the different platforms. It was good to see that Budapest's administration was striving for an alliance with the free, sovereign country delegates. But then, taking a closer look, the pleasure turned a little sour. And I remembered the apostle Paul's warning "God is no respecter of persons". In the weeks before the Congress nothing was known about the people's democrats, and in the last days before the opening only an appeal published in the daily Népszabadság ("On behalf of the People's Democratic Delegates' group: László Iklódi, Béla Fábri, Tamás Krausz" was the signature) informed us on the founding of that platform which, according to Friday's registration, still had only a few members then. Yet, there was undoubted attention to the Congress address of János Gönci who was to be quoted from Saturday on as the platform's "leader" in press organs.

Probably a large number of delegates *considered that address to be the platform's manifesto-like message*. Not too rich in new thoughts, here it is:

"After the interval there was an extremely short time to prepare for this comment, so I apologise in advance, should it fail to be fully precise.

The People's democratic platform requested an interval because we feel the necessity of making a real and sharp point of the questions that have arisen in the course of the Congress. In our opinion it is impossible not to notice what kind of break lines there are, or not to clarify what kind of break lines there aren't at the Congress, that is, in our party's leadership, so in the Congress.

We have come to this Congress to decide whether to reshape our party or form a new party. To decide whether or not it is a real question.

In our opinion there are four topics to agree upon. We must agree on the party's operational method; we must agree on a bottom limit of a platform or a program which, if we resolve that the party may be an alliance of platforms, will decide whether these platforms will belong to one party or mean a loose alliance of different parties. We suggest that there should be one platform that will keep away from extremes, keep away from other parties and thus create one party from the HSWP's successor party. Third, we must resolve personal matters. The fourth item, which is rather neglected but extremely important as it throws light on the first three: the problem of transition.

I have spoken about the party's operation, we suggest an alliance of platforms, with the supremacy of the Congress guaranteed. That is reflected in the present draft Rules, so it is practically acceptable.

Concerning the basic questions, we must draw up a left-wing program which, at the same time, will mean a real democratic operation, demolishing the party state and refusing the possibility of dictatorship of the proletariat, thus cutting off that extremist wing of the HSWP that compromises us even by that threat. We are of the opinion that the bottom limit of the platform should include a declaration of the need of a multisector market economy based on the equality of the types of ownership. At the same time, we prefer social ownership in the sense it is mentioned in the program declaration. That, we think, can also be a connecting or separating line. And we also think that, from the aspect of the society's operation, a really democratic operation based on territorial self-government is an essential item. These questions have arisen so far today, there has been practically no debate on them. So the problems have not become pointed. We are afraid that the problems will come to a head over the personal questions, and perhaps this party will turn out to be not one party any more only when we come to resolve the problem of transition.

The People's democratic platform is of the opinion that the party's continuity must be ensured, even in personal matters, so we support the suggestions that comrade Rezső Nyers should be the party's President in the future and we believe that he would accept that proposal. At the same time the party's

members expect us to fully refresh the leadership. At the same time, the same party members stand behind Miklós Németh and Imre Pozsgay—but all the same, we propose to consider: if the four-member Presidium changes only at one point Mr. Grósz, what will the public think about our party and Congress? I knew in advance that there would be a smaller applause after the previous sentence, but we must still face the problem, as the conclusions will be drawn, unfortunately, from those matters instead of those of essence.

The problem of transition. It will become the most important issue at the Congress, even if we have not discussed it. What does the founding of a new party mean? We accept that a line must be drawn between the HSWP and its successor party. The People's Democratic Platform does not regard the problem of the party's name as a crucial test, we can accept the name of Hungarian Socialist Party, at the same time our opinion (I am sorry, there must be some time trouble here, it seems I misread my watch).

...At the same time, we are of the opinion that it must be made clear here at the Congress that the successor party will be the one accepted by the majority here. We are of the opinion that we must ensure the participation and continuity of membership for that majority of the decent party members whom we have several times declared here to have had no responsibility, as they had no say in the errors, are not responsible for the errors committed by this party.

This is why we cannot agree with the idea that the majority of members should undergo some admittance procedure or entry procedure. We propose that the membership should be registered again with the program's acceptance. It should not be a revision of membership but rather, for example, the payment of membership fees for December, so that the comrades will have time to decide whether they will or will not pay them. May I give you just one argument for that.

Since June 24 I have been the first secretary of the party committee for the capital's IXth district. In our district there are a large number of elderly comrades, members, whom I have very often talked to, as this is the issue I am the least familiar with. (I'll finish right away.) They said they're comrades. At first there is always a lot of shouting when I communicate my views. And then, two or three hours later, they usually say, "We understand, comrade Gönci, we do understand, but for heaven's sake, give us some time to also comprehend it, because we can't change overnight!" In my opinion we should not send away those who allow and, by their votes, support the party's basic and essential renewal and transformation; rather, we should call and wait for them to enter the ranks of the HSWP, that is, the HSP."

In connection with that platform I recall a journalist of "Magyar Hirlap" who quotes them as saying they were formed in the summer and had become a

decision-shaping force by the time of the Congress. The "Hirlap" asks: why did they announced their theses only a few days before the Congress? Now that is a very good question from a journalist.

Since the above address—on behalf of the platform—stood up for Rezső Nyers, it can be supposed that Rezső Nyers's previously quoted opening address and the above comment building upon it can be considered together to include all the theoretical and political elements of their joint rally.

They probably do.

But the task of finding the new elements requires a concentrated effort from the reader of listener. Anyway, from Friday afternoon János Gönci, Béla Katona and Csaba Hámori all lined up beside László Iklódi, Béla Fábri and Tamás Krausz, the signers of the appeal in "Népszabadság" and from then on, it was mostly the new chrew who provided leadership for the People's democratic platform. The question of why this platform, originating in the countryside, at first small then suddenly flooded by hundreds of people, has a leadership of five or six Budapest men, is certainly worth some thinking. Observers easily recognised that glaring disproportion. The leaders and the led, however, did not. The former did not want to, the latter were unable to see and realize that a distortion was born here. That trend was reinforced when the above persons immediately took care of the extensive press coverage for them. It is the fault and responsibility of the Reform Association's members, leaders or even Imre Pozsgay himself that they failed to look and see the fact of the *organic distance* between the leaders, intensely active in the limelight, and the members, operated less intensely in the background.

I took notice of all that only when some non-Budapest delegates approached me on Saturday afternoon, October 7. They were members of the People's democratic platform and expressed their bewilderment upon hearing such news on the radio that day as, for example, János Gönci, the "renowned reformist", "leader of the People's democratic platform was *shaping an accord*" with the Reform Association and was thus saving the Congress, eliminating the danger of the Party falling apart. These countryside delegates were outraged exactly because they had given no mandate to anyone for an accord with the Reform Association, as most of them had *actually declined* joining the reform platform as they had disagreed with its theses and sometimes too rough radicalism.

In short, they were uneasy about the contents of an agreement drawn up in their names and without their knowledge.

We were to learn the answer supplied by life, though.

On Saturday afternoon several of the People's democratic platform's leaders mentioned above, in co-operation with the Reform Association's leaders, created *in a few hours* a document on the new Party's character, which was to become the founding document of the new Hungarian Socialist Party to be approved on Saturday evening. *In a few hours, let me stress it again.* At an international press conference on Sunday Béla Fábry, János Gönci and András Bárd made statements to the effect of verifying that "*they had initiated this document of compromise*". Thus it is quite credible; that's the way it happened. Their fellow platform members could have the (this time questionable) *pleasure of noticing* on Saturday evening that the work was done: the Party was remade.

Now let us stop for a word here.

Or two, rather. On the one hand, I have some concrete experience concerning how a traditional major party with a long past, working in a well-balanced social-economic situation, like the Social Democrats in West Germany, prepares its strategic programme and the theses deciding the party's future character by tremendous mental and political efforts—once in every few decades.

For instance, the SPD has been preparing since the early 1980s to replace its outdated Bad Godesberg programme (which, however, had a penetrating force in its day). And in the last three years their best theoreticians and most progressive, internationally known politicians have been preparing in countless sub-committees to approve their new programme, planned to be valid for the times after the turn of the millenium as well, still this year. This team has been led for years by a personality of no less calibre than Prime Minister Lafontaine of the Saarland.

There are some minor differences between the preparations done in Budapest and Bonn. The former took about *3-4 hours*, the latter *3-4 years*. And, comparing the two countries' social, economic, welfare and political conditions, we can see some difference between calmness and calamity. That difference should justify the necessity of *putting in a bit more* than just a few hours of mental shovelling to create a new program built upon the unstable foundations prevailing in Hungary and intending to maintain and stabilize the Party's leading role; the political strategy defining the party's character' and the new party's aspect and the definitions supporting its name's security.

While not criticizing the enthusiastic diligence of the elected, appointed or self-appointed members of the Reform Association and the People's democratic platform, *we might perhaps doubt their ability* to create, in a matter of hours in such chaotic social conditions, a basic document (which is, incidentally, not quite clear in principles: e.g. it was a surprise for the members of the People's democratic platform). And they valued all that as a victory on the way.

Thus the chances of a fair and clear divorce or breakaway of parties were excluded as a matter of course, to the amazement of delegates.

It remains a sad fact that *the leading social force* in Hungary—and, embodied in the Congress, still the chief political medium of the society at the moment—*had to resolve the vital question* of creating the party and defining its character under such conditions where the level of enthusiasm and excitement shown by the persons drawing up that document is *hardly in harmony* with their programme-making mental capacities and political organizing experience. Saturday night was *the minute*—and the preceding period had been the few hours—that *destined* the future of the leftist party. It thus created a whole row of uncleared political and legal questions, *seemingly* bringing about the right compromise but in reality latently setting the different forces of the Left, the HSWP and the HSP, *against each other*.

Let me recall some elements of János Gönci's above-quoted "program speech". He declared the Party's *continuity* - in a way that must be ensured in personnel matters as well, that is, Rezső Nyers should be the new party's President. Later, *just contrary to continuity*, he spoke in favour of *a line to be drawn* between the HSWP and the successor party. If continuity is possible for the person of the President, a key figure (none other but Rezső Nyers, and even with all due respect it must be noted that his activity since 1957 has been a *trademark of continuity*, or as he so eloquently put it, his long-run reformist course), well, if there may be continuity in the President's person, then *where* do they think the line should have been drawn?

Unfortunately, that did not turn out. Since that moment, the blur has been complete.

And *how should we interpret* that part of the speech made on behalf of the platform where it was asked: if the previous four-member Presidium changes only at one point, "what will be thought of our Party and Congress?" Does the person speaking in his platform's name require Miklós Németh and Imre Pozsgay beside Rezső Nyers, or does he not? If he does, why is he disturbed

about "what will be thought of our Party"? And if he does not, why does he not clearly spell out the other elements of the leading quartet where he wishes changes? In connection with Károly Grósz's earlier announced quitting, why does he fail to react to the firm and long-known opinion of the Reform Association in which, beside Miklós Németh and Imre Pozsgay, they regard Gyula Horn to be the most striking top representative of their reformist ideas? And hey presto, here stands the new quartet. What is the mandate for? Are we to accept that or not?

But there is no real mandate. There is only improvisation.

And the days following the Congress also *strikingly proved* how little considerate was the opinion of the quoted speaker referring to his platform, and that of many others, the majority of those voting at the Congress, who thought, "*The successor party will be the one approved by the majority here.*"

Would it not have been more appropriate to consider, even during their "grand-scale" mental performance of a few hours, what the—possibly hundreds of thousands of—HSWP membership card-holders for perhaps 32 years will say to that?

And what is the opinion of those approximately 150 delegates who voted NO to the new party, that is, to the document defining its character? And of the about 40 delegates who abstained, thus intending to express their anguish—including Károly Grósz, not long after his ramrod speech? (See it later.)

Me, I was among those who voted NO to all those proposals late on Saturday evening. Sitting up there in the hardly visible gallery, I could not see how the vote was going downstairs where about a thousand delegates were seated. Few of us were up there. Only later did it turn out that there were over 150 of us against that motion.

In my case it was *not a matter of orthodox consideration*. Not even my tension tormenting me for weeks as I had seen the anxiety of numerous HSWP members in the countryside over having the roof taken away from over their heads against their will or even without getting asked about it. Hundreds of thousands *rightfully felt insulted* by such practice.

That, however, was not my reason for voting against the motion. As I had said in a small company of leaders at Zalaegerszeg on September 9, a *honest break in the party*, effected by clear programmes and personalities, is inevitable. We must not allow the hundreds of thousands of our fellow party members to *feel embarrassed shame*, to flee from the party with pale faces, afraid of both getting let down in the future and *suffering the undeserved attacks* in the press as well as by part of the public and the opposition. A clear break in the Party would have made it possible for the HSWP's

members to decide that they would all remain members of the legally continuing HSWP, while others may found a new party.

The Reform Association possessed that organic force which could have attracted masses to the new party. And if, owing to the earlier rough manifestation of the reform clubs that had gravely insulted the masses of Party members, those of a different mentality but still committed to the reforms had also wanted to form a new party of their own, then the Reform Bloc, led by the worldfamous film director Ferenc Kósa, appearing a couple of weeks before the Congress and growing in strength at an increasing speed, would have given them the opportunity to create a new, even a narrow elitist if necessary, party on the basis of a pure, ethical conviction free of radical prejudices.

It is *not* those persons of the People's Democratic Platform, appearing overnight, most of them being ineffectual and unknown but most agile, rooted in the Budapest Party administrations, who are mainly responsible for this unexpected compromise settling over the whole Congress on Saturday night. At best, they did what they could, since neither they, nor Csaba Hámori, a Politburo member since 1985, who joined them en route, found appropriate spots for themselves in the reform clubs movement and thus remained without sufficient support at the beginning of the Congress: they did what was in their interest, trying to survive, to display political power, to become equal partners with the Reform Association at the negotiating table by creating the image of a strong platform by means of acquiring the signatures of a large number of non-Budapest delegates; and thus, to dominate the Congress. And the new party's character. Its programme. Statutes. New leaders. And meanwhile, they would also ensure their continued existence as leaders. Whether it was a method people's enough or democratic enough, the facts of life and the judgement of history should decide: my opinion, I hope, is clear enough. Here and now their action will be qualified by whether the Hungarian Socialist Party will become a mass organization, and what kind of a senseless and painfully unnecessary struggle there will ensue between the HSP and the HSWP, involving other successor parties and party embryos having once belonged to the HSWP.

The campaign of survival in itself is the personal right of those concerned, their self-defense reflexes at work. Are they "parachuters"? Or a well-organized small airborne commando?

And if I say that theirs is not the main responsibility, as all they did was legalize their political survival through the several-hundred-strong but rarely gathered group of non-Budapest delegates, then *who are chiefly to blame?*

It is the Reform Association. Mostly its leading personality Imre Pozsgay who created the basis of the Reform Association and continuously

collaborated with its members. Miklós Németh and Gyula Horn also share the blame. And so do those who, on behalf of the Reform Association, accepted this—you will excuse me for the exaggeration—phantom platform as a power equal to themselves. They became just as cowardly as they had at their national conference held in early September when they could have raised the banner: “Pro patria et libertate”.

And this time it was not only thirty barefooted serfs awaiting at the border between Poland and Hungary, like it had happened in the year 1703 when Prince Francis Rákóczi II had started his freedom fight. For the Reform Association and its one-year history were characterized (and thus distinguished from other, sometimes short-lived, platforms) by their organic structure and, spontaneously born and extremely powerful ever since, their becoming an ever-stronger movement in the countryside. They had become a *genuine reformist force*. And though they often irritated the undeserving public, including mostly the honest but reluctant Party members (especially the elderly ones), they can still claim to have fought their way through the domestic iron curtain, simultaneously with the removal of the barbed wire from our Western border.

It was the fault of also the reform clubs that their most radical representatives—including, mainly in Budapest, dozens of turncoats and self-appointed ideological Messiahs—were getting increasingly strong, aggressive and power-hungry. And they did not notice that, of the founders at Kecskemét and Szeged, some of the moderate personalities who were experienced in organizing politics had fallen back. Nevertheless, this gap was bridged over by Kósa's Reform Bloc and the fact that this latter received an important role in the new Reform Association.

Let us not deny, though: even in the small negotiating group of the Reform Association's Congress delegates there were several people characterized by the ardour of thought rather than experience in professional organizing of politics.

And albeit they regularly consulted their 500-strong membership; and albeit they made all their decisions collectively indeed, forming and defending a political force, style and ideology clearly new in the Party's history,—in the moment of truth they lost heart, because neither before, nor at the beginning of the Congress, and even less on the way towards its troubled end, did they receive an utterly dedicated, purely unambiguous set of political signals from their leading lights (Horn, Németh, Pozsgay) who possessed an almost symbolic power for them.

Thus the product of the second day and, considering also the preliminary session, third night of the Congress was a blur. While singing the the Hymn anthem, did it occur to the more than 1000 participants that in the critical

light of the following days and weeks the new party's birth would not be as shiny and enthusiastic as they were considering it to be at the time?

The strong reformist platform and the team of apparatchiks who pretended strength: they tied up themselves, they tied up their alliance of a troubled content, and they tied up the further course of the Congress as well.

But even that aside, an especially sad episode of that Saturday night for me was that none other but this document on the Party's character was the first one submitted by the Congress to the public of Hungary. Why did the leaders of this Congress (and let us not acquit its delegates growing up perhaps in naivety and political inexperience, either) believe that it was what the country was expecting? Why did they not notice through the increasingly frequent failures of the past months and years that the country was expecting something drastically different? That people were hardly interested in a new name or the question of what name the Party would use after having accepted the new document that was, by the way, far more up-to-date in all aspects. Half of the four days had gone by. And the Congress had not yet spoken a single word to the citizens of the country. It had not given birth to a result contributing to the improvement of the citizens daily lives.

Saturday night went off in exultation within the walls of the Congress. The effect of Rezső Nyers's address reflected that mood undoubtedly well. Rezső Nyers, President of not only the old party but clearly the new as well for an overwhelming majority, displayed a new quality that I had not known before. It was János Kádár who in his time had been able to send Congresses into such a mood. (True, the last real one took place in 1975. The Congresses in 1980 and 1985 granted only good-mannered applause after the speeches of the Party's leader.)

But were the enthusiastic delegates and leaders aware of the consequences of these decisions and presidential words to the hundreds of thousands of Party members? To the population which, for a long time, has been following the HSWP's ever more frequent "renewals" that occur now in almost every six months, with an increasingly irritated indifference?

Will the people receive bread? For circus tickets they have no money left, anyway.

Basking in the light of success, the two platform mediators radically snatched the power of shaping further events. The unity of disparity invisibly forced not only the Reform Association and its leaders but also the whole Congress on their knees. From this moment on, the bulk of delegates was compelled to retreat into the status of observers of hardly perceivable events, even if they did not yet know that.

For Saturday night was still the hour of victory.

But I wonder if they thought of what the people remaining outside the Congress walls, making up the masses of Party membership, would have to say about the new statement on the Party (App.4.), especially the opening sentence: "The period bearing the stamp of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party has ended in our homeland. The so far valid concept of Socialism, the system of Stalinist origins, have consumed all their social, economic, political and moral resources and are insufficient to keep abreast of the world's development. Thus the history of the HSWP as a State Party has come to an end... From a State Party, our party will become a modern Leftist socialist movement, a political mass party under its members' control..."

I have also long had the opinion that a *period has ended. But not that of the HSWP*: The outdated period is the one when, in Hungary defeated in WW2, excellent representatives of the technical, scientific and religious communities as well as the medium landowner peasantry preparing their lands with a renewed force, that is, the leading forces of the maintenance of society—were expelled from public life or even out of the country. Serving Stalin both asked and unasked for, this period drove a majority of the nation into unspoken madness.

That period, that is, the period then forced upon us by powers within and without, has ended indeed. Within that period, however, the people and the intellectuals intending to lead the people by democratic means had pushed forward since 1953. October 23, 1956: a popular uprising. Followed by multifold bloody reprisals. A reform attempt re-strated and stopped as early as 1957, accompanied by the signs of terror. A Party whose Central Committee accepts and thereby legitimizes the execution of Imre Nagy and his comrades in 1957. And the same Central Committee with Rezső Nyers and the same János Kádár set out to return to the interrupted experiment of 1953-1955. Also itself is often interrupted. But it finds its way to 1968. That year is not only that of the beginning of Hungary's reform: that is when we enter Czechoslovakia as well, in the service of alien interests. Later the Party's leadership partly beheds itself. The uneducated soap-bos speakers, too powerful local lords and arbitrariness return in the 1970s. Crisis from the late '70s. In every three years it is declared that in the next three years the economy will be refloatated, stabilized and then developed. Meanwhile, everything sinks ever deeper.

And mostly: the leadership does not lead any longer. It is paralyzed.

At first the masses' passivity, then their poverty increases.

This is a revolutionary situation in the deepest currents.

But even that, even its surfacing fits the increasingly selfconscious Hungarians. Such is the country the world learns to know. But within, here is the 5th column, the army of quislings, and the worse for the country, the better for them, since in the vacuum they can increase their power into even a total one; and though the worsening of the crisis-like situation does indeed bring about a crisis, yet...

INTERVAL

It may have been purely incidental that today, on October 23 (having already handed in the manuscript), while I was listening to the crowd marching towards the Parliament shout "56 will live again!", echoing the handlers of loudspeakers—so this is when I received a copy of a letter. It was written in the countryside, addressed to Béla Fábry—and the copy to me. Here it goes:

"Dear comrade Fábry,

I acknowledge the receipt of the letter-cum-invitation calling on me to attend the next session of the people's democratic platform. I was glad to see the platform still counts on my work. Previously, however, allow me to inform you of some of my thoughts.

Reading through a lot of material in the course of preparing for the Congress, I made up my mind to become a member of the Reform Association. I thought it was the platform that would represent my interests. I cannot deny, however, that I had my misgivings, due especially to the lack of organizing the platform from the grassroots level. On the first day of the Congress I encountered the People's democratic platform's material and, having read it, I immediately saw: here was the platform to represent my interests in the Party.

Several of us delegates thought we should participate in the work not only as silent observers but actively organizing the platform. All the more so since it

was a grassroots initiative. And I saw that this grassroots initiative had made an impact, the platform of 25-30 people became one of 100 members, influencing already other delegates, too. And here I want to bring up the point of my message. As long as we were a small platform, we stuck to our programme. But when the hard fighting began, the platform's leaders made such compromises that can no longer be harmonized with the platform's programme. Reaching over the platform of already 400 people, its leaders monopolized the right of decisionmaking. Scurrying and haste started dominating the platform's sessions, resulting later in a loss of members. I regard it was a mistake by the platform, or its leaders, to accept the closed-list voting, making such a compromise which no longer contained the platform's "original programme". It also lacks a plan for the implementation of the concret economic idea. And it lacks a solution to the problems of the individual layers: workers, intellectuals. I feel that the platform's leaders used the high number of members only to break their way into the so-called high region of politics.

Meanwhile, the platform's grassroots organizers, who had brought up our number to nearly 400 people, expressed their disappointment and also the thought that the compromises of electing the Presidium had gravely affected many people.

Thinking the whole process over again, I am not sure the PDP has remained my platform after all.

Eger, October 20, 1989.

Yours sincerely,
Mihály Pruzsinszki
(a driver)

Looking out through the window, I heard the loudspeakers claiming the revival of 1956. The people were marching after them in long columns.

Who are more dangerous? Those setting the tone of the street or the amateurs who wanted to enter the HSP's Presidium at all costs, enjoying and utilizing momentary advantages? Amateurs in politics, on the top and in the bottom, outside and inside? Their being amateurs would be no problem, but may the Lord save us from their activity and mental aggressivity wanting to shape politics!

These dangerous times require professionals now, and the likes of Mihály Pruzsinszki: honest voices.

My mandate was expired. Slowly I started collecting my papers and books to leave the building of the central offices, never to return. I'll take them home

soon. But before that I'll take a look at the Parliament. 1800 hours, Monday, October 23.

Yet—this is where I interrupted myself—in the social average of the last forty years it was the HSWP's period that stood out from among the rest: it was the one to which the word "Stalinist" is the least applicable.

In recent years I have kept wondering: who are those that make most of the diligent population to humiliate themselves and suffer the burden of humiliated feelings—and why do they do it? That practice strongly reminds me of the religion used by the Rákosi clique so aggressively for clownlike flattery to Stalin and for a whip here at home, the religion on "the sinful nation, the Germans' last satellite," mocking the people of Hungary, their own people.

For years I have been worrying that there will come a time when, say, a village woodchopper can no longer make a distinction in his way of thinking and approach to Hungary's conditions: whether it is the effect of the sense of crisis methodically instilled in his mind and heart, or the actual worsening of his everyday conditions that will make him burst out, "I've had enough!" And stopping chopping, he will crash his axe into the ground. We can be happy if he does not look for a better target.

For a few years there has been a quiet popular revolution unfolding before our eyes. It has put an end to the process that started 40 years ago when, in the name of the revolution, anti-revolutionaries excluded the people from the people's power; and in the last two years this quiet popular revolution indicated all that make up the fact of a revolution: the rulers can no longer rule in the old way; the people can no longer live like that. And the latter's activity increases. At that point there is but one more thing needed: a revolutionary new party.

In my best hopes the Hungarian Socialist Party should be such a party. That would be, or that would have been, its historical mission. And my faith prompts me to say: it should be able to fulfil that.

For if it does not, the Leftist party, formed the way it was, having abandoned masses of people, will leave such a vacuum in the situation thus created which may provide political and geopolitical tensions as well.

And as there are not witches, like wise, there are no vacuums - at least permanently.

In connection with the spring of 1988 I already indicated my option, in which the gravely unstable economic situation would have required a balanced political democratisation conducted through safe channels: a democratisation that, by applying modern tools, would create a centrally harmonized

leadership based on the alliance of professionalism and efficiency. I do not beat around the bush: in my past and, even more, current opinion we need such a modern, centralized state government to minimize the next few years' political and economic crisis, as what the absolutist monarchs used to maintain it their time, creating the conditions of a bourgeois society in the last phase of declining feudalism.

That, today, is possible only in a coalition of several parties. If the governing coalition of many parties that lack popular support brings about a disintegration, Hungary may arrive at the Italian pattern where at least three governments are formed in every two years. The only difference is that we have no North Italian industry—and we would like to avoid having our Sicily, South Italy. Having left my interpretation of the Congress events for the sake of these few thoughts, let me quote Molière:

Ours is the age of order, and the law—
breakers, the violent ones, will have to pay.

And it would be unfortunate to have such people participating either in the new party or the future's still unknown governing coalition who would be unable to solve in themselves the dilemma that even the apostle Luke could not: "I cannot hoe; I am ashamed to beg."

But let us return to Saturday evening, October 7, one day after the 140th anniversary of the martyrs of Arad—return now to the Congress of the HSP. As I could not identify with the new party structure that was blurring everything, or with the party's character, I remembered a saying of János Apáczai Csere, good for a pun: "I would rather get rid of one of my members than listen to useless talk for two hours." During the two last days and the many times two hours of the previous night, we got rid of many members, not only one. And in the following days I was increasingly anxious, fearing that the Congress would amputate quite a lot of members, deliberately or by accident.

Naturally, I concede that both the Statement on the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Manifesto (App.4-5.) mean an unprecedented innovation in the over seven decades long history of ruling Communist parties. They provide an opportunity for Hungary to get nearer to Europe's efficient economies and democratic political establishments—albeit clearly through an essential loss

in the Communist, or newly Socialist, party's power, ability and possibility to lead the country.

It is also clear, however, that in its programme the Party has not supplied a direct, exactly determinable and implementable initiative to get rid of the crisis situation gravely affecting the population. The government has put a distance between itself and its own party - that is, naturally, the government's responsibility. Fortunately, it is better composed than any other government of the past 40 years in Hungary, and is thus capable of staying in charge of crisis management.

The government needs one or more parties capable of rallying masses to support national interests and the concret work of governing, with all their organizing force.

But: if the Party does not attract masses, then the public organizing power that the most outstanding layers of the HSWP's (otherwise overgrown) membership, hundreds of thousands, created in the invisible channels of the social system, will be lacking.

There is always a need for a well-organized party, an organization working on the basis of followable disciplines, in every civilized land. That need is especially bad in those countries whose social outlines and profile are not yet clear, countries that—like Hungary - underwent such major shocks affecting them for centuries like the Versailles treaties, two lost world wars, several bouts of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary terror, a permanent danger of civil war, the situation of being hemmed in a traditionally unnatural area kept locked up by the Iron Curtain, as a willing-unwilling puppet of a Socialist world power. (There is a less sophisticated phrase, actually, to describe it: as a well-behaved puppet.)

And there is a need for one or two modern parties (and what a need!) even where there is such a huge but hydrocephalously helpless system of bureaucracy existing as in the socialist countries, including ours. Even in well-operating systems of government and state administration there are some spheres of public and private life that state administration cannot penetrate, its efforts being even rebuffed.

Either since birth or on the basis of later habits, some people require public forums for themselves: possibly the Party, the one answering their needs, their own party. A party that creates and lives the state of affairs in which, according to Macchiavelli's wise teaching, "The most useful fortification is... the love of the people."

Our Party was not very much like that. But it had always had the possibility to be made into such a party. The elderly and even more aged generations, however, have forgotten that the 1970s had brought the beginning of a new era. In modern states the new generation have taken their places with bursting

energy and are fulfilling their leading role without generation gaps, providing a continuity of succession.

Aside from the generation change taking place under constraint and resulting a catastrophe from the aspect of professional quality at the turn of the 1940s and 50s, Hungary's leaders did and often still do resist such a change.

They may not know or accept Hölderlin's wise statement: "He who sees far understands the power of youth."

Hungary's leaders did not pick up their binoculars even when they could not see more than themselves and the small courts of sycophants they had built around themselves. Instead of a generation change, this is why the selection of the unfittest is still raging—and so is the father-complex of young social climbers who always find the high-ranking leader whom they can respectfully idolize, looking on him with a child's awe—and thus easily grabbing up the parental inheritance. Blind chance is as much present in "juvenation" as self-made, talented people's persistent work over any hurdles, their thirst of knowledge and love of public and people.

These latter eminences of the young generation have been scattered recently—we will return to that later.

At the Congress, fighting against the political dispossession of less well-informed delegates and in favour of the forceful political support of the idea of self-government, I got involved—against my will—in several famous and ill-famed situations of multiple tensions. Such situations nevertheless have their advantages as well, over the disadvantages.

My fellow delegates approached me not only in the matter of the People's democratic platform. Some of them required help in what they could not go on, lacking sufficient experience, contacts or battle practice.

I remember them with gratitude. Surely, during the months preceding the Congress and in the four days shaking the country, even I got on the floor mentally several times. I felt there were powers, papers, groups of apparatchiks who would have loved to see me counted out, and sometimes they had even found the referee to do the counting already.

I avoid such fights. Seeing my struggling, Minister István Horváth of the Interior, whose loose acquaintance with me was based on hardly a few conversations, asked me why I took up all the gauntlets flung before me, and why I kept flinging mine. I could answer only what had directed my practice so far: I have no gauntlets with me and I never use those of others. My hands are too big.

In one of the unexpected encounters, an economist working for a leading economic institute (I do not know his name) confided in me and gave me the following compilation. Not for my eyes only, I suppose, but also to pass it on to others. Here it goes:

WITH NO RESPONSIBILITY

In the September 9 issue of "HVG", Ferenc Havasi deals with the decisions and persons that determined Hungary's economic policy and consequently—for even a generation's time perhaps—the country's fate in the mid-1970s. Memory, nevertheless, is not a sufficiently objective tool for passing judgement in such questions. We have a far more reliable picture of the characters involved if we start from what post the main questions of economic policy were decided at.

In the political superstructure operating until very recently—that is, in the Party State—economic political decisions were made on two levels: those of state and Party. The state level's decisionmaking posts were the following: prime minister, deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs, the president (and his deputy) of the National Planning Bureau, the finance minister and his deputy, and the governor of the National Bank of Hungary and his deputy. On the Party level it was the CC secretary responsible for economic affairs, the HSWP CC Economic Policy Department's head and his deputy in charge of national economic planning who had a say. The deputies must be taken into consideration because it is not at all certain that an economic political position formed at an institution is originated from the institution's leader, but the actual decisionmaker is likely to be one of the two top men. At several institutions there are more than one deputies. From our aspect those of them can be considered to be decisionmakers who dealt with general economic political questions or problem fields strongly influencing the shaping of our economic policy. Unfortunately, the demarcation is not fully reliable even this way, as very often it was not the leaders but the administration's strong man, for instance, divisional director playing the role of factotum who determined the institution's position. Going into such details, however, would certainly increase the subjectiveness of the judgement.

Though of the economic political decisions resulting in today's situation it is those made in the mid-1970s that have an outstanding importance, the later ones and even non-decisions are equally important from the aspect of adapting to the changed conditions. Therefore, though from a certain viewpoint it might be justified to weigh the different periods, we still think

that it would further increase the inevitable subjectiveness. It also cannot be really decided whether it was the state organs or the Party that had a greater role in decisionmaking. We are simply not in a position to judge whether it was the functional governing bodies determining the political bodies' freedom of movement, or the other way round? Similarly, it would be difficult to rank the individual state governing bodies, as it would not be easy to decide whether, for example, it was the attitude of the National Planning Bureau, the Ministry of Finance or the National Bank of Hungary that finally prevailed in the question of getting loans; what is certain is that the proposals were initially made within those three institutions. Some people might want to mention the sectoral directing organs as well, but those familiar with the mechanism of decisionmaking know that the sectoral people could not really influence the truly vital questions of economic policy.

In case the above reasoning on the functions determining the economic policy is acceptable, we can give names to the decisionmakers. The names are featured in the enclosed chart. Another probably acceptable suggestion is that the more often a name is featured in the chart, the greater role its bearer had in shaping the economic policy. Thus a ranking is created which, of course, cannot be regarded as an exact measure, albeit it certainly indicates that those on the top of the list must have had a more important role than those midway or on the bottom of the list.

Some interesting conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the careers attached to the names. First of all it turns out that, with one or two exceptions, these people were all graduates of the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences. Second, it was at the directing state and Party organizations where their careers rose: they did not have experience on company level. Third, several of them are still filling key posts in economic administration. Fourth, several of those already on pension are playing key roles in the reform committees organized on different Party and government levels.

A careful analysis would certainly provide grounds for drawing further conclusions. But perhaps this one is enough."

Before publishing the charts, let me add: the following data and names are provided with an openness unusual in Hungarian public information. At the same time, not a word is mentioned on the permanent counselors, leaders of the reform committees. But this frank compilation was made up by dedicated professionals, free and independently thinking and fighting people even within the Party—not some anonymous outsiders. As I saw it, these experts'

work, conducted not only in their offices, may be exemplary for the present and the future as well.

They happened to try to gather backers for their ideas as members of the "Rally for the HSWP" group. It was a strange grimace of history and, naturally, the unpleasant result of the obvious infighting for power on the top and of the labelling generated by the press, that whoever stood up on behalf of the "Rally" at the forums preceding the Congress and at the Congress itself, he drew irritation automatically. At times, like at the Szekszárd conference harmonizing the views of the five South Transdanubian counties, that platform's representatives had to struggle inproportionally much, because of that attitude. It is no use denying, however, that the top personalities of the "Rally" had been, at least partly, high -ranking employees of the Party and government administration themselves, or of those persons stepping forward as initiators at different mental forums who had shaped their organizational and mental centres at the HSWP's Political Academy.

So their isolation is mostly justified: they had no mass basis, their platform was mixed and lacked courage—they principally denied having a platform at all—and they could not find new leaders. (Mr. Berecz was not a good choice them.) But since their Congress preparations and endeavours to be given roles were not dishonest, their isolation prompted me to decide to publish what they had to say, as quoted above.

And now their chart of responsibility:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. János Fekete | 6. Lajos Faluvégi |
| 2. Ferenc Havasi | 7. István Hetényi |
| 3. Mátyás Tímár | 8. József Marjai |
| 4. János Hoós | 9. Péter Medgyessy |
| 5. György Lázár | 10. Mjklós Németh |

5.) LACK OF GENETIC KNOWLEDGE

On Saturday evening, October 7, something irreparably fell apart—that is how I felt all along. What do our friends, opponents, enemies in the world think about all that? We do not yet know their detailed answers but I dearly hope their approach will not reflect Madame de Sévigné. “Not even wine at a feast is as sweet as our enemies grief”.

Here I am quoting the international press again. The International Herald Tribune’s article “A Hungarian Leader Urges End of Party” is included because the correspondent’s view concerning the positive opportunities and barely relievable controversies and compromises of the new party created at the Congress is identical with mine in many respects. AFP, the French news agency dealt with the possible dangers also in a way close to my anxieties. Finally, Reuter supplied a fairly circumspect summary. All three quoted analyses were written at halftime, as the Congress was at a standstill.

The International Herald Tribune, Oktober 7-8. 1989:

“A HUNGARIAN LEADER URGES END OF PARTY

A Hungarian Communist leader urged a party congress on Friday to vote the party out of existence and start again under a banner of democratic values. The party leader, Rezső Nyers, also appealed to the 1.279 delegates to rid the party of orthodox Marxists and centrists who oppose sweeping change and who would only tinker with the system.

“The historic role of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party has reached an end here”, said Mr. Nyers, using the formal name of the Communist Party in a keynote speech on the opening day of the congress.

“It is my belief that the new party cannot be Communist.”

He said the fledging party should be a synthesis of the Communist Party and European-style social democratic parties, and that the name should drop the word “workers” to reflect the new party’s broader base.

Mr. Nyers, a moderate who occupies the middle of the political spectrum among the four-men Presidium, echoed his more liberal coleaders, Imre Pozsgay and Prime Minister Miklós Németh, in calling for the removal of conservatives who cannot accept fundamental change.

But Károly Grósz, the most conservative member of the party leadership, opened a veiled attack on Mr. Pozsgay and Mr. Németh, both of whom have said they would rather see a party split than cooperate with orthodox Marxists.

Mr. Grósz, who removed the veteran leader, János Kádár, as general secretary

in May 1988 and led the party until his post was devalued in June this year, defended Communist ideals.

"It is not the progressive values of the workers' movement that we have to deny, among these the ideals of communism, but rather the practice that discredited them," Mr. Grósz said.

He attacked "radical extremists" in the party for saying they would not cooperate with others.

Advocates of change say that Mr. Grósz is being overtaken by the initiatives that he began in removing Mr. Kádár, who took control a month after the 1956 uprising.

Mr. Grósz said that intolerance of unidentified party leaders toward differing opinions was reminiscent of "old Stalinist practices, even if they're covered with the sweet glaze of reformism."

The four-man leadership was formed in June in an effort to bridge growing ideological differences within the party.

But the leaders' differing political tendencies led to growing estrangement, and Mr. Grósz acknowledged major differences.

He also directly contradicted Mr. Nyers, formally the senior leader, saying the party should not give up Communist ideals and should keep the word "workers" in its name.

The party leaders who advocate change want to move toward a multiparty system and a market economy. Conservatives want a return to Marxist orthodoxy.

Communist leaders and the political opposition have agreed that there will be free elections by June but sentiment within the party against far-reaching change could derail such an arrangement.

The orthodox Marxists are angered about a Central Committee draft manifesto that proposes radical change.

The document foresees a "constitutional state based on a multi-party system, in which the source of power is the will of the people, manifested at free elections," and "an efficient market economy".

In addition to voting on the draft, the delegates will elect party leaders. A defeat of Mr. Pozsgay or Mr. Nyers would be a setback for advocates of change."

AFP, October 10, 1989

"The new Hungarian Socialist Party, proclaimed by an overwhelming majority of delegates at the old Party's (HSWP) congress, has reluctantly

given some most significant concessions to its different factions, which may give rise to new and deep tensions within the party in the next few months. The new consensus within the party covers only the program's principles: the HSP favours a multiparty system, free elections and a government answering to the elected parliament. In foreign policy, Hungary will grant priority to its national interests, while maintaining special relations with the USSR and remaining a Warsaw Pact member.

In all the other issues there are three major factions facing each other. Led by Minister of State Imre Pozsgay, Prime Minister Miklós Németh and Foreign Minister Gyula Horn, the reformists are apparently striving to form the HSP in the image of the classical Western Social Democratic parties, open to both East and West."

The Reuter's summary on "a Western-Style Socialist System",

October 9, 1989

HUNGARY DISSOLVES OLD PARTY

COMMUNISTS VOTE A WESTERN-STYLE SOCIALIST SYSTEM.

Reuters

"Political leaders debated Sunday over how to run a Western-style socialist party after having dissolved Hungary's Communist Party.

A draft program expected to be adopted Monday will pledge a free, multiparty system with full civil liberties and a market economy. Proposed statutes would also commit the new party to freedom of expression and a decentralized structure.

The decision to set up the new Hungarian Socialist Party was achieved without the deep split expected between radical reformers and conservatives. All but 179 of the nearly 1,300 delegates voted in favor.

For some liberals, not enough was done to break with the Leninist past, whereas some conservatives felt that the new party could be hijacked by a radical leadership.

A group called the János Kádár Society, named after the Communist Party's late hard-line leader and claiming more than 50,000 members, said it would spearhead a new party for people who found no place in the Socialist Party.

The draft program calls for "stubborn prejudices regarding private

ownership" to be abandoned and for the creation of a non-class party in an independent Hungary. "Private ownership is one of the indispensable driving forces of growth," it said.

But political analysts, opposition parties and some radical members of the old party wondered whether the new organization could be fundamentally different if it took over so many people from a defunct Communist Party.

"How can a party be socialist all of a sudden when it has so many Communists in it?" asked an activist of the Alliance of Free Democrats, which is preparing to fight multiparty elections due by the middle of next year.

The Hungarian Communist Party voted Saturday to transform itself into a socialist party and said it would strive to bridge the gulf between doctrinaire Marxism and European democratic socialism, Harry Kamm of The New York Times reports from Budapest.

Saturday night's cluster of votes—to change the name to the Hungarian Socialist Party and to set its general direction—greatly raised expectations that the change-oriented leadership's entire program to overhaul the party would be adopted by the party congress.

With Poland, Hungary is at the forefront of change in the Eastern bloc. But unlike Poland, where Solidarity has taken the reins of power with the Communist Party largely unchanged, Hungarian Communists are pushing through radical change from within.

The Communist congress, which began Friday, is meeting to prepare for Hungary's first multiparty national elections in more than four decades. Voting is to take place by June.

Faced with severe economic problems and declining popularity—as shown in recent losses in several parliamentary by-elections—the Communist Party has nonetheless moved Hungary into a leading position among East bloc countries seeking economic and political change.

An official close to Rezső Nyers, the current leader, said that Mr. Nyers would be chosen as party president, Imre Pozsgay and Premier Miklós Németh, members of the collective presidency, are to be named vice-presidents, and it is possible that a Politburo member, Pál Vastagh, will be elected to that same rank.

The post of general secretary, now held by Károly Grósz, would be abolished. Instead, the lesser position of national secretary is to be created. Jenő Kovács, now a central committee secretary, has been chosen to fill the office, which is to manage the day-to-day work of the party."

Without comments I quote here parts of the most famous Hungarian poems,

(from the nineteenth century, the period of the Hungarian reform and revolution), the Hymn:

Hymn

“O, my God, the Magyar bless
With Thy plenty and good cheer!
With Thine said his just cause press,
Where his foes to fight appear.
Fate, who for so long did’st frown,
Bring him happy times and ways;
Atoning sorrow hath weighed down
Sins of past and future days.

Pity, God the Magyar, then,
Long by waves of danger tossed;
Help him by Thy strong hand when
He on grief’s sea may be lost.
Fate, who for so long did’st frown,
Bring him happy times and ways;
Atoning sorrow hath weighed down
All the sins of all his days.”

(Translated by William N. Loew)

6. A CLEAR ANALYSIS BY KÁROLY GRÓSZ—TOO LATE

“Dear Congress, let me announce first of all that, after yesterday’s thoughtprovoking debate, I overhauled my oral comments at night. Consequently, the Central Committee cannot have approved it. However, the body discussed the Central Committee’s written report on two occasions. At its latest session on September 25, with 98 of the 109 Central Committee members present, the draft was approved with 109 abstentions. I quote the

resolution: With the modifying and correcting remarks arisen in the debate, the draft of the Central Committee's Congress report is approved. Should the eleven comrades absent, including comrade Géza Kótai, have voted against the draft, even then we can say without scruples that the Central Committee approved the submitted material with a great majority. (Long applause.)

At the first Central Committee session discussing the report it was essentially two questions that underwent debates. On the one hand, several members complained that the report failed to be appropriately theoretical in analysing the changes taking place within the Party in the last 16 months. That is true. It cannot be explained even with the argument that not even the corporate debate provided sufficient help for wording our theoretical conclusions. It did not—and I do not think it could have done so. I am convinced that we are participating in so significant and fast-paced events which we still lack the experience to analyse for the values and weaknesses of these processes or draw our theoretical conclusions. It is especially true after such decades when one of the most serious shortcomings in our political work can be considered to have been the flatness of our theoretical work.

The other problem field in the debate concerned what we should undertake at this Congress. By mercilessly exploring the differences of opinions and disputed issues within the leadership, should the Central Committee help the Congress judge the different trends, or should we rather seek which one, saving the political unity despite the existing differences in views, would create a better chance for successfully participating in the elections?

I was in favour of the latter opinion. In mid-September, comrade Iván T. Berend published the main issue of the debate in the "Népszabadság". Unfortunately, our debate did not deal with the basic issues. Unity or breaking apart, a renewed Party or a new Party, this is the main question today for many of us. True. But I think there is more to it than that. The main objective is democratic socialism which, I believe, is the best way to help our nation rise. (Applause.) And even the Party itself is but a tool for that.

Today the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party is the most significant political force in our country. Its organization, preparedness, domestic and foreign connections make it suitable for ensuring a smooth transition. That is impossible without the Party. Just this is why we must discuss the timely tasks for the transition here. This is why in the written material we made our suggestions concerning the most urgent tasks and this is why we must clear

now some basically important questions of attitude rather than theoretical ideology.

It is today that we must marshal ourselves for the most urgent tasks and most timely problems of the day if we want to successfully influence the political processes. We know today, for posterity always knows better, that the Hungarian leadership of the 1970s gave the wrong answer to the challenges of world economy. The 1978 switch did not bring a decisive turn in either economic policy or the further development of the economic mechanism ... The Party leadership of the time, though earlier capable of deeds of historical importance, was now unwilling to undertake the social tensions resulting from economic modernisation, or a conscious brake on living standards. It did not launch a genuine reformation of the Party and the system of political institutions. The XIIIth Congress made impossible resolutions. Its objectives could not be simultaneously implemented. More years were wasted. All that led to a large-scale indebtedness. Only a fragment of the received loans provided a real extension of resources. Between 1974 and 1979 we could turn only about \$3.5bn for genuine economic development. By 1989 that sum had returned to the creditors. Meanwhile, our net debt had risen to \$14bn. The responsibility for that lies not with the Party's membership but the political leaders. (Long applause.)

It was not the Party members but a small team of leaders who made decisions in these vital questions, and those decisions were made not in the Parliament or Government but in the central Party leadership. At the same time, let us not be biased. The mistaken decisions were also initiated and supported by advisers. For instance, the experts close to decisionmaking centres were in the forefront of those urging for borrowing. The same happened, unfortunately, in the 80s, for example, in case of the 1985 dynamisation program. That, of course, does not diminish the leaders' responsibility for disregarding the signals warning for caution. Over the errors of the political and economic leadership, however, there were other reasons in the background of those processes, quite beyond our power. The most significant of them is the restructuring of the world economy which, owing to our inherited backwardness, is especially disadvantageous for us. In the mid-1980s there were already so heavy burdens pressing Hungary's economy whose magnitude was far exceeding the country's size and its leaders' decision-making competence. The debt crisis had increasingly become a global economic problem. Our positions were weakened by the fact that the inner reserves of the earlier model were just running out and the experimenting in search of a new way was becoming acutely urgent exactly

when modernisation, demanding high capital investments, was becoming the chief trend of world economic development and, at the same time, the burdens of the crisis were also becoming increasingly heavy for us.

No good breeze, no shelter—in trying to solve our domestic troubles, we had to sail against the wind of world economy. So it is not only the inherent controversies of Socialism—as so many say—that became visible in our crisis. Since the Socialist countries are facing similar problems and even the level of our economic co-operation is outdated, we could not use that tool, either, to a good effect in our renewal efforts. After all, we are forced to cope with global economic problems demanding a broad international co-operation on our national level even today.

This is also why we decided to accelerate our opening towards world economy. This is why we so consistently urge the Comecon's modernisation. This is why we initiated a more definite reform and basic reorganisation of the structure of political institutions. It was in order to provide opportunities for different interests to clash openly, to help form a new social alliance. To strengthen the publicity and social control of decisions. To clearly distinguish between Party and state functions. To give an impetus to the development of self-management. And to make all that together the locomotive of modernisation, decreasing the possibility of making erroneous decisions due to subjectivity.

The pains of the past year and a half are the pains accompanying the new Hungarian model of Socialism. The changes have been initiated by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and its Central Committee, also present here, which was also open to other similar endeavours. We must ask the question: what is the balance of the last 16 months? There are many who perceive this really controversial period only as a series of errors, failures and wasted opportunities.

I agree with those in whose opinion an epoch-making transformation began in our country after the Party Conference. We must highly appreciate its initial results achieved in the economy, society and politics. Owing to the grave economic situation, the burdens of debt service and the leadership crisis slowing down the Party's renewal, all that is still only a begi-ning. The bulk of the work is still waiting for us. We have often told: we will need several years, not one and a half, to make up for the shortcomings of the last 15 years and to get rid of the consequences of the crisis that set in. Though

accompanied by disputes and uncertainties, we still have made important steps on the road from the bureaucratic State Party towards a real political movement. The Party's life became open; many new faces, talented young politicians have appeared. A quality change has taken place in the style of the Party's work, which is amply proven by the Party conferences and the unprecedentedly democratic preparations for this Congress. The modernisation of the structure and operation of medium-level Party organs has also begun. Low-level Party organs and primary organisation have become more independent and free to organize themselves. However, owing to the signs of unevenness in the leadership, the advance of our competitors and the economic difficulties, we have not yet managed to marshal our membership, regain the trust of society or win that of youth. The disputes around the change of model are natural companions of our search for a way out. These disputes are often rather loud, at times becoming personal, even taking on the character of cliquery. As it is worded also in the information material circulated by the Central Committee, the problem is caused not by the existence of disputes within the Party or the birth of platforms and currents, but rather by the fact that some people cannot show tolerance and strive to exclude others, for example, on a generation basis. The new fashion of labelling within the Party is not a necessary feature of renewal, either. Its use in connection with leaders is not the main trouble. Even outsiders have always made their one-word, one-line comments on them. The real problem arises when the leaders are labelling members. When, for example, they feel empowered to decide who is a fundamentalist and who is a reformer, who may stay with the Party and who must go. There are even those who exactly w many people should leave the Party in their opinion. (Applause.)

Initially, the leadership elected at the Party Conference was unable, and later did not even want to, become homogenous. The Party's leaders committed the omission of failing to debate their different opinions on the political and economic transformation and the pace of reform measures to a conclusion, whereas their operational styles and political utterances created the image of a quarrelling community. Thus they contributed to spreading the false view in which the improvement of the country's life and the immediate renewal of the Party depended on them, them leaders, alone.

The responsibility for all that lies first of all with the Secretary-General.

This is but the old Stalinist approach and practice, however thick a coat of reformist rhetorics, looking brand new, covers it. (Applause.) The differences in opinions have divided the advocates of reforms. One side is taken by those who wish to synchronize the change of model with the renewal of Party movement and would consider it a success to attract as many people to come with us as possible. On the other side there are those who think we should get as soon as far as possible on this road for, they think, that is the best guarantee against retrocession. They do not mind whether or not this fast pace means the most appropriate utilization of powers, thus risking perhaps a too high price to be paid for the necessary progress. This is the division that should be gotten rid of in mutual patience. Certainly, it would be naivety to suppose that the Party's extremists can be reconciled with each other. It would be a historical mistake, however, to accept that the Party's moderate and radical reformists are irreconcilable. Yet, the sea of interviews given in the last few days indicateth that those who claim to be radical reformers have already made up their minds not to accept the fellowship. They consciously want to mix the advocates of the moderate pace of reforms with the representatives of the far left. Thus they unpardonably narrow down the social basis of reforms. The experiences gained during the preparations for the Congress show that many Party members have assumed an expectant attitude. They are making the decision on their relations with the Party dependent on the results of the Congress.

A majority of them take a realistic attitude concerning the events and put a distance between themselves and political extremities. They realize the need of giving up earlier practices as well as the fact that our homeland's fate is depending now, to a great extent, on a radical renewal of socialism and the Party movement. They accept the Democratic Socialist model as a suitable one for that purpose, with its elements like a mixed economy built on community and private property, a steady increase of economic capacities, a constitutional state, or the self-organization of citizens.

Although such things affect the bases of the economic and political establishments, they are not regarded as a switch of social systems. The social and political systems are two different things, characteristically so, and our members are aware of that.

Of course, I do not think it would be necessary for me to insist how much committed a majority of our members are to the reforms. I am convinced, however, that neither May 1988, nor the present hopeful new period could have taken place without the previous two and a half decades.

Today we do not have to invent the policy of reforms; even less to claim it to be ours: all we have to do is carry it on. Nevertheless, sometimes our sense of proportions seems to leave us, making us think that history begins with our appearance only. Our self-esteem needs an authentic historical view. Should we, led by the necessities of daily politicking, speak only about the HSWP a earlier mistakes and crimes (which must be frankly spoken about all the same), we would seriously endanger any development. For to achieve that we need strength and self-confidence. We need to believe in the importance of action and to desire success—unlike now as our self-reproach exceeds even our political opponents attack.

For a 700,000-strong membership few things are more depressing than hearing over and over that all their work, all their efforts made so far were in vain, and they have reason only to feel ashamed before their children and grandchildren. For the sake of the future, we need the utilizable experiences of the past, the increasingly cognoscible past. It is not the progressive values of the workers movement, including the Communist ideals, that we must renounce—but rather the practices that discredited them.

No leftist or other kind of total denial can be tolerated within the Party.

Thus now, in reporting to you on the 16 months work of the Central Committee, I hereby declare: In less than a year and a half this Central Committee has initiated more epoch-making changes than what took place in the previous decade and a half altogether. It accepted the idea and then initiated the establishment of one of the best ways of political pluralism: the multiparty system. It has consistently urged the elaboration of the constitutional state. It has started the liquidation of the several decades-long intertwining of the Party and social organs. Having recognized the need, it has started an objective exploration and publication of recent history. It has opened wide the possibility of publicity. It has accelerated the multifold development of international relations.

Of course, we cannot deny even that the Central Committee has left some of its work undone. First of all, as it is also featured in the written material, it has been unable to marshal the Party and achieve a unity of action. It was too occupied with itself instead of strengthening its presence and influence in the society.

It failed to pay appropriate attention to economic processes.

It did not take a sufficient part in preventing the political tension created between Hungary and the socialist countries. Its operational style was formed too slowly. In consequence, it had insufficient energy to really clear the disputed questions.

The question is justified: why did the Central committee make those errors? Why did it do nothing more for the sake of renewal?

There are three basic reasons of that in my opinion.

One: this Party leadership was not, as it could not be, sufficiently prepared for the tasks arising after May 1988. Only gradually did it recognize the multitude and magnitude of tasks facing it.

Two: the Central Committee's organizational structure turned out, in the course of its work, to be unsuitable for the simultaneous handling of the economic and political crises as well as for directing a divided party of torn confidence with a firm hand in a modern style.

Three: the top leadership of the Central Committee was paralysed by the lack of political unity and badly-needed solidarity.

Which way to go now? This is the question we must focus on today, as our tasks are extremely huge and it is extremely urgent to perform them.

We must be aware that some Socialist values, including full employment, social security and mobility, are gravely conflicting with the short-term interests of crisis management, economic stabilisation and structural change. I am convinced that a Leftist party, committed to the reforms, can and must undertake to manage that conflict. Our social dedication and prime political representation of employees must not weaken in our reborn Party. Though it has long ceased to be an exclusive workers' party, our Party must not refuse the workers' class either overtly or, shrouded in hazy wording, covertly.

The essence of our turn should not be a fading of the Party's "worker" character but rather a new, progressive interpretation of both the special and common interests of blue-collar workers and intellectuals. For example, the development of culture (in the multifold Marxist meaning) is a vital problem for us because we consider it to be one of the best ways to increase the vitality of our homeland and people. We must achieve that the policy of modernisation produce employee winners even in the short-run, and that short-run losers receive protection and perspectives. The resources of a merely limiting economic policy have run out: this is why we must perform a turn.

Beside maintaining our financial liquidity, a programme capable of accelerating both the structural change and selective growth is urgently needed. For its elaboration and acceptance both home and abroad, the HSWP must mobilise all its mental and political force. A strong HSWP is a key factor of the policy of modernisation even by lining up its wide-ranging international connections and government experiences in the service of economic stabilisation.

I think the Party should operate as a Leftist Socialist mass movement, an alliance of different currents where the central platform, the programme passed

by the Congress, is binding for every Party member. The Party's leading bodies should direct and control the implementation of the resolutions passed by the Congress.

It is desirable for the constructive debates of the currents within the Party to guarantee the continuous renewal of party policies. The platforms, however, should not become the tools of paralysing power struggles. Rather, they should endeavour to recruit supporters for the Party in all layers of society. The reform policy's basis in the Party will be strengthened by the nearing of viewpoints and the search for compromises rather than the expulsion of dissidents. On the other hand, a condition of the Party's strengthening is that those who basically disagree with the political line accepted by the Congress should not be able to organize themselves into an independent political force within the Party. In preparing for elections, a party's different currents must come to an agreement with each other and demonstrate unity to the public. Without that there is no success at the elections where citizens usually cast their votes in favour of whom they suppose to have strength and ability to govern.

Therefore a prime task of the new Party leadership is to mobilize and support its members in preparing for the forthcoming presidential, parliamentary and council elections. Aware of our responsibility for the nation and our common goals, we must reinforce the sense of political homogeneity and solidarity in our members.

Dear comrades: Allow me to sum up our political conclusions in a few points.

First: let us not go on with the Stalinist practice, according to which those closest to us are our worst enemies. There is no sense in further deepening our differences which are overdramatized anyway. We must not forget what is happening both left and right of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in Hungary's public life.

Second: let me remind you that we are approaching the elections, from which we must emerge as the strongest party.

Finally I would like to stress the importance of repairing our relations with the socialist countries. There is nothing to gain in setting the right policy of opening against the maintenance of our allied relations. At the same time, a return to the old model must not be the basis of our good relations with the socialist countries. And let us do our utmost to prevent the country's economic collapse.

Returning now to the problems mentioned in my oral supplement, let us

discuss and decide whether it is possible to form, and how to form, a new type of unity in the Party. Do we need a renewed or a brand - new Party? I put my faith in a renewed Party and a new type of unity in it. But let us not want to hammer our Party into a monolithic mass again. Let us organize the recently arisen lively and forward-looking initiatives in the Party movement into a homogenous framework. Quite rightfully, we do not make any compulsory ideology a condition of belonging to our Party. Religious people can also be members if they identify with our political goals. At the same time, let me hope that atheists will also enjoy such tolerance. Nobody must give up his Communist conviction just in order to be a fully valued full member of the renewed Party.

Should our renewed Party declare itself to be either Socialist or Communist, that alone is no guarantee of a strong social basis or especially of our usefulness for the country, the nation, the race of Magyars.

Last but not least, our Congress will also be responsible for electing a homogenous leadership capable of promoting the renewal of the Party movement. This homogeneity should be that of variety and colourfulness. It should be demonstrated in the leadership's mental qualities, operational style, consistency and loyalty to each other.

Allow me to take the opportunity to express my gratitude for the support of all those who honoured me with a thousand manifestations of their trust that I received during my Secretary-Generalship from my comrades, members of our Party.

Thank you for your attention."

And I thank him for his analysis, even though our opinions differ at many points. It was especially a big WHY I missed his answer to: in the course of the last one year, why did the Secretary-General get into such a position where he had to exercise such a lot of (manfully done) self-criticism?

And another WHY. Why did he deny his active, openly wise presence to the further course of the Congress, to hundreds of delegates?

He was missing—not only from the stalls (often) but also from the life and content of the Congress which would have been richer with him. Comparing the Congress addresses of Károly Grósz and Rezső Nyers again and again, I still cannot understand who left and who stayed. And how much? And why him? And why not him? It is a mystery. But they do not answer.

Why?

7.) INTERMEZZO

The tension arising in the delegates concerning the possibly most important question, the nomination—and subsequent election - of Presidium members, regarding actually the democratic or anti-democratic character of the nomination, was clearly visible already at the preliminary congress held on Thursday evening, October 5. Several people several times argued that the closed-list system of the Presidium's nomination excluded direct democracy in view of the fact that the list submitted by the Presidential candidates and later the elected President would be absolutely closed, with no changes possible.

Prior to the Congress, the exclusive and harmful character of this nomination method was brought up at every county and other level delegates' group and at the Szekszárd meeting of the five Southern Transdanubian counties' delegates, I strongly argued against that system and in favour of open, individual nominations. Of the CC's leading politicians, I gave my mind in face to face conversations to György Fejtő, Csaba Hámori, Jenő Kovács.

I always remained in a visible minority, even though there were delegates everywhere who indicated—even if silently—their agreement. Of the above politicians, György Fejtő understood my reasoning and acknowledged my intention to strongly and openly stand up for it all along the way, even at the ultimate forum of the Congress. I had the impression that there was a strictly organized central propaganda campaign going on in the provinces during the weeks and months preceding the Congress, which was rather clearly linked to the probability of Rezső Nyers coming out as the favourite candidate for President to submit the closed list. The centre gathered the agreeing views from the counties, shrouding the location and strength of opinions countering theirs. Thus a large majority of the delegates arrived at the Congress in the belief that Rezső Nyers's closed list would be the best and most useful alternative.

It is particularly the knife-edge situations in politics where both naivity and its illusion are especially advisable to be avoided. It was clear that, considering the Party's future, it is not the program details and statements that will have a decisive importance but the election of whom to which post. After the continuously bedraggled state of the Party leadership in the last year and a half, the probable dominance of the future leadership was clear to see.

The system of closed-list election works satisfactorily in those modern Western parties of considerable traditions where the number, character and weight of different clear currents within a party are as obvious as the persons

linked to them. In that case, no conciliatory negotiations are needed to be held behind the scenes, and both the preparations and the decision itself may be open and democratic. This was the chief argument of the highly educated new CC Secretary (Jenő Kovács) who had a key role in our Congress preparations and was rather familiar with Western parties. He added that, because of the torn state of the Party, the President needed a homogenous, operable team of his own, so he needed the right for a closed list. And the mass support, albeit built on isolated groups, was slowly being forget that way.

The above argument is a pretty one. The person submitting it is authentic. But the individual counties prepare for the Congress more or less in isolation, so that those in Vas county can hardly know the opinion of those in Hajdu-Bihar county in this matter. So it is relatively easy to organize, produce and then put together an overwhelming majority support for that idea.

Yes, but who would dare say that the currents within the HSWP were clear? And that there were long-known, characteristic politicians linkable to each of them as live symbols? And what kind of an argument is it to speak of a "team of his own" consisting of pre-selected members, while we knew all along that there had been unresolvable differences deepening the void among the Party's most striking leaders for the last year and a half?

I remember Macchiavelli: "Trusting for a change of their fate for the better, people are willing to change their rulers." I do not know how many Hungarians are trusting for a change of their fate for the better. But if they had to change their "rulers" to achieve that, there would certainly be 10m people to volunteer. Shaped in advance and continuously chiselled through the help of Party propaganda and the press, President Rezső Nyers' s profile was so deeply imbedded in the delegates' conscience that there remained no doubt about no change occurring in the top slot. Even so, in spite of that, people' s lives might as well change for the better....

I have long grown out of my political puberty. Yet it was those weeks that made me an adult in the field of politics full of rudeness and disappointment as well as moments of beauty and elevated feelings.

Thank you, friends, for turning away from me in the hour of hardship. Our separation is likely to be final, for this is no accident. And thank you, old and new friends, for convincing me by your support that I can go on believing: I must not give up. Just like Domokos Szilágyi in Transylvania put it, even if he also knew: "Even stones are sobbing."

The story was prosaically. The different members of the Mandate Control and Agenda Committee (let me fondly remember here Pál Vastagh and József Hamóczy as well as State Secretary László Kovács of foreign affairs whom I was to encounter also in a fiery dispute on the same subject next

day) acknowledged in an easy, gentlemanlike manner that I was empowered by the delegates to try and change the agenda accepted on Friday. Minority rights are rights as well. Naturally, our chances were considerably lessened by the fact that, trusting the power of their groups, the approximately 500 members of the Reform Association and, by that time, perhaps as many as 350 members of the People's Democratic Platform, were still committed to the closed list.

Thus began Sunday morning. I was tense and expectant. Stepping up to the microphone, I read out the text I had written on Friday evening. Despite my intentions, a time bomb started ticking audibly.



8.) "AN INITIATIVE IN FAVOUR OF OPEN, DEMOCRATIC NOMINATIONS"

"After the close of Friday's agenda debate we, initiators were compelled to seek out our fellow delegates, potential undersigners. We had to search for each other because the conducting of Friday's morning session had not made it possible to clarify who would have answered with a firm "no" to any closed list of nominating the Presidium, and would do so even now.

We are standing up for open, democratic, individual nominations conducted with the active participation of the Congress. We appreciate the decision made earlier by 645 Congress delegates in favour of a closed-list nomination system. We intend, however, to express our minority opinion, different in spirit and essence, even in a personal undertaking. We do so in the hope that others will join us.

Our standpoint:

1. We consider the closed-list election to be wrong and harmful. We do not know how, on what basis, organised by whom, through what compromises one or the other list is created, for instance, the ones being drawn up by the Party's present leaders or other possible presidential candidates. We do not want to find ourselves in a situation where the composition of the closed list takes place within one group or another, excluding openness and the public of the Congress. Such a list does not ensure the clash of arguments and opinions, nor does it demonstrate the clear contents of the views of persons nominated by only the President. Thus there is no possibility for the political concepts to openly compete and the personalities standing behind them to be weighed. It is to be feared that, owing to such practice, the fatal errors of the past may be repeated: the too decisive role of the No.1. leader—and that such a way of choosing the Presidium's members will essentially keep the Congress at bay, excluding it from the processes of nomination at first, then from those of the election which was hoped to be truly based on openness. The unity built up this way may seem to be fragile and uncertain. And old-fashioned. Our past provides examples of the damage done by such methods.

The main criterion is not how the President can direct his fellow members whom he has nominated from that very aspect; rather, it is that we should suggest leaders chosen by the delegates, delegates who participate in the work of the Congress in a fully liberated, sovereign capacity, free to make decisions. And they would do their choosing on the basis of what leaders,

individually found to be suitable for which tasks, are suggested after their individual weighing, in a process of open debate and nomination.

This sovereign role of the Congress to fully direct and control that process is undeniable, and such nominations and election would provide a better guarantee for the Presidium's operability, including that of the President himself, than any version of closed lists that would make it a Presidential prerogative to submit the closed list.

2.) Due to the above considerations, we do not regard the closed list form to be democratic as a matter of course. Further, we assume (and we wish we were wrong) that in the nomination process of different lists and interferences our fellow delegates will, too late and in a painful way, notice the political, personal, organisational and perhaps even technical traps, obligations and cornering character of the closed-list election system.

3. A real basis for decision in our opinion is the possibility for the Congress delegates to openly and individually nominate leaders. The members of a Presidium elected that way, including the President, will be those enjoying a majority support gained through genuine work, so that they can start their sovereign work of directing the Party in a valid, legitimate manner.

They will be individually empowered—and also made individually responsible—by a majority of the delegates who will consider the main criterion to be their authorization forcing those people to collaborate, and not the prospective members workable dedication to the President. And if someone does not find himself to be capable of co-operating with his fellow candidates, he can say so before the Congress as well.

4. I am requesting another decision to be made.

(Plenary session, 9.15 hours, October 8, 1989.)

Lajos Gubcsi”

After I finished, Chairman László Kovács of the Agenda Committee (State Secretary of Foreign Affairs) commented on my message:

“Dear Comrades:

During Friday's agenda debate one of our fellow delegates said there was a political dispute going on, disguised as an agenda debate. I think this is exactly

what has happened now. Disguising his speech as an agenda debate or agenda proposal, comrade Lajos Gubcsi has questioned a valid resolution of the Congress. (Applause.) I would like to react to only one of his arguments, where he said the Party, we, had committed such and such crimes in the past. Let me remark that it has precious little to do with the closed-list or the individual systems of election, in view of the fact that earlier we never applied the closed-list method.” (Applause.)

Next President Iván T. Berend of the Hungarian Academy of Science, chairman of the day, called a vote on the issue. There was a visibly overwhelming majority voting against my proposal. The number of those present was 1271. During the counting of votes Sándor Kiss demanded the floor.

“I am Sándor Kiss, a delegate from Heves county. Comrade Gubcsi expressed his thanks to the group of Heves county’s delegates. I would like to tell you that the group of Heves county’s delegates did not support his proposal.” (Applause.)

Meanwhile, the counting went on in the hall. Now another delegate asked for permission to speak:

“I am Kálmán Asztalos of the group of Army delegates. Similarly to the previous speaker, we of the group of Army delegates deny having unanimously supported this proposal. There must have been a few, though. (Applause.)

According to the minutes, “(Noise, a voice: quite scandalous... No, no problem... it is supported... no... certainly, counting...)”

Meanwhile, I went up to the microphone and demanded the floor to express my opinion on the obvious distortions. Chairman Iván T. Berend turned me down. Then I referred to having a two-minute mandate to speak, given by my fellow delegates. It was not accepted, either.

Iván T. Berend: “I propose denying Lajos Gubcsi the floor now. He has demanded the floor again. Let us wait for the result of the vote and consider the issue settled.” (Applause.)

Once again, I tried to signal my intention to speak. Iván T. Berend:

“We have closed the debate. The debate is closed, thank you. (Applause.) We have closed the debate, I deny permission.” (Applause.)

Alone again. By myself. Muted by applause, shall I slink off now? I know that TV cameras show the events of the Congress on countless screens in closed circuit, monitored also at the Hungarian and international press centre by the flock of hundreds of journalists. All they can see is one person—me—trying to have the floor, standing in front of the microphone, his lips moving soundlessly...

And that the chairman regularly repeats in a firm voice, accompanied by applause: he denies permission.

All right, then. Thank you, gentlemen. I remain yours sincerely.

With nothing better to do, I go out to dictate what I had to say to a secretary. (The technical organization of the Congress was perfect.) Journalists turned out later to have thought, watching the screens, that I had walked out of the Congress. No. I was not planning anything like that. I was dictating a letter. All that is extremely awful. Now who is aggressive, the chair or me? I must not let down either those trusting me or myself. And like Sonny and Cher used to sing my favourite tune of the 60s, “...the beat goes on.” In the interval I pass the following letter to László Kovács, asking him to read it out word by word. His answer: a friendly promise. I have long and well known State Secretary László Kovács, might even call him a friend perhaps.

The letter: “To Comrade László Kovács: Dear Agenda Committee:

Dear Congress Chair,

As I was denied the floor in my attempt to answer the charges against me—and, indirectly, against my fellow delegates agreeing with me and having signed my proposal -, will you kindly read out the following text to the Congress:

1. I request László Kovács to withdraw his statement concerning my having spoken about any “crimes” in my address. Will he please show me the minutes recording my saying that.
2. I also request him to withdraw his statement concerning my having supposedly tried (thus obviously deliberately) to force political issue on the Congress in connection with the agenda debate.

That statement insults, in their rights as well as probably their personal dignity, the minority that empowered me to voice this minority opinion on the basis of the intent and text worded by myself, in harmony with the official agenda issues of the Congress.

3. I request the speaker from Heves county and the speaker from the Hungarian People's Army to withdraw their statements in view of the fact that nowhere did I say I was speaking on behalf of one or the other group of delegates. On the one hand, they should look over the signed list and see that my fellow delegates arriving from those areas as well as from a dozen other counties exercised their sovereign rights by signing my initiative, thus supporting our common initiative. On the other hand, in our conversations made in connection with the signatures this very sovereignty was the link that made it possible for them to provide their support. My initiative was not aimed at forming a platform just because I wanted to avoid ever limiting them in their decisions and voting. They, as well as myself, had a strong emphasis on every delegate remaining sovereign until the end of the Congress.

After reading out my above text, will you please officially enclose it with the minutes.

Budapest, cca. 9.30 hours, October 8, 1989."

After the interval László Kovács, requested by Iván T. Berend, informs the Congress on the main lines of my letter together with his comments made in a polite, finely chiselled tone. That is, he does not read it out.

Now I walk up to the microphone again and try to demand the floor. The tension in the Congress hall is obviously high. The microphone remains mute again. Several people, especially from the Budapest group, are visibly irritated by my insistence: at a good distance from me, they are difficult to hear but their faces are expressive. Somebody from the back rows shouts that I am right and should be given permission to speak. My microphone is still mute. Turning towards the Congress delegates I have to shout to be heard: it is impossible to have such a situation arise: of course, only a few delegates can hear me in the huge hall. (The centrally organised press keeps silent about the incident.)

Now Iván T. Berend makes a closing decision: "As there is not a Gubcsi-issue or debate any more, I propose we should close it. Please, let us not carry on, as it would be a most unfortunate dispute."

So, after mute microphones, excluded answers, failed attempts, shouted backbencher remarks for and against, is it possible to degrade all we tried and all I personally endeavoured to support, as a "Gubcsi-issue"? I leave the hall

once again. This is already a political matter, and one of honour, at least by my standards. Everything is overtensed - so am I.

As a postscript, I write another letter:

"I protest against the practice of having my letter interpreted instead of read out. I refuse Iván T. Berend's statement degrading my and our opinion as a "Gubcsi-issue". Such a mentality is the heritage of times past now. Hundreds of delegates voted in favour of my initiative. Though they are a minority, but merit concentrated attention. I still demand these lines to be enclosed with the minutes."

In the next interval I pocketed a number of emotional reactions from different sides. Some looked at me in anger. Others embraced me or shook my hand in solidarity. Somebody requested an interview for his book to be written. Had we lost or won?

If I remember that on Friday I was totally alone, that on Saturday there were at least 127 of us with the same opinion, that at this Sunday morning vote about 400 delegates supported the idea of individual nominations, that the doubts over the closed list have visibly increased among the Congress delegates—well, all that seem to justify the well-foundedness of our reasoning. Not its victory—just its well-foundedness. Victory is a relative category. It would be good now to believe Simonides: "Chance will help the strong."

Are we strong at all? Even being defeated? Yes, perhaps, because in forming our open, honestly undertaken minority opinion we never contested the majority's right for their different opinion.

The missile is flying.

I give an interview to "Népszabadság". It is unprecedented, unlike that paper's venomous publication it concerning my person. I only request the lady to ask her questions word-perfect exactly so that I can give my answers also word-perfect exactly—and the interview should be published according to that. The lady readily agrees. I very well know why I must stress my request.

The radio program "Chronicle" also asks for an interview. One minute and twenty seconds. Television keeps silent: their editors of political programs are consistently maintaining their practice of many years: my exclusion from the publicity they create. In the evening television summary, not a word is uttered about the morning incident, as though there was not a sharp debate going on in rehearsal for the forthcoming election. An international press conference

in the afternoon. After my brief summary there are questions and answers. Rapid, honest.

I make an announcement or declaration here. At the beginning of this book I already quoted my proposal closely linked to also the way of nomination and election: the Prime Minister should be elected to take the post of Party President as well. Representatives of the international press perk up as they hear my reasoning.

The domestic press keeps mum.

At about 10 p.m., in the course of a private conversation I am informed that "Népszabadság" has given the title "The Gubcsi-issue" to my mercilessly shortened and edited interview.

My only request is to please replace the article's title. It is impossible to do. For them. So later they take the whole story out of the page and a few hundred thousand copies appear with "The Gubcsi-issue" and another few hundred thousand with an interview granted by Bárd in the same space. Two different "Népszabadság"s.

A curiosity of press history.

Sunday evening, late into the night, I am approached again by delegates from the countryside. I react to their request with what I will say again next day, early Monday morning:

"I can no longer come forward with changing the agenda or having a vote called on the closed or open list. Evidently I have pulled the bowstring too far. If I go on stretching it, it will go ping without the arrow having even a slight chance to find its mark. My stepping up again would only harm our cause."

My fellow delegates re-start collecting signatures on Monday. There is already an increasing number of people feeling that something very awful might happen. They already know that small teams and possibly totally unknown people have been negotiating about unknown and constantly changing personal combinations since Sunday morning at unknown places and upon unknown bases. Gossips abound. There is an increasing fear that the delegates will be left out of the decision making process. There is a spreading rumour that the government will resign. Restlessness grows. The corridors are buzzing. There is a critical mass—but without a genuine leader. I am not pleased to remember my forecast worded on Friday evening: "it will be too late and too painful" when our fellow delegates realize that they are trapped, cornered. Rumours circulate about the secret negotiations and clashes among the most potent leaders. There are also ridiculous news about

how four or five Party bureaucrats want to make history in the name of the People's democratic platform—and how the small (but at least democratically elected for the talks) team of the Reform Association takes part in this mudfight conducted without us. The process is just as irreversible as the growing resentment of the excluded hundreds.

Those in favour of the open nomination, having collected the necessary number of signatures, make yet another attempt. On Monday evening. But this is already a closed session. And everything is decided by that time. Our proposal remains in minority again. Of course we all recognize our defeat—in a downcast mood. Many of us are worried about the unpredictability of what is going on. You, dear Reader, can blame me for taking hold (did I?) of your attention with such a seemingly minor and rather personal string of thoughts before reporting on the genuine issues discussed by the Congress, the circumstances of the new party's birth and the basic factors in the Manifesto debate.

But, please, pardon me—for three reasons.

First, I have never denied on these pages that my special and individual viewpoint is also present in what I am describing here. Second, the issue of nomination and election rose to the forefront in an always tense, sometimes outright suffocating atmosphere, dividing the delegates often with a clarity like fire and water. A detailed account of that incident may have served as a lesson for those who intend to understand, make understood or just practise politics as well as the strongly outlined spheres of power and the struggles behind it. In this sense - but only in this broad sense—László Kovács was of course right to say in his above-quoted words that I was following a political course in connection with the agenda. True. In that sense, every split second of the Congress, its prehistory and consequences, the applauses of elation and the applauses to silence speakers, the stresses and the suppressed thoughts and emotions, the Congress organizers' natural and unnatural tactical manipulations and so on, all that was hard-core politics.

And third, if the saying "A drop reflects the ocean" were true, it would have been enough to deal only briefly in this book with this procedural issue, shrugging it off as inessential. But I do not believe that the sea is ever reflected in a mere drop. The sea is different. Its currents are huge and the drop is not aware of that. This is why I went into details here.

9.) ECHO II.

From the aspect of what happened at the Congress, three episodes taking place on Saturday, Sunday and Monday evening were decisive moments of symbolic power. The last will merit even further discussion, for the way and circumstances of the Presidium's election did, spoken or unspoken, serve as a dividing line along those four and a half days. Back on Saturday and Sunday, however, unlike Monday evening when there was no way back any more, since the final (and erroneous) compromise was sealed by the Presidium's election, so on Saturday and Sunday the open question of the Congress's dramatic and essential mission was still present in the hall: is a break of the Party possible or necessary to risk, and along what lines would it be permissible? Or if a break were avoided,

how would that influence the Congress and the Party's future life?

The two incidents were: on Saturday, the creation and character of the new party (Appendix 4), on Sunday, an incident far from being accidental, involving the party's President risking the "tearing test" against the reformist wing's most dedicated representatives over the issue of the party's activity in factories.

Before passing my personal judgement on those two events, I will quote the Time's and The Economist's special correspondent and as a first account, made by Reuters and AP their evaluation dated Sunday on Saturday's events. It is titled:

"Hungary Socialists Tap Former Leader As First President

"Dear comrades

"Dear Comrades

Mr. Nyers 66, received 1,065 votes from the 1,276 delegates attending a special party congress, the radio said.

Earlier in the day, reformers won overwhelming adoption of a new program that promotes a democratic political system, including free elections and a market-based economy.

But delegates chose Mr. Nyers as their presidential candidate and adopted a compromise 25-member slate of officers that includes oldline Communist Party stalwarts as well as radicals. On Saturday, delegates voted the Communist Hungarian Socialist Workers Party out of existence.

Imre Pozsgay, the leader of the liberals, who had lobbied for the top spot

himself, had threatened to leave the new party if he were not elected to head a slate of changeminded officers, sources said. But during a break in Monday's proceedings Mr. Pozsgay, who had sought to relegate Mr. Nyers to the powerless post of "honorary leader", said he would remain.

"I will stay in the party" Mr. Pozsgay said. Prime Minister Miklós Németh said that "the danger of a split has been averted." He did not elaborate.

On Saturday, the congress founded the Hungarian Socialist Party in a vote without parallel in the East bloc. That opens the way for Hungary's first free national elections in 41 years. Founding documents described the new party as having Euro-Communist and democratic-socialist sympathies and as being committed to a free-market economy and a parliamentary democracy.

In a compromise, the congress rejected demands of radicals that old-line Marxists be shut out, stipulating instead that anyone accepting the new orientation in writing could become a party member.

Liberals were disturbed further Sunday when Mr. Nyers declared support for political activity on the job. Delegates subsequently passed a motion to continue party politics in factories and shops, despite liberal protest that such activity smacked of the old Communist Party political cells.

Radicals then tired vainly to shunt Mr. Nyers aside and elect Mr. Pozsgay head of the collective presidency.

In February, the predominantly liberal-minded Communist Party leadership promised newly permitted opposition groups to hold free elections by June 1990 and to abide by the results. That led to growing pressure for a new, democratic party that would attract voter support.

After the compromise on Mr. Nyers one delegate, Tibor Szecheni, said outside the congress hall: "It's the only way this thing could hang together until the election."

His comment indicated that Mr. Nyers might be a temporary choice, with a change to come if the party did badly in the elections. The state radio said, without naming sources, that Mr. Nyers, Mr. Németh, Mr. Pozsgay and Foreign Minister Gyula Horn had addressed the members before the vote. It said that only Mr. Horn had differed substantially with Mr. Nyers, advocating quicker and deeper changes.

The conservative Marxist Unity Platform issued a statement saying that the old party was still alive and urging true Communist not to join the new one. János Berecz, a ranking conservative who is a former party ideologist and Politburo member, declared Sunday that the old party should continue until the rank-and-file decided its fate. Robert Ribanszki, another opponent of change, announced plans Sunday for a referendum of the more than 700,000 card-carrying Communist Party members.

A group called the János Kádár Society, after the late hard-line leader,

announced plans Sunday for a new Communist Party. The official news agency quoted his widow Monday as having said that she was "appaled" and that the group's "aspirations are contrary to János Kádár's mentality and political convictions."

Evaluating the importance of the HSWP, it is a fact, that the Hungarian party played an enormous and revolutionary role in Europe, fighting its way through unaided. A month later the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria had a far more simple task.

That is my point of view.

"We Will Accept What the People Say"

An interview with reformer Imre Pozsgay

Imre Pozsgay, 55, a Politburo member in Hungary's former Communist Party, is the newborn Hungarian Socialist Party's leading reformer and its candidate in presidential elections, scheduled for next month. In his Budapest office overlooking the Danube, Pozsgay was interviewed by TIME Eastern Europe bureau chief John Borrell. Excerpts from the conversation:

Q. In the electorate's eyes, is there such a thing as a good Communist?

A. We are not going to have an easy time in the elections. Unlike Poland, where there was a prior agreement dividing up the seats, we are going to have a real struggle, rivalry and competition. We have already said we will accept what the people say. The party does not have the comfortable feeling that whatever happens, it will still have its place in Parliament.

Q. Look what happened in Poland, even to Communist reformers. Might not the electorate reject the reformers in Hungary too?

A. It cannot be excluded that the same thing could happen here. We must keep in mind that the electorate, given the past 40 years, is out to punish the Communist.

Q. Don't the party's defeats in four recent by-elections confirm this?

A. Before the reform wing took over, the leadership was noted for its tyrannical, authoritarian and corrupt nature. Candidates were saddled with this image.

Q. If you receive substantial electoral support, what are the implications for the rest of Eastern Europe?

A. It will have a positive impact on Communist parties in neighbouring countries. It is going to strengthen their reform wings. It is my conviction that it would help the Soviet Union's own perestroika

Q. But only if it works?

A. Yes. If it fails, there will be catastrophic repercussions.

Q. In the sense of discouraging reform elsewhere in the East bloc?

A. Yes. The failure of the reformers in Hungary will help the conservative (hard line) forces in other socialist countries. Some are eagerly awaiting this development. Reform is unavoidable, but it can be temporarily halted or set back. There is still the possibility of the use of force.

Q. What about Hungary? Is it too late for the use of force?

A. I would find it hard to believe. But there are people who would like to do it. But given their lack of a base among the people and the fact that the international situation is not favorable for such an attempt, I see no possibility of its happening.

Q. In what way are the reforms in Hungary dependent on Mikhail Gorbachev?

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

A. If perestroika in the Soviet Union is allowed to continue and is successful, it will provide a positive background for Hungary's reform efforts. On the other hand, if Hungary's reforms are successful, they can be a positive example for the Soviet Union. So we are talking about reciprocity—although we are obviously aware that Hungary is a small country and the Soviet Union a large empire. I hope, therefore, that Mr. Gorbachev stays in power for a long time. At the same time, Hungary should realize that time is of the essence.

Q. In what way?

A. If there are unfavorable changes in superpower relations our reforms need to be at such a level that they can no longer be reversed.

Q. Are the reforms in the Soviet Union irreversible?

A. Yes, I think so. It is clear that the Stalinist model has been shown to be totally bankrupt. There is not returning to it. Such a large country cannot allow itself not to have a dynamic and energetic economy and dynamic social development.

Q. Yet during the 1950s there was a strong sense in the West that there was no way of breaking Communism's hold on power. Did you ever feel that?

A. Yes, I considered it an irreversibel situation, that Communism was the only way forward for humanity. Faith took me to the party when I was 17. I had just abandoned Catholicism because my doubts had overpowered my faith. But even in the 1950s I had my eyes opened by the experiences of my family, who were small farmers. There was a compulsory state purchasing system for farm products, and people would sweep the attic for the last grains of wheat. My family finally abandoned the fields. It was shocking, but I convinced myself that the policy was bad in practice and that the principles behind it were sound. I was willing to lose my sence of reality to keep the faith.

Q. When did you really begin to doubt the principles?

A. When the 1956 uprising came, I saw it first of all as an uprising. Then I thought it was a counterrevolution, and I even wrote articles in 1957 about the counterrevolutionary nature of those events. Then came a major turn in my thinking with the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Since then I have been a consistent reformer.

Q. Why do you think Communist the world over took so long to recognize that their principles were wrong?

A. Resistance to this recognition lay within ourselves. It was hard to recognize that we were on a dead-end street or that what we were protecting was not socialism but merely a dictatorial state socialism.

Q. Can you catch up with the West?

A. Given a different approach, the country can catch up. But we need

investments, we need working capital. We also need to stimulate and motivate domestic private capital.

Q. Is the West doing enough? Or is it letting Eastern Europe's reformers down?

A. It is not really letting the reformers down. But the West has to recognize that there are dangers to itself in not helping. What we need is an influx of working capital and the economic freedom of movement that would allow Hungary to participate in the marketplaces of the European Community and of the U.S.

Q. By working capital are you talking about joint ventures with Western countries?

A. Primarily joint ventures. But also straight Western investments and investments in which Western companies have a majority shareholding... Western governments should realize that they have a vested interest in helping us.

Q. What happens if they don't help enough? Will East Europeans leave and head for the West?

A. It is quite possible that this might come to pass. We hope it won't, and I trust there won't be a mass exodus of Hungarians. But we won't stand in their way.

Q. What about relations within the bloc? How has your country's decision to let the East German refugees go affected these ties?

A. The East European alliance system itself must undergo reform. We have to find ways of dealing with situations precisely, such as the flight to the West of the East Germans."

“Pale-pink Danube

The death of Hungarian communism was officially recorded at 8.20pm on October 7th. That was when the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, as the communist party which had ruled Hungary for the past 40 years called itself, decided at its congress in Budapest to dissolve itself and to re-form as the Hungarian Socialist Party. The “new” party elected as its leader Mr. Rezső Nyers, a Social Democrat who became a communist when Stalin forced the parties to merge in 1948 and was an architect of the 1968 economic reform. The Socialist say they are committed to a market economy and multiparty democracy, and stand somewhere between Italy’s Eurocommunists and Sweden’s Social Democrats.

This was a victory for the party’s reform wing, in particular for its most prominent figure, Mr. Imre Pozsgay. It was achieved only after a hard battle for the support of the party’s confused “timid centre”. Old Stalinist shouted “sell-out” and “betrayal” from the sidelines. Of the party’s 25-member presidium, 14 are committed reformers (including Mr. Pozsgay and his two closest supporters, Mr. Miklós Németh, the prime minister, and Mr. Gyula Horn, the foreign minister). The rest are “centrists”.

But conservatives left declaring that the old party was still in existence and that the majority of its members would soon show this by reversing the “unrepresentative” congress’s decisions. To the reformers visible disappointment, there was no immediate split in the party, despite strong pressure on conservatives to get out. The reformers hope now is that most of those who disapproved of what had been happening at the congress will simply not join the new party when the time comes for applying for party membership cards.

Why are Hungary’s communist (sorry, Socialist) going to such lengths to dissociate themselves from their past—not just the Stalinism of the late 1940s and early 1950s, but also the Leninism which had served them so well in keeping their monopoly of power? Observers at the congress in Budapest had the impression of watching passengers in a balloon dropping overboard every bit of ballast they could lay their hands on in order to stay aloft. Poland has

shown with devastating clarity what can happen to a communist party which fails to move with time. That is why reformers like Mr. Pozsgay decided a while ago to act while their party was still in relatively good shape and the opposition still relatively weak, inexperienced and above all divided.

Last month they concluded an agreement with the opposition- the Hungarian counterpart to the Polish round-table deal in March - to prepare for power-sharing. The latest internal party calculations, based on opinion polls the communists had already been using for some time, have shown that a reformed party might hope to win at best only 75 out of the 374 seats (that is, 20%) at the free parliamentary election promised for early next year. The same calculations unpublished but leaked by reformists, show that an unreformed party could hope to get at most 15% of the seats, perhaps even as little as 5%. The by-election results of the past few months illustrated the communists' troubles: out of five held, four were won by the largest opposition group, the Hungarian Democratic Forum. So the reformists opted for a complete break with the past.

Will it work, or will the voters see it as just a cosmetic exercise? Among Hungarians, scepticism seems to run almost as deep as anti-communist feeling. After all, Hungarians are cynical people who will tell a visitor that in Budapest before the war there were a number of places where young ladies, no longer virgins, could have their virginity restored if their prospective husbands absolutely insisted.

Doubters point in particular to the congress's decision, against Mr. Pozsgay's wish, to retain party organisation in factories and offices. So the party may still poke its nose into matters which are officially none of its business any more. There was also the decision to keep "for the time being" the 60,000-strong workers guard, the party's private army formed after the crushing of the 1956 revolution. Mr. Pozsgay wanted it disbanded; instead it is to be put under government control and used for civil emergencies. Then there is the question of the party's property-especially its numerous, now extremely valuable buildings in Budapest and elsewhere. The decision at the congress was "to give up whatever the new party did not need for its operations", instead of dividing it up with the other parties as the reformers proposed. Mr. Nyers's still rather stiff attitudes also raised eyebrows.

So doubts will remain until the new Socialists dispel them. But Mr. Pozsgay

can look forward with a fair degree of confidence to becoming Hungary's first directly elected president in the vote due to be held on November 25th. (It was delayed. See later -L.G.) His personal popularity should see to that, even if, as now looks likely, he will face competition from at least one opposition candidate.

After the parliamentary election, probably in March, the communists-turned-Socialists are likely to form a coalition with the Democratic Forum, which is particularly strong in the countryside. One of the Forum's leaders, Mr. Sándor Csoóri, was at last week's congress talking to Mr. Pozsgay. The Forum insists that no deal has been struck in advance of the election. But co-operation could clearly help both sides. There is talk of a possible prime minister from the Forum, perhaps Mr. József Antall, one of the negotiators in this summer's talks between government and opposition. What 's the Hungarian for cohabitation?"

So, after this above-mentioned vote where I was one of the 159 delegates who voted NO, Congress was basically split in two—or more. Unfortunately, those of the 159 NO voters who want to keep on the HSWP were mostly silent. They got helplessly isolated. They maintained their silence concerning those ethical, political, legal considerations (and failed to organize themselves into a reliable party as characteristic partners along those lines) that they and others would raise on their banners soon after the Congress, causing a lot of disturbance. The old, the new, and the newly old parties' political and inheritance relations are still unclear. The Left has fallen apart.

But let us be just. Since a considerable part of the over 1000 YES voter delegates was deeply disturbed, the new party had amorphous members, carrying many kinds of potential break lines. In the mood of his speech delivered in the evening of October 7, celebrating the birth of the HSP, Rezső Nyers was able to make up of it for the future. Here is his address: (I do not know the political or moral grounds on which Rezső Nyers passed judgement on his comrades of yesterday. He was not President of either the old party any more, or the new party yet. And he and they are collectively responsible for all that happened.)

The plan submitted now is, in my opinion, such a principally acceptable compromise that is suitable to serve our party's renewal in creating a new, leftist Socialist party of a new type, which party will put a distance between itself and the Stalinist remnants still existing in our predecessor party, put a distance between itself and the errors of the past, and remain the inheritor of the HSWP's progressive reformist endeavours. In my view this is the political essence of the relation between the old and new parties. From the aspects of Hungarian democracy are not yet laid down: the laws are being prepared and must be passed. The laws themselves do not mean the realisation of the new democratic system. There must be political strength standing behind it, for democracy is not only elections, not only voting slips, but also the people's system in possession of some political support. In the late 1950s we witnessed the collapse of France's Fourth Republic which had a perfect multiparty-system, a perfect voting mechanism, and yet it collapsed, and then it was de Gaulle, who was a conservative man but a great statesman, who had to save democracy, help it survive.

That is how we should take care, that is how we should prepare for democracy, and I say that because no well-founded, fundamental democracy is possible in Hungary without a Socialist movement. And those who want to see a fragmented Socialist movement after the HSWP and those who unwittingly serve that cause, they are not serving the cause of democracy. Without the Socialist workers class, the co-operative peasantry, the Socialist and leftist intelligentsia we will be unable to perform the great and difficult historical task of constitution-making.

Shall we become a renewed party or a new-type party, this principal platform decides the dispute in the sense that it declares its faith in a new party of a new type. It is, I think, a very progressive historical step forward, and every Socialist must support it wholeheartedly. That means we must consistently and permanently break with the dictatorship of the proletariat as a method of exercising power and an ideology. I would like to say something on my personal opinion on the name. I am not ashamed of the name of Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, or my having been a member of that party. I kept wondering, this is a good name, the name Socialist Party is also dear to my heart, which one shall I choose? Finally I decided that if I am a reformer, drawn towards novelty, true, a long-distance reformer who has been often outrun by a lap on short distances, well, if I have to choose between the old and the new, then I will choose the new, and this is what I suggest you, dear Comrades, to consider.

What must we distance ourselves from? We must distance ourselves from the narrowly interpreted and rigid class policy but not from the workers and the

peasantry. We must distance ourselves, naturally distance ourselves, from those who wished to transform the new Socialist party into a bourgeois party. There will be several bourgeois parties, better than we would be, we cannot be such a bourgeois party and should not be, either. János Berecz asked me whether I considered the reformist Communists and reform—Communism as part of the new party. I do, and they belong here, but then they must be reformist Communists, accept the programme of this party and accept its statutes. I would like János Berecz to struggle on for the reformist party as a reformist Communist, armed with a pen rather than weapons. That is his right. I am sorry if he spoke with a short temper, but others also spoke with short tempers.

I would like to say something, dear comrades, on the relations between the party and the government. I hope the government will not be transformed into an independent “experts” government but will remain the HSWP’s government and then we, the Hungarian Socialist Party, if that is what we will become, we will have to support the government in its difficult tasks, the economic renewal, the reforms and the stabilisation, too. Here I have heard a nice list of the government’s fine achievements, I would say this list should be still augmented. I said that even when I was and would say it even if I still were a member of the cabinet. Our relations with the government: we must support the government and must not return to the earlier error of the party trying to direct the government; the government must be independent and only that is how it can be responsible. The party will control the government through its members of parliament, and that is the right way, and if we have little strength in parliament, then we cannot influence the government. So we need a strength in parliament. At the same time I agree with the idea of our becoming the governing party, but let me add here a little correction, let us add that it is a question of principle for every Socialist movement over there in the West, less so in the East, for the situation there is troubled, so I mean, the party is not the government’s party: the party is the masses’ party. And even when it provides a government, it must realize the masses’ interests to the government, and call it to account if necessary. I would like to say something about our relations with the opposition. We must recognize the merits of those parties’ narrow democratic movements—they were narrow movements—that kept calling our earlier party for years to account for democracy. They have merits in criticism. The erroneous earlier political structure was attacked from two sides: from the side of Democratic Socialism, from the side of the reformists within the party, and from the side of the bourgeois democracy. This is the truth and we must admit that truth. We must be fellow travellers with the really democratic opposition which intends to provide a wide basis for democracy. We need

new partners in constitution-making, even if we will compete at the elections, so we should maintain the possibility of co-operating with those democratic forces, even though at present they are putting a distance between us and themselves for short-term popular interests. Even so we offer our hands for the sake of democracy. But please—I would like to add this: we will not and do not want to interfere with any other party's internal affairs. We do not want to create their leaderships, but with all respect we ask the other parties and movements not to want to elect, from the outside, the leadership of the Hungarian Socialist Party and not to want to define its policies.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of appropriately defining our role in the world Socialist movement, in this principal programme here it is essentially well defined in my opinion, but we still have to elaborate it in the future and make it clear both abroad and at home.

We must strive for an alliance and co-operation with the Communist parties carrying on the reforms, on a solidarity basis. At the same time, even if it seems early for some, still principally and in the long run we must aim at the faraway but fine target of the international reunion of the Socialist movement on a democratic basis. And on this same basis we must be able to build up our contacts with the Socialist parties, Social Democrat parties and the Socialist International. Dear comrades, as far as I can see, a new strength is born here after a long labour, or gets accepted, a force encouraging from the aspect of Socialism and even of democracy, provided we find a leadership - we can put that up—that is sufficiently homogenous to be capable of action, but also sufficiently pluralistic to be capable of debating, providing the opportunity for Party control over it, and capable of creativity: if this leadership does not want to be fully monolithic, then it will be a good leadership.

I think, dear comrades, that thus the plan of the party's Manifesto and its organizational rules, statutes, could be considered as accepted now, and only practical comments should be made, in order to correct the text, but in a well-organized operative way rather than in long negotiations. As we have seen now, the platforms are working increasingly better, more skilfully: in their platform activities they would collect the comments, on the basis of which the drafting committee might create these two documents in a short time, and so we have done our bit.

Thank you for your attention.”

An ovation followed Rezső Nyers's Saturday evening speech launching the HSP. The Congress enthusiastically celebrated the passing of the previous months' tension, the dilemma of “Will there be a party break? Must it happen

or shall we keep warm together?" But in the heat of elation, did the two main characters, Rezső Nyers and Imre Pozsgay, clearly see the price of the compromise? How long will the doubtful period of peaceful "co-existence" and "sub-existence" last?

Did Imre Pozsgay not have to pay a price too high for taking part in the summer in the four-member Presidium whose makeshift and forced character was clearly obvious from the beginning? And were his fellows - rivals—led only by their good will when they in turn announced that Imre Pozsgay was the Party's candidate for President of the Republic? Who wanted his early nomination more: Pozsgay himself or the Grósz-Nyers duo? See what time shows: In the summer of 1989 Imre Pozsgay's authority was total and undeniable. In late summer the attacks started against him. And now, in writing these words, I am worried: what will the presidential elections bring him? And at what price? Will he have been aided or damaged by the Congress rally of a hazy content? How much power was behind the promise of Rezső Nyers to support the presidential candidate? And anyway, why did the Party retreat even in accepting the suggestion of aggressive, small opposition parties on putting off electing a President of the Republic in 1989?

10.) ECHO III.

October 9, 1989. MTI/Reuter/AFP/AP:

Hungary's reformist leaders Monday were engaged in a fierce battle for maintaining the unity of their newly-founded Socialist party, Reuters reported. In their evaluations of the previous day of the Congress, Western papers and news agencies found that the patched-up and fragile compromise that had facilitated the new party's founding was in danger as dissatisfied reformists, having wanted more, started quarrelling with the conservatives.

Hardly 24 hours after changing its name and denying its Communist identity, the new Hungarian party was already crumbling, reports the Monday issue of The Daily Telegraph which (together with a number of other Western papers and several news agencies) gives an account on the vote concerning the factory-floor party organs and bringing a crashing defeat to the front-line reformists.

According to several British papers, the quarrel was started by the reformists who assumed that the compromise was insufficient for drawing a clear line to force Conservatives outside the party. Fighting for their political future, the Conservatives followed the changing winds and joined the HSP in a move that actually shocked the reformists who were afraid that the new party would

be dominated by the faithful cadres of Communist times, the Financial Times suggests.

Western papers and news agencies quoted Deputy Prime Minister Péter Medgyessy who found the compromise disappointing and noted, "now everybody poses as a reformist." His interview prompted The Daily Telegraph to suppose that the cabinet would soon start negotiations with moderate opposition parties on forming a coalition "experts' government". Nevertheless, the British daily notes that, in his Saturday address, Party President Rezső Nyers explicitly condemned that idea and called on the government not to let the party down.

Having tried in vain to push through with sanctions aiming at expulsions, the reformists tried to trample on their adversaries by personal insults: their rebukes' main targets were Secretary-General Károly Grósz and former chief ideologist János Berecz, The Independent writes on Monday.

On the same day The Times considers the Congress vote sealing the new party's creation to be a shining victory of leading reformist Imre Pozsgay. At a discussion behind closed doors Pozsgay urged Rezső Nyers to firmly stand up for the accepted standpoint, to prevent a protest by hardliners, the paper reveals. It also notes that Pozsgay's candidacy was strengthened by his excellent management of the reformist wing's victory march and the quick collapse of his conservative opponents.

Several authoritative West German papers use Hungarian reformist politicians' photographs to illustrate their reports on the founding of the new Hungarian Socialist Party. The Munich daily Süd-deutsche Zeitung writes that the greatest sacrifice on the altar of reforms has so far been made by the Hungarian Communists: they sacrificed their party for at least a fighting chance at the forthcoming free elections.

Reformist politicians found this move to be their only chance to play any role in the future. The General-Anzeiger, a daily close to the Bonn cabinet, is certain that there will be a non-Communist government formed in Hungary after the elections. Reuters' Monday report summarizes the essential elements of the HSP's Manifesto: 1. A multiparty system (in case of losing the elections, the ruling party will concede power). 2. Government is responsible to the elected Parliament (and not a political party), the institution of plebiscite is to be introduced as a means of direct democracy, local self-government. 3. The status of President of the Republic to be established in order to solidify the balance among branches of power. 5. Constitutionally guaranteed legal defence of ethnic and religious minorities. 6. A welfare state based on market economy: the government is to encourage private enterprise, using taxes to aid the poor and needy and to improve the level of education, health care and environmental protection.

The Japanese paper Jomiuri Simbun regards the founding of the Hungarian Socialist Party to be a contribution to the disintegration of the post-Jalta situation. It quotes Foreign Minister Roland Dumas of France as saying that the French Socialist Party is ready to support the HSP, should the latter apply for admittance to the Socialist International and "meet the demands of Socialism and freedom."

They should not have found themselves in such a fix. It was unworthy of the Hungarian reformist movement's three most dedicated leaders to listen in humiliation to Rezső Nyers's unexpected comment on late Sunday afternoon. And despite Imre Pozsgay's explosive march out of the hall, despite my opinion that they were right, they were badly beaten—and deservedly. Their followers, however, did not deserve the senseless and decisive compromises that these three leaders, in a somewhat defenseless position, had to make against the superior force lined up in mood behind Rezső Nyers and blown up into a phantom power by those half dozen "people's democratic" leaders.

Let us see then Rezső Nyers's comment of presidential authority. (24 hours after the victorious clasp of hands by Pozsgay and Nyers on the stage, and the joy expressed by that handshake, I wonder if they could have done so now. And how strong is a compromise if its participants make a 180 turn before the small hand of the clock goes round once? "Our life is sign language," as put by János Bródy, an early Hungarian rocker.

As I was unable to get the text of the otherwise public speech (delivered before live TV cameras) from different CC officials in charge, though I still do not know why, I must apologise now for having to resort to the short summary published in the "Népszabadság":

"In the late evening round of the Statutes debate, the issue of liberty or banning of organizations in factories and offices created a heavier storm than anything so far. Following a lengthy conflict concerning the agenda, the disturbance was quelled by Rezső Nyers's comment. I do not want to live in a democratic system that accepts more reactionary laws than those of the Horthy era, he recalled his organized Socialist past. We will accept the law passed in Parliament but nevertheless ask the MPs belonging to our party not to make the party's shopfloor operation impossible. At the same time, he added, we will strive to organize ourselves in residence districts. The vote produced an overwhelming majority for this standpoint. There were 107 votes

against it, including those of Miklos Németh, Imre Pozsgay and Gyula Horn (and mine). 34 delegates abstained.

In the hours of late evening the debate was still continuing on matters of wording and even almost punctuation. True, some seemingly negligible changes might mean a basic modification of the contents of the Hungarian Socialist Party's constitution, the Statutes.

Late on Sunday evening, after a several hours' voting procedure, the Congress suspended the debate on the new party's statutes. The two last proposals aimed at discussing vital issues. One of them wanted the Congress to debate the Workers Guard. The other suggested that the debate on the liberty of shopfloor Party organizing should not be considered as closed yet. According to the delegate bringing it up, the NO voters should be given the chance to explain their views. A decision on whether to restart debating the issue was put off by the Congress until next morning.

And since many of the events took place outside the congress hall, while the delegates inside were far late in comparison with their own work schedule, on Sunday evening it was still impossible to tell how long the Congress would last and what the consequences of Saturday's historical resolution will be after all."

There is uncertainty, desperation, a lack of perspectives. All that cannot have been caused by the economic crisis, the falling living standards hitting a quarter of the population, or the huge holes yawning in the social protective net. The tensions are being created, generated, hinted at subjectively as well, and the visible crumbling on the top creates a lack of integrity down here. Naturally, individuals are also responsible for their inner uncertainty. We have not learnt to draw up an inner balance, especially not in hard times when we have no words to answer the challenges of unexpected force and multitude.

The country's ruling party was to blame for that, too—and I believe that, though it will be certainly unable to keep its dominant position, its leftist and humanist character will be strong enough to keep on a considerable part of its members and attract others—for otherwise, if it must withdraw to the outskirts of politics (and the signs pointing that way are increasing, as it was expected), then its leading figures of the last year and a half: János Kádár, Károly Grósz, Rezső Nyers and many others made a hardly pardonable error. Each of them had the key of our history, their history, History, in his hand. They locked it up like Bartók's Bluebeard did. In one of the Congresses this is why I call your attention to the tolerant Tolstoy. Relying on Zsigmond This is why I call your attention to the tolerant Tolstoy. Relying on Zsigmond Móríc's enlightening discovery regarding Tolstoy, György Száraz writes in

Rezső Nyers had a Pyrrhic victory on Sunday—and the others suffered an even worse loss of face. Ten days later in the Parliament where two thirds of the members were HSWP card-holders when they were elected in 1985, well, now an unpleasantly small number of these same legislators voted in favour of allowing parties to organize themselves on the shopfloor, when the parties' Act was debated. That is, they rejected the enthusiastic resolution of their own party's congress. And likewise, only a fragment group of those members of Parliament has joined the new Parliament faction of the new HSP. All that is most unprecedented in the lands of existing Socialism. We know who has lost.

But then, who has won?

The closed session—a trap?

I do not have the right to pass judgement on the phase of the Congress that almost exploded into a scandal: the closed session. I do not, for, according to the traditions of our old Party ethics, if something is closed, then that's why it is closed.

I have not the moral right either: in about the 40th minute of the closed session I returned my mandate and ended my activities pursued for exactly a month in my capacity as a delegate to the Congress.

But I do have the right to quote my own short comment in this passage.

It was a per se anachronism that I—or anyone else—was allowed to make comments. The essence of the closed list is, you see, that it is untouchable. It is submitted on behalf of the President, and one can do one of two things to it. Drop one or the other or the third list in the polling box. Provided there are two or three lists.

Provided there is no trap.

But at this Congress it turned out that there is not only a situation but a trap as well. And the good delegates walked straight into it all right. And when they were already in, it was no use reminding them of what I had collected their signatures on Saturday for, that I had said, "it would be too late and too painful when they realized they were cornered" in case of a closed-list system. I suspect I was the most deeply hurt by my forecast coming true. They were cornered. They, the mass that was willing even to fight for democracy!

It could all be seen well in advance, weeks in advance. But in the days of the Congress it knocked your eyes out.

But I can quote myself, at least myself, from the closed session. The case is

a textbook one. If there is only one list, and one list is just like the Indian shudras: untouchable, then there is absolutely nothing to talk about: the list must be dropped into the box or thrown away. Or you can do as some sophisticated delegates, forced to become ironic and cynical: they did neither drop in, nor throw away the list but took it home as a souvenir—and a gilt-edged proof for posterity to see that they sabotaged the vote. Even if late, even if painfully, they still proved in a credible way that they had found out the trap and avoided it in their way: or at least tried to climb out morally.

So, terribly bored with the number of my appearances and the tension I was creating, I demanded the floor after Rezső Nyers had asked the Congress, as he put it, for the first and last time, to raise the number of Presidium members to 25, even though the day before we had passed the Statutes that limited that number with a permanent authority to between 17-21. The Statutes are the party's constitution. Within a week the Parliament would modify the constitution of the country anyway, why shouldn't we do likewise to ours in 24 hours? A flexible method. Or, rather, despotic. But by this time this Congress accepted anything. They just wanted to go home.

I did not want that to happen. I had suffered catcalls in peace but now, after András Bárd's impatient, high-pitched sentences rebuking the uncomprehending delegates in the name of unity and efficiency, I at least had to ask: let us not accept the President's proposal and let us at least vote about it. I do not know if a vote was called after all.

I do not think it was. In the above-mentioned 40th minute, when the straight, frank young miner László Ádám whom I have long considered a friend, was choking with emotion while asking the delegates appointing him on behalf of the youth platform for a post in the Presidium to please reconsider his nomination and accept that of the youth association's President, Imre Nagy; and as I heard the last words of Imre Nagy saying he would gladly resign his candidacy in favour of László Ádám: when, in that 40th minute I witnessed this as yet another futile attempt to tear apart a mercilessly single one and only list—well, when my ears were hit by the outward expression of the obvious inner drama raging in the two young men who were very close to me, and the reverberations reached far deeper in me, around my heart, I made up my mind. And though my fellow delegates from Zala county suspected and perhaps even saw what I decided to do, by that time I was fully dominated by what I had resolved in myself long before, during the summer, in the weeks of my physical and mental collapse and in the months of systematic self-development; what I had suggested to others for several months had become my very self: in these decisive months, days, hours and minutes, and the forever most decisive Current Second, in that very Time and very Space, one must remain sovereign, self-reliant, independent.

In order to remain calm even if one was mistaken. In order not to be able to blame others. Thus, I wrote down my reasons for resigning my mandate and left the Congress hall that I had entered with so much hope, after 19 years of Party membership. And that was the four days. I may be the only one to have been shaken by those four days: it is all right then. I will get over them easier than the country would. But until the latter gets over it, I hardly can. All the same, I had to write my letter. (see App.6.)

OSZK
Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

IV. CONCLUSION "A"

1.) Tolstoy's tolerance

In the dawn of October 10 the buses left for home, towards the countries. Many of the passengers had a strange feeling: they had arrived from their border castles full of vigour five days before, and now they were not sure whether their castles were still standing, waiting for the border patrol to return from inland. And will they find faithful soldiers? Or at least mercenaries? Since the beginning of the Congress, and even more in the last phase of the four days that shook the Party, I felt that, of the countless mistakes made there, one of the worst concerned the handling of non-Budapest delegates. 90 per cent of the delegates were more or less left out of the most dramatic, closing phase of the nomination—they would take home nothing but a few stale sandwiches to their electors and people—the countryside failed again, as so often before, to break through the forty years of Budapest's political and economic monopoly, even though for the first and probably last time it had the necessary desperation and strength to do so within the Party—and now, lacking an overwhelming conviction, how can they supply their environment, their Party member friends and allies with those impulses, that invisible strategic mental weapon of intercontinental range that the country expected the Congress, This Very Congress, to radiate? The country still did. It did—yet.

I have already spoken about how worrisome I consider the creation of a vacuum.

A vacuum is never too permanent. New players will come out in the deserted field and a new crowd of spectators will root on the stands. In this mood, threatening even to turn dramatic, will my fellow members, friends and unknown comrades find their own integrity? And will they be able to radiate it over their environment? If they are not, that will mean Hungary is as badly shaken as the Party. Our world has gone into a spin, and our thoughts are spinning, too. Now one, now another factor of the human character surfaces: less and less of us can maintain the undisturbed unity of our character.

There is uncertainty, desperation, a lack of perspectives. All that cannot have been caused by the economic crisis, the falling living standards hitting a quarter of the population, or the huge holes yawning in the social protective net. The tensions are being created, generated, hinted at subjectively as well, and the visible crumbling on the top creates a lack of integrity down here. Naturally, individuals are also responsible for their inner uncertainty. We have not learnt to draw up an inner balance, especially not in hard times when we have no words to answer the challenges of unexpected force and multitude. The country's ruling party was to blame for that, too—and I believe that, though it will be certainly unable to keep its dominant position, its leftist and humanist character will be strong enough to keep on a considerable part of its members and attract others—for otherwise, if it must withdraw to the outskirts of politics (and the signs pointing that way are increasing, as it was expected), then its leading figures of the last year and a half: János Kádár, Károly Grósz, Rezső Nyers and many others made a hardly pardonable error. Each of them had the key of our history, their history, History, in his hand. They locked it up like Bartók's Bluebeard did. In one of the Congress intervals Károly Grósz told me that he knew what would happen. I wished he would speak out still in time. But I asked him in vain.

And as our citizens, worthy of higher appreciation than what they enjoy, are just as disturbed as their leaders, it has become clear by now that impatience has become a dominant psychological and even political feature in Hungary. His work *History in Present Tense*: "An author, a writer—these are not ranks. The former is an artist: only an artist, or mostly that. The latter sports a conscious educating, developing, apostolic or outright prophetic intent.

Tolstoy was born a hundred and fifty years ago, in the 7th year after Napoleon's death and left this world 7 years before Russia's revolution. And what a lot of things he was in those eight decades: patriot and cosmopolitan, militarist and peace apostle, simple believer and hardened heathen, drunkard and teatotaler, bont-vivant gambler and penny-pinching landowner, haughty aristocrat and garlic-smelling peasant. He had all that inside him, in harmony and in conflict. And the many new identities did not quite put out the previous ones. His family doctor Dusán Makovický recorded that, hardly six months before his death, Tolstoy was listening to a gypsy female singer on his gramophone and was deeply moved. "What a wonderful girl! Gypsies should be written about. There are so many memories attaching me to them..." That was a double crime for Tolstoy's "Tolstoian" lips to utter such words: nostalgia for the renounced, "sinful" quoth and for the "only literary" creation labelled to be useless.

In a short parable he tells about the blind man who stumbles along the street

at night, holding a lamp. Those who see him are bewildered: what does the blind man need a lamp for? "But he did need the lamp, he needed it to avoid getting knocked off his feet by others." Stumbling blindly between doubts and controversies he was searching for the road, and he knew that about himself, as proven by his diaries. Romain Rolland says of him: "He is our conscience. He speaks out what we, everyday souls, all think and are afraid to read in our hearts. And he is not an arrogant schoolmaster, not one of those proud geniuses enthroned over mankind on the heights of their art and intellect." He is—our brother."

Even in the last two months I saw a lot of things in the country. I was genuinely moved outside Debrecen's Calvinist College, the historic site of our progressive decisionmakings in the years 1848 and 1944, the dethronement and a new state's creation, where I saw the incredible hope in the eyes of a tiny man, broken with work and his advanced age, unshavenly shaking and gripping Imre Pozsgay's hand, telling him, "Mr. Minister, please help us and the Lord will help you, too." But I also witnessed, at the mass meetings in several towns on August 20, our national holiday, or at the Szeged election rally of Rezső Nyers and Imre Pozsgay, the HSP's two leaders, that the number of participants was a fragment of the crowd receiving them in late May there, at the closing ceremony of the reformist clubs' Szeged conference.

Meanwhile, I heard the irritated message of the deservedly acknowledged Miklos Németh sent from Cegléd where he accused the trade unions of pursuing a policy of social demagogy. And I was sad to see how the two men of identical age and mentality, Miklós Németh and Sándor Nagy, were edging away from each other, toughening the lines of division. And I can almost hear the advisers of both, encouraging their bosses to display even more characteristic toughness even against each other - instead of forcing them into a co-operation undertaken and exercised in front of the nation's publicity, supplied with guarantees. Into a co-operation that would openly express the confronting interests of their different jobs without dividing them and other excellent members of their generation.

Meanwhile I saw the demonstration of the uranium mine workers at Pécs in August. It was a tough one. And every day we can hear the senselessly tough statements of the FDA and the YDA, insulting the country's great communities, its past and present, trampling Communists "into the ground." Representing them (and the HDF), Member of Parliament Gábor Roszik got rid, overnight, of the serenity that he probably exercises as a priest as well as the balanced family breadwinner in his renewed marriage. Now he has become a national institution overnight, owing to his radical philippics

and the press faithfully echoing them, rather than owing to his professional background. Yet, I am asking you not to be afraid. You are sovereign and your answer is, too. In any situation.

Almost all of those whose names were smeared by political abuses, power abuses, hunting orgies, lack of education or intellect have disappeared from the stage of politics. And if they have not left the stage yet to take an aisle seat modestly beside You (and You would, wouldn't you, receive them, having never wanted to stone them, unless they actually committed crimes) at last, so if they have not yet left the stage, You must know: you live in democracy, in a constitutional state and, already, in a Socialist country exercising political tolerance as well.

In the closing minutes of the Congress when I had no mandate any more, someone came up to me and gave me the following text. I am pleased to publish it, for what he suggests is valid today, October 23, regardless of whether he joined the HSP or not.

"In order to protect the HSP's moral purity, there should be ethical committees working on national, municipal and local levels with party organs. Their composition should correspond with the platforms and currents present in the HSP. The ethical committees exclusive task should be to ensure that politically and personally authentic persons make up the new party. This is a basic condition for us to regain people's confidence in the HSP's programme, statutes and authentic leaders.

We distance ourselves from those who

- were directly and personally responsible for unlawful persecutions and inhuman decisions against the people,
- gained material advantages by abusing their power,
- are involved in cases of corruption causing public outrage.

In the matters arising with local party organs, the municipal level should be the forum of appeal, in those arising in the counties (and Budapest), the national level. The committees should operate until the next Congress. The committee formed to elaborate questions of ethics:

(Lajos Fejes, Miklós Horn, László Juhász, György Nádor, Attila Szabádkai)
Reform Association"

I know the majority of the undersigners. I fully agree with their message. When a week later, on October 16, I decided to found an alliance under the name of People's Democratic Association, I remembered this proposal. And in myself I added: Lajos Fejes from Zalaegerszeg, having dynamically fought his way up from obscurity in the last weeks with his new style, does not bear the same amount of responsibility for the past does György Nádor who has been working for decades on high posts of different official administrations.

The latter must carefully look into a lot of the incidents of his past as a leader and politician if he wants to create authenticity in ethical questions, for the sake of which he appears on behalf of others. But the aim is a noble one. And in vetting the individual applicants to our alliance, the PDA, we will put a strong emphasis on the difference between what Lajos Fejes and György Nádor symbolise. In our fallible world it is impossible to lead people without ethics.

2. Who is who?

Let us look in retrospect at a tiny section of the facts. We were already past the preliminary congress, that is the Thursday, October 5, rehearsal, the Congress was under way at full steam when the Friday evening, October 6 issue of the "Kongresszus 89" published the list of the People's democratic platform. At that time there were only 68 of the People's Democratic Platform. At that time there were only 68 of them. And, quite characteristically, 33 of that number were non-Budapest delegates, with another 25 being the members of the Pest county group of delegates. Of the 18 other counties and the county-level groups of the Foreign, Interior and Defence delegates, only 10 people were present in the platform. Among the platform's 68 undersigners there was hardly a name whose bearer could have shown up a political or professional oeuvre. Without intending to insult others, I found only four names of a nationwide political or professional reputation: those of Ádám Angyal, István Bihari, György Marosán and Csaba Hámori. They all live in Budapest. Naturally, András Bárd and Béla Fábry are also present—but perhaps I can state that in these hours and days presenperhaps I can state that in these hours and days of the Congress they could not have regarded themselves to be nationally known and recognized politicians. Nobody else called them that, either. Csaba Hámori, similarly to Ádám Angyal and many others, signalled their intention to join the platform only in the previous hours and days. I might, of course, mention such well-known names as those of Mihály Jassó or Pál Iványi, two ex Politburomember—I would rather not. They "signed up" in the closing phase of the Congress, being no more members of the Presidium. They did that for Rezső Nyers. Then, after the Congress being left out, they both resigned. With honest self-criticism. Their younger fellows failed to do so.

This list of names well demonstrates the composition of the group or platform founded "in the excitement" of the scene.

So the naturally Budapest-dweller persons referring to the platform's name during the Congress and the days following it made the impression of appearing as the leading politicians of an organically working national platform. That belief is a false belief. A caricature of democratic organisation and politicking. A balloon. Building upon those 68 people and then the later joiners signing up in good faith, half a dozen men created the impression that they had equal strength with that of the Reform Association.

Do I deal too much with the "dynamic" organizers of this platform? Sometimes even too much is too little. With their aggressive behaviour covering the lack of strength, with their administrative tricks it was mostly they who destroyed the clear current of the Congress of historical importance. At the press conference following the Congress, these self-nominated leaders who had not at all built on any organic cooperation, made the impression that there had always been two great platforms. Thus András Bárd can tell the press that they "have always been active participants and organizers of the new party." Who? Them. Half a dozen of them. And since when? Let us not go into that. And if—as it happened - they held none less than two briefings for the platform's undersigners, they reserved the final decision and its process to themselves. Like in case of organizing post-Conference public appearances. They stamp and label in the name of others.

Enough of this characteristic feature of the platform's afterlife in connection with a press conference. It is to be feared that in the couple of weeks before this book gets out, this personal power show will go on.

And to encourage my foreign readers: it is true that democracy is still in an embryonic state over here—but common future baby is developing nicely. Instead of some further comments that might be found too subjective, let me give you a real number here. Still on October 6, at the same time with the registered appearance of the overwhelmingly Pest county platform built on 68 people: THE REFORM ASSOCIATION HAD 466 ON THAT DAY 88 OF THEM FROM BUDAPEST AND 378 FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE.

Otherwise it was elevating to see that, in the weeks and months preceding the Congress, people of new, fresh, independent characters and in possession of real professional backgrounds got into leading positions in several counties and towns. Alas, too late. It is not their fault but that of the central Party leadership that the old guard remained rooted in many provincial towns and counties even after May 1988. The centre feared the mass strength of the new generation after May 1988, almost as much as before then.

Benevolently but, of course, also because of its helplessness, the Party headquarters played out the great model experiment of democracy. That is, they did not intervene, did not help dissolve the conservative forces of

administration in both the countryside and Budapest. That delay was a dramatic error this time.

By introducing the character and accidental or outright antidemocratic operation of the increasingly monopolized People's democratic platform, I tried to make you see how the Congress of a decisive importance for the country's life became -unintentionally and unwillingly—a forum of behind-the-scenes secrets worthy of the Operetta Theatre and decisions built upon them, at a historical turning point. How some people appointed themselves to be of equal value with the Reform Association that had such personalities among its members (and here I apologise to those whose names I leave unmentioned), such nationally important politicians like Attila Ágh, Csaba Csáki, Ferenc Gázsó, Ferenc Kósa, Ferenc Vissi of Budapest. The countryside delegated Imre Pozsgay and such founders of the reform clubs as Gyula Gráner, György Kerényi, József Gécz, László Bruszel, Zoltán Daróczy, Mátyás Szűrös, Zoltán Körösfői, Kálmán Gyuricsku, Jenő Kovács, and Gyula Horn from the group of the Foreign Ministry's delegates. I hardly mention the multitude of delegates from small villages (like László Asbóth from Vas county, and such dedicated fighters of the reform idea as Csaba Vass or László Szarvas from Budapest, László Láng or Zsolt Dobozy and hundreds of others from the countryside). They might have been the backbone of a modern party: a fair, well-educated team even by European standards. I have the moral right to make such a distinction between the two platforms' lists of names. Mainly because I stubbornly remained outside any platform, because I considered remaining sovereign as the most important thing—and so I advised everybody.

I have another reason, too. Since the early summer of 1988, and especially since this summer's birth of the forced quartet lacking any clear principal basis, I have seen that the Party's top leaders were not heeding Mihály Váci's warning: "Only he who dares lead should call me."

They did call—but did not dare. Because of that, since this year's midsummer I had been afraid to see this extraordinary Congress become a Congress of applause instead of programmes. And after the applause, the country's political stage becomes empty. Curtains!

3.) "I'm looking for the word, looking for the sound"

Motto: "Nature never breaks her rules." /Leonardo da Vinci)

But man does. Not only those of nature, from which he comes, but also his own rules, and even those of his community.

The question is whether, according to Imre Pozsgay's metaphor, we live and move in politics indeed, that is, in the human interpretation of the natural law that snakes cast off their skins time and again, forcing them off, because they do not fit any more. Imre Pozsgay thus provided the right for many people to honestly change their views. And perhaps everybody needed such a sense of release in the last years, after the decades of getting cornered in character and politics.

But there is another saying concerning animal skin. Snakes are "pleased" with their skins getting torn: underneath their new skins have grown out.

Foxes, however, are not fond of getting skinned seven times. If asked, they would protest even against the first. Compared to snakes, foxes have not made up their minds to cast off their skins: instead of them, hunters and trappers made new laws. And in the light of their success with foxes, many people have got drunk with pleasure in the last few thousand years. They try to skin the miserable creatures seven times - and foxes in such a state are far less cunning than when they were still trotting free, according to their own laws.

The Hungarian nation has been skinned quite a few times in the past decades. A lot of people now live, or are trying to make a living, indecently naked.

Who will decide who should play the snake, the fox and the trapper and the hunter?

In the last year or two it has grown into my conviction: everybody must accept himself, accept even that his possibly grave mistakes are caused by only himself, for a sovereign person never points a finger. That is why he is sovereign.

And so is he, heeding the words of Mohammed: "Man's real wealth is the good he has done in the world." Many people staggered out of the HSWP. In the months before the Congress. And since the end of spring, I have been trying to signal to the Party's leaders: hundreds of thousands of people will certainly leave the Party. And we should not be automatically pleased with the sea of departures, for behind the numbers we will not know who has left and who has remained, why did those and why didn't these. What qualities

will the Party lose? It was to be feared that the excellent army of intellectuals will leave it just as well as the bulk of workers.

Myself, I accepted the Central Committee's job offer after refusing it several times in the past decade, resinging my earlier stand, when it was clear that the ship was half sunk already. It had no master. The bog suns were receiving and passing on contradicting orders. The sailors were removing the masts when the good wind was approaching. And they would put them up again when there was no wind at all. And many of them had already disappeared in a sea grave.

My entry in the administration was met with incomprehension everywhere. At such time?

Yes, right at such time. And though I was floored by the Budapest press attacks that started quickly and the attacks from inside the central administration, and my immediate principal György Fejtő was on the point of throwing the towel in (he would have been right to do that), he finally shouted into the ring, "Stand up!" The referee had reached nine—but I stood up.

My entry, which I decided after a lot of controversial pondering and hesitation, had two openly declared conditions. One of them was that (and my urging published in an April issue of the "Magyar Ifjúság" was in harmony with the HSWP CC's May 9 resolution) the CC should try to bring the parliamentary elections forward to this year's autumn, while it still enjoyed its systematically operating parliamentary majority. I assumed that, if there are no elections held this year, the Party would break apart before the year was out and next year it would suffer a bad defeat, hitting its government as well. Simultaneously, I also urged that the Central Committee should openly and immediately declare before the public whom it considered to be its first and only leader, its candidate for president of the Republic and Prime Minister. My article written in April and my condition of entry included that. My second, similarly openly voiced condition was that György Fejtő should lead the election campaign, the new and dynamic rallying of the Party's masses. Of the Party's leaders I considered (and still would) him alone capable of displaying the necessary dedication, strength in leadership and concentrated organizational ability. Capable of leading a real political struggle. From behind the scenes, of course, with his customary soft-spokenness—and endurance. Like a real stage manager. And those appointed by the Party for the above-mentioned posts should stand in the limelight.

I also explained that the absolute first of those three functions' candidates should be decided upon. Who is the Hungary's Vranitzky, Kohl, Mitterand, Weizsäcker, with Fejtő's team behind? What actually happened was just the

opposite. Already in the moment of our agreement György Fejti and I counted on that possibility, and I alone with all the ensuing consequences. Not lacking either malice or a measure of realism, we encouraged each other with the same thought: probably we would lose. But until that moment we would do our best. An evident conclusion of the above chain of thoughts as well as my behaviour—and partly my ordeal—before and during the Congress was that I had nothing to do for the administration after the Congress. With fair words, not only because my conditions were not fulfilled (and perhaps even I failed to perform to everybody's liking), but also because the administration and I have long known something about each other: both by the objective and subjective characters of the matter, the administration is casting me out, and likewise I am casting the administration out of myself. No passion is needed for that conclusion; it is a natural, mutually characteristic habit.

On October 9 I stood up in the knowledge that I would be unemployed again from November 1 on; I would not join the new party (I informed my superior about that next day) or ever take part in party work again.

On Tuesday dawn I woke to realise that I would be probably unable to keep my word in the latter issue, however long-prepared and firm my conviction was: a vacuum and disturbance was created—probably not only in me but in our general conditions as well. And so that Tuesday found me on the road again, driving to counties and villages.

The behaviour, expected even in those minutes to strengthen the Left's falling apart, of the Party and its natural and unnatural successors is the democracy of disintegration; and all that has been done without asking the grassroot members while making decisions aiming at liquidating all the good and bad heritage of the past 40 years. "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite..." murmurs Hamlet.

The roots, the thousands of strong main roots and the several hundred thousand hairline roots of the part deserving a better fate were left torn in the soil. The crown of leaves—or rather, the sunflower—is bobbing on a thin line.

The Party leadership faces incredible responsibility. And today it is still lacking an invaluable answer. If the Left is weakened, the vacuum thus created may cause even geopolitical dangers. For in today's most influential party, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, there are not only the moderate, politically and personally outstanding leaders present but also the huge masses of members, most of whom were organised in the last year without cohesive disciplines of any binding force. And the HSWP's summer defeat followed by its weakening of strategic importance in October will create such

a political free market where there is a shortage of goods and, consequently, the position of the main vendors may become too strong, almost monopolistic. In short: the Left's incomprehensible and historically responsible destruction and collapse, reflecting the leadership's unfitness, may bring about the radicalisation of partly the HDF and partly such radical and aggressive parties as, for instance, the hardly controllable groups of the FDA and YDA. For many of them, authority has so far meant bitterness, limiting their aspirations. But now the taste of authority may become sweet, too sweet. Unprepared and perhaps accompanied by even anarchic emotional elements, those of the center and right center are trying to capture it. And that may cause an adverse situation not only in our domestic conditions but also in a geopolitical context, in the Carpathian and Danube basins.

The only possible balancing elements may be provided by a very authoritative government's work and a President of the Republic who should be elected immediately and victorious after a minimum of confrontations, enjoying confidence in his person from possibly all directions—and the self-consciously operating Parliament until its dissolution.

The Constitution and power structure of the U.S. are built on a balance of legislation, execution and judgement. Within that, its main element is the system of "cheques and balances". Where in our unbalanced lives are the built-in brakes?

There is one, perhaps. It is the year-and-a-half-long process of legislation and constitution-making which, since the beginning of last summer, mainly under the direct control of György Fejtő and Kálmán Kulcsár and approved by the HSWP CC and the government, has irrevocably laid down the supporting pillars of political democracy, mostly through parliamentary legislation. Thus the Party expressed its awareness and recognition of the quiet popular revolution, a revolution naturally expressed on the other side as well, by the increasing political weight of opposition party seeds and developing parties.

It is a pity that the HSWP's leaders brought such a situation over their heads and over their members' heads—those members whom the leadership griveously damaged not only in their political situation but also in their individual general disposition by dismantling the roof over their heads without asking them, disregarding the fact that the membership were already freezing at the -30° surrounding them anyway.

How can the Party, created to express human relations unorganizable and incomprehensible by bureaucracy and administration, made to organize the

community, be regarded to be still capable of operating, at least until the system of brakes and balances developed among the opposition parties and by the strengthening of independent-minded individuals and groups?

The emergency brake is removed, the points have been shifted by different pointsmen in an incomprehensible manner—and the train is running at full speed. And what if, because of a faulty shift, the rails disappear?

Two weeks after the HSWP-HSP Congress, the HDF also held its congress (which is being concluded right now as I am writing this) and we must cherish the hope that no impatient groups, unaware of the delicate factors of social balance, will come to the front rows.

In the days preceding the HDF congress I had the opportunity to talk to József Antal (who will probably be elected President of his party today, October 22, putting a moderate, politically extremely well-versed, far-reaching and sovereignty personality on the top of the HDF), Zoltán Bíró and Sándor Csóri who used to be the spiritual leaders of the HDF and will certainly leave their mark on the organisation's still forming character even if they have stood aside now, being a little too tired, even if Zoltán Bíró announced his resignation at the HDF Presidium's session exactly one week after the HSP' late-night election pains, and I also talked to the new opposition MP, Ern Raffay from Szeged: getting introduced to each other on a Parliament corridor, we quickly agreed that it is the common interest of both of us, our generation and our country that we should talk to each other, searching for common points even if the HDF naturally refused an election coalition in the first round. And though at the summer parliamentary session one side was taken by the HSWP members who still represented me, while the HDF took the other side together with radical opposition parties, I kept claiming even then that the HDF's moderate members soberly and forcefully representing their party's popular/national view would find occasion to harmonize and implement plans more easily with us than with the most radical groups of the FDA and YDA who took neighbouring seats at the Opposition Round Table, harmonizing from spring 1989 till early autumn. This latter group's hard core has visibly settled down with the idea of "the sooner, the better". I wonder what are the democratic ways in which their leaders make their often provocative resolutions?

When I returned my mandate I decided not to participate in party politics any more. The above conversations, however, convinced me in a few days that a people's democratic spiritual rally is as necessary as the consistent forming of harmonizations among the parties fighting for that. And naturally, I know that today, tomorrow and the day after, we will always find

a common platform with those members of the young generation who fought through the reformist movement and, for the time being, remain HSP members while forming a Socialist Democratic section and thus maintaining a fully independent character even within the party.

Consequently, I founded a party. It is called the People's Democratic Association. You can read more about it at the end of the book. I might characterise this tiny party, just like, because of their similarities, the earlier endeavours of reform clubs, with the phrase "grassroots movement". Rooted in the ground, sprung out of it, a solidly growing and not speculative movement. Such movements, parties and organisations have grown out of a precisely defined part of their peoples and are built on their interests.

Here is a recommendable piece of wisdom from the Talmud: "Cling to your homeland with all your heart."

A week after the congress I met some influential Austrian businessmen in Budapest. According to our agreement, they passed(?) my message on to Chancellor Vranitzky, the comprehensive politician who knows Hungary rather well and harmonizes with Miklós Németh in a close relationship, to be also on the lookout in order to avoid the stormly and, partly, uncontrollable changes in Hungary's party political arena causing an imbalance in the middle section of the Danube basin.

And how strange! One or two days later I heard the same argument worded crystal-clearly by Imre Makovetz, the world-famous Hungarian architect whose widely acknowledged talent permits him to stay away from direct politics in the future as well. He added that, having recently visited Brno, he very strongly felt how much the Czechs and, in general, the diligent peoples of Czechoslovakia were anticipating to shake off the political shackles and, waking from the Sleeping Beauty trance of their revolutionary reform attempt beheaded in 1968/69, join the old tradition of rallying together along the Danube. The shackles' loosening started in November and gathered impetus

Is Hungary destabilised now? or rather, has it created the radical (merciless, if necessary) resources and explosive forces of the long-awaited changes, among others by ruthlessly demolishing the Citadel of the Party State and State Party?

Or should we still be worried? Should we share Machiavelli's uneasy thought: "In their fear, people attack under the leadership of Hatred?"

One way or another, let us not offend those who do not immediately cast aside their old symbols, their feelings and traditions attached to them. Some people will always need public life as a third sphere supplementing their

families and jobs. For hundreds of thousands the HSWP served as an appropriate focal point for that reason, even if other hundreds of thousands were just idling or, worse, pursued career-oriented activities in a way that others loathed. I know it would have been more difficult to push them out then breaking down the whole Party structure and cast all members out in the cold. Yet, this dangerous and hard job should have been undertaken. The old generation was unable to do so. And did the young not want to?

In the year 1711 Prince Rákóczi's remaining troops bent their "Pro patria et libertate" banners towards the ground. But at least they did that in an organised way. And they had had no alternative against an overwhelming force. And in their hearts they knew that the Prince was alive. Allow me to call your attention to all the contexts of the above historical moment in view of today, in creating the Hungary of today and tomorrow.

4.) How others saw it

I resumed my country tours immediately on the first post-Congress day. Late in the evening on Tuesday, October 10, I gave a lift to three conscripted soldiers on the Miskolc road. They were on their way home, on leave from the Abasár garrison. We talked at length. As always in the last ten years, I had my "memory", the tiny tape recorder on me. I recorded the conversation; but the boys were afraid. They wanted to go on leave on further occasions, too, they said. Only one of them dared give his name—so I will not use it here.

Bearers of names, it seems, have been often and much abused in our land. The young soldiers knew nothing about the Congress. While radical opposition parties are trying to create the impression of Communists forcing some ideological brainwash to be performed in the Army, these three boys were actually missing some sensible briefing. They are never suggested to watch one or another existing political conversation or debate on the TV, so they watch video movies and clips every evening, sipping their Cola: and it is totally senseless.

And then I told them that their fears were unfounded for we lived in a free country, one where even the freedom of idling is greater than the sense of freely undertaken but, from then, strictly obligatory work. They just shrugged. Their thinking's base line is the sergeant. Now, that is a great man. And if they gave me an interview now, they would never know why they were refused leave next time.

Approaching these hikers on the road, I had assumed that the colour of their

skin was darker because of the night hour. Now in the car I could take a better look. They were gipsy soldiers.

Naturally they did not believe that I could guarantee their avoiding any problems if they spoke up. Their comrades might even be proud of them. They just did not believe me. I know, though, there is no need for my guarantee. Indeed, we live in a free country. In one which may easily lose its regular freedom if burnt clay is mixed into the concrete to serve as the foundations of a huge building. I offer the two forthcoming poems to those three boys and everybody else. I found them in the Hungarian gipsy folk poetry volume "Our foals are delicate".

I offer the first one to my mother as well: she has long followed my running up and down Budapest with alarmed attention, and on the ninth day after the Congress she phoned to ask me: "Get out of politics, son!" I was afraid to tell her that we had founded our party on that very morning.

What could she say to that? Especially if she knew that there were only ten of us starting it.

"Wind blows

Wind blows from the mountainside -
blown me far away from mother:
So far, into such a distance as the earth is from the sky."

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

"Whose night doesn't go away?

Whose night doesn't go away?
That of the poor gipsy,
That of the poor gipsy,
That of his whole kind."

Aside with poetry. Instead of a self-evaluation and an evaluation that would certainly carry some subjective overtones, let me give you now four short interviews granted by such persons who consider the cause of Hungary as a

deeply personal affair and who can speak about that wisely, in any situation, regardless of whether they live here as Hungarians or in one case in Vienna as an Austrian. I made the first interview with Ferenc Glatz who spoke with a historian's and not with a minister's responsibility. Next I asked Imre Tarafás, First Vice President of the National Bank of Hungary, eager to hear what his political and financial wisdom had to say about post-Congress Hungary. Similar was my reason in searching out Zoltán Biró who then was Provisional President of the HDF, replaced by József Antall right now as I am dictating this. I interviewed Gyula Gráner, the Kecskemét reform club's man who might be my mighty opponent, for he was born at Kiskörös, the town which, aided by the power of authority, snatched our national poet Petöfi's birth from us at Félegyháza—but Gyula Gráner and I will remain comrades of the same cause for ever. The last interview was granted by Günther Sallaberger who managed Vranitzky's election campaigns several times; last year he was still Secretary-General of Austria's Social Democrats, then took an excursion into the world of enterprise only to probably find himself by Vranitzky's side again next year when Austria is also holding elections: a knight in armour in the campaign staff. The right of making objective evaluations should go to them now. And to you. Of course.

- How does Ferenc Glatz, historian—who as a member of the government often appeared in the Gallery of the Congress—value the situation on the eighth day following the Congress?—First of all, there is a great deal of confusion; disillusionment can also be experienced. Now there already exists an infinite disillusionment not only toward the slogans of the former party and the usual ones of the state but also toward the patriotic, the national and the daily ones referring to the red, white and green Hungarian colours. This kind of overproliferation of slogans can lead to nihilism, that is, to the development of a total lack of political and national interest in the society.

- How can such a trend be counteracted, for this is really a matter of life and death?

- By programmes which are concrete ones, can be implemented, and have a tangible effect in everyday life. This cannot be achieved when one party is bidding after the other making ever bigger promises. Suppose, on party is for a 20 per cent wage increase in certain fields, then the other is for 40 per cent, and the next one—in total disregard for the cost—is already demanding an

increase of 100 per cent. But none of them is able to say where the funds would come from. No one dares to undertake unpopular measures. Whatever government rules in this country in the coming years, it must, once and for all, dismantle the over-bureaucratized, irrational mechanisms of the economy and culture. This is, of course, an unpopular task. In our country, however, everybody is a reformer *only as long as where his or her position and status are not involved*. After all, who is able to persuade a bureaucrat sipping his coffee and sitting in his comfortable armchair, who produces nothing, that it is precisely he who is superfluous for the society. You could not convince a single one of them. In the midst of powerful smooth-toned orations, the society, for the time being, continues to suffer in the bureaucratic shackles. And as long as this situation lasts, there is no use of dreaming about substantial changes.

- What does the historian think: is our self-respecting image as Hungarians endangered?

—No one is able to tell me what the “sense of being” means exactly. It means not only the national slogans, as some may think, but also our *daily relation* to the society. I was deeply touched by the words of a humble man: he said, he wanted to have a people and a society exercising *patience* with everybody, where anyone can state his or her opinion, and no extreme can force the other to refrain from explaining his or her views. I sense not only leftist but rightist radicalism, and left-wing and right-wing impatience as well. *In this respect I fear for our Hungarian consciousness.*

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

Imre Tarafás is urging the defence not of our consciousness but of our currency, the Hungarian *forint*. *He has never been a party member. He is my friend, so I can say that we have had many heated debates over his religious ideas. How does the First Vice-President of the National Bank of Hungary judge the Congress, and the uncertain and confused atmosphere that followed it, and especially in the light of the forint at home as well as our economy abroad?* (A few days after the Congress, I visited him, together with **Karl Javurek**, election manager of the Socialist Party of Austria who was equally interested in getting answers to these exciting questions.)

-We are not concerned, or at least I am certainly not concerned, by the problem of how successfully which party will conclude its congress, rather we are thinking about a government which is a viable one. I am not particularly interested in parties. I think the best would be to have a party emerge which purely and strongly commits itself to do reforms or if such a

party were to be created after the congress. A party of this kind could still count on the support of the great majority of the voters. Since the elections are still several months away, and many things could happen during that time, we do not have an clear picture yet of the outcome of the voting. It is, however, clear for me that one or two strong parties are needed, and, building on them, a coalition government can be formed with the inclusion of small parties. That is all that is needed. How could we know the outcome of the elections when we do not even know how many people will transfer to the new party, switch over to *other* parties, stay out entirely?

—From the point of view of a stable economy and a forint whose stability can still be saved, how risky would it be to have substantially fewer members than expected in the new party?

—If instead of and in place of a brand-new, comparatively strong new party, 4-5 *more or less equally powerful* - that is more or less ineffective—parties were formed as successors and fight with one another, then the governability of the country would suffer from this situation. Unfortunately, several signs pointing to this phenomenon could already be seen immediately after the Congress.

- Would it endanger the ruling of the country then if too many parties existed?

—If the new government has to be set up from 15 recently formed parties, then it will be unable to function. The only workable construction is one which include 2—3 strong parties in coalition with one another, and connects the representatives of smaller parties to it.

- What if the new Socialist Party remains too weak?

- Nothing. At least, nothing special if there exist 2—3 strong parties of different trend. I have already said this before, too. In this case, there is no particular reason for anxiety. We need a strong government supported by strong parties. Among them I personally may find one or another party to be more or less attractive. But this is of no importance. *Only* strong parties could form a *workable* government.

- How would the international money market react to an insufficiently strong, that is, a weak socialist party? Would it be afraid of the destabilization of Hungary and its economy in this case?

- International capital is not particularly concerned with the problem of *what parties* back the government, the only fact it follows with attention is whether the government is vigorously supported by the coalition parties. If this strong party is the socialist party, then they say O.K. to it but they would say O.K. to any other strong party.

- Since the danger that the HSWP will be replaced by several successor parties cannot be ruled out, and since international capital does not like

such a situation a stated before, could a paradox situation occur when this capital would promote the substantial consolidation of the socialist party with its own means?

- No.

- Would this capital consider a coalition without a communist-socialist party as a stable one?

- Why not?

- Don't you think that your answer is too naive?

- No, I don't. It's my personal view, nowever, that none of the present opposition parties—and especially not several parties at the same time—can be consolidated enough to be able to fill the vacuum caused by the lack of a left-wing socialist party's power.

- How do you evaluate, and do you pay attention at all to the possible geopolitical tensions which could be strengthened if the socialist party is sufficiently powerful in the centre of the government? Do you forecast the economic reactions of the neighbouring countries—and naturally the chances of the Hungarian economy and within this that of the forint—in the case where instead of an expected left-centre coalition, a governing arrangement of a centre or rather a right-centre emerges?

- I feel that the socialist party will have good prospects to win a considerable share of the votes. During the election, the voters will be aware of the geopolitical realities, too. And all the other parties are taking into consideration the geopolitical situation. Foreign analyses show that most of the Hungarian parties—with the exception of one or two radical parties see it in the same manner. They have *identical* views of the market economy and the opening to the external economy. The trouble will come when the implementation of this program *must be started* and it will be found how high a price must be paid for it, and how important tensions will be generated by the market economy in the field of inflation, unemployment and enterprise bankruptcy. All these, however, will not depend on good political intentions and fitting political programs but the sober reality of the economy.

- Will the increase in political struggle and uncertainty influence the exchange rate of the forint?

—Not directly.

- And what if I suppose it were, nevertheless, so?

- Undoubtedly, if the political uncertainties become too extreme, then it will retrain and discourage the *movement and the inflow of capital*—and it can, sooner or later, contribute to imposing the forint's devaluation. However, no such concrete relationship actually exists in the case of Hungary because the movement of capital is very limited, including the redistribution of the domestic capital, too.

- **And what about the speculation spreading at the sight of growing dangers?**

- Since we have been liberalizing our trade with the West, that is freeing imports, our international balance of payments has greatly deteriorated. Especially, the balance of tourism has become extraordinarily unfavourable. Since the introduction of stricter customs regulations, last spring, the situation has improved. Now, on the other hand, the import of cars has increased very significantly and I don't understand why Hungarian trade is unable to solve this problem, and why it forces the individual citizens to buy cars abroad and, this way, to spend their foreign exchange.

In any case, the government does and will not intend, before the end of the year, to increase the burden of individual *car imports*. After all, during the larger part of 1989, both the available foreign currency of the population flowed out of the country in billions. That is worrying. This is a special form of the flight of capital. But the main reason for it is not the rescuing of money abroad and speculation with a *political background*: it is only for commercial and shopping purposes.

- **Does all this indicate that this year the forint will again be devalued due to the gradual deterioration of this situation?**

- No leading figure of any Central Bank would answer that question in advance. (In December the Forint was devaluated by 10 percent.—L. G.)

When just one week after the Congress—seeking answers to our question—together with *Karl Javurek*, I visited Zoltán Biró, then President of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) in the “headquarters” of the HDF, in a typical construction barrack, I already knew that Zoltán Biró would resign the same night at the presidium's meeting which preceded the HDF's Congress, and that he didn't want the Congress to elect him to the top of the HDF that was transforming from a movement into a party. Knowing this, we could suppose, all the more, that Zoltán Biró's answers would not only be correct and moderate but presumably free from otherwise rightful partialities of a party preparing for an election fight and considered as the strongest adversary. Zoltán Biró:

What happened at the Congress is that a party began to carry out an operation on itself. This kind of operation, of course, is very painful. The question, however, is always what the final outcome will be.

- **And in your opinion what was it?**

- It was something which proved to be unacceptable for everybody. Nobody considered it as reassuring.

—**Why?**

—Above all for two reasons. One has intellectual and ideological content with very serious and direct consequences of a political nature. The reform communists and what they called social democrats and socialists were drawn together into one party. Anyone who considers himself a communist in the country doesn't know what party he should join now if he wanted to. Apart from this, the meaning of reform communism has yet to be made clear. Those, however, who would join a social democratic party, don't like the symbiosis with the communists, they don't know where to put it. The whole *society* doesn't know what to do with this conglomeration. *Those who aren't involved* in the matter, who aren't associated with the HSWP or any of the successor parties, consider the change as just change of letters. This is, however, an oversimplification and not a correct approach. Nevertheless, they consider the change as unbelievable. It is my personal conviction that much more happened than a simple repainting of a name-plate. But what would have been important from the point of view of the Hungarian party structure as a whole, namely the creation of a clearer formula and by that the promotion of the society's orientation in the present conflicts, did not happen.

- **In your view, what would have been the solution? A split into two?**

- Yes. That is what has actually happened, to only a small extent, that is to say, if the extreme left-wing marked by Robert Ribánszki's name had broken away, and the two courses existing at present had been organized into two parties.

- **If two parties, one reform communist and the other reform socialist, had been formed then where would the old, elderly communists have found their place?**

- Either they would have joined the reform communist party or they would have formed a separate small party.

The logic of what I want to say can better be demonstrated by naming a few *persons*. What would have legalized—under any name—the transformation of the party, the radical change, would have been if the division had taken place among persons. For the society, it was clear that there existed a group within the party preferring to be linked to Rezső Nyers—in it, perhaps only the role and place of Károly Grósz was uncertain—and there existed a reform wing which can rather be regarded as social democrat, socialist, marked by the names of Imre Pozsgay, Miklós Németh, Gyula Horn. If these two wings had clearly separated from one another in regard of persons too, then not even its ideological aspect would have caused any particular problem. All the less because it is not the ideologies which determine the Hungarian orientation

nowadays. The problems are raised much more pragmatically. Decisive roles would have been played by persons and programs and not by ideologies or rather by their blurring.

- And what would its international effect have been?

—That would have been easier as well, It will not be easy for the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) to join the Socialist International. Its relation to the Western European parties could be a confused one, if only because these powerful, fierce debates are going on among themselves. Perhaps, the situation would have been clearer in the relationship within the East too. - **In your opinion, what should the party have done to achieve credibility before the population in a country demanding pragmatism?**

—This is a fundamental question. It is more important than the other aspects raised above. The Congress should already have decided unambiguously in three questions. However, it decided only in one of them, namely concerning the party's property. However, it has not taken a straight forward position as to the future of the Workers' Militia. The proposals rather dealt with the problem of how the Workers' Militia could be integrated into the Army. Consequently, the Congress didn't disband the Workers' Militia. It's true, of course, that the repainting of this institution has been commenced, and, to a certain degree, its reduction, too.

(I personally and obviously many of my fellow delegates experienced and felt this differently at the Congress. There was a heated debate. Indeed, there was a lack of unambiguous decision as to the disbanding. A few days later the government, however, decided to disband the Workers' Militia entirely.—L.G.)

And the most important would have been the third one: the party should have assumed the responsibility for the withdrawal from the working places. It was precisely in this matter that Rezső Nyers and Imre Pozsgay *opposed each other*. And precisely in this matter, a compromise was unfortunately reached—which, nevertheless, is considered by the *society* as unacceptable. Instead of having developed a clearer picture in the Hungarian political relations before the elections, the party has, on the long range, made the first step on the road of clarification, but in this *very difficult period of transition* it has rather increased the confusion.

- Has the position of the opposition parties become easier or more difficult in this formula?

- It has become substantially more difficult because it will be more complicated to find the contact points. As a consequence of the lack of clarification, an opposition party can hardly permit itself to offer even a loose alliance to this party, for the time being. It will be difficult for a centre to take shape, although this would be the principal guarantee for forcing the

extremes appearing from the most different angles to the periphery of the society. Under these circumstances, too much responsibility falls on the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF). We feel that our political influence is increasing, and perhaps the foreign interest and judgement may also be strengthened, it is improving, in favour of and shifting toward the Hungarian Democratic Forum. We have been striving for a central, i.e. centralized position from the outset. At the weekend we intend to announce that the Democratic Forum would like to become a democratic national centre party.

As is known, on October 22nd, the Congress of the Hungarian Democratic Forum—taking note of Zoltán Biró's motives (which I consider as very true and sincere ones, although I regret that he has stepped back a rand in the leadership of his party) elected József Antall as president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum. From the beginning, at the negotiations of the National Round-Table of last summer, in the Parliament, József Antall has formed opinion, sought compromise, increasingly as the most respected representative of the opposition parties and as the most qualified one during the conciliation talks in the fields of state, public and constitutional laws, and in the long run, similarly to the delegation of the HSWP, he has contributed, in effect—in spite of the absence of the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Alliance of Young Democrats—to the achievement of a compromise in September which could be accepted by the HSWP, too *because it pointed ahead* in its essentials.

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

Gyula Gráner has taken all the steps which were necessary to "keep his feet" on the earth, but yet be able to observe public affairs from a higher level. He was a leader of the youth movement in a small town, later he had same function but on county level and simultaneously is the director of AGROINVEST (an agricultural investment) enterprise in Bács-Kiskun county, which is perhaps the most entrepreneurial region of Hungary in the field of agriculture. He is one of the founders of the reform circles, and one of the intellectual leaders of the reform circle at Kecskemét which has been playing a most striking role in this movement from the very beginning. Two days after the Congress, we had a conversation. Since the reform alliance has played a role of conciliation all along and Gyula Gráner was an active

participant in it, I thought he must have formed a reliable opinion on the proceedings.

- **An alliance, formed of dedicated reformers was forced to negotiate day and night with a team having no roots the general staff of the people's democratic platform. And it failed, in the meantime, to notice that it was gradually gibing up its own strength. What consequences can be seen of this not so really principled compromise concerning the final outcome of the Congress, as well as the events of the following days when the leaders of the people's democratic platform already made statements before the whole world as representatives of a truly grand alliance? What actually happened? Following the explanation of my own view in the book, it is obviously reasonable to ask the authentic eyewitness and active participant.**

- The reform circles' movement started its activities at the end of last year. As a result of one year's work, it has formulated disputable but clear principles. Consequently, its firm ideological and theoretical platform has been formulated. So we came to the Congress in possession of a real platform.

As regards the association that appeared under the people's democratic label at the Congress, we felt that it had no integral political theses. Their platform represented the personal ambitions—and ambitious persons -who tried to preserve their posts in the new party. For ourselves, we draw the conclusion that a manager bureaucratic oligarchy under the cover of the people's democratic label achieved victory at the Congress. We were forced to enter compromises, for example, to hush the political discussions on the organizing activities of the parties at working places. We already decided a long time ago that the working place could not be the scene of party struggles. As a consequence of this situation, because of the blurring, public opinion has not received an answer from the Congress concerning this question.

During the Congress, the reform alliance repeatedly tried to wring some results, but it was repeatedly voted down. On the last night of the meeting, we decided, in the possession of 180 signatures to submit a procedural motion. It was originally organized by one of the Budapest reform circles, and far more signatures than the necessary minimum were collected in order to raise again the prohibition of organizing activities of parties at working places.

- **What was the fate of the motion?—since one day earlier, I, myself also initiated such a step, and had a strong dose of the bitter taste of the failure created by the chairman of the session.**

—In this last night an extremely indisposed person was in the chair. At that

time, however, such serious questions as the return of the party property to the public and the future of the Workers' Militia were awaiting decision.

Our procedural initiative was aimed at encouraging members of the parliament—at least the party member ones—to support our position in this matter. At this night meeting, somebody,—visibly from among the Budapest benches—jumped up, and squarely stated that because of the indisposition of the chairman a new person be requested to the chair. The motion was carried by acclamation. At this very moment, however, János Gönci, to my great surprise, walked up to the rostrum and simply took over the chairmanship.

—Without nomination and voting?

- Yes. In all probability he thought that he was entitled to do so because he was a member of the Congress' presidency. But on that grounds, anybody could have taken it over, for example, Imre Szekeres of Veszprém. I don't know who requested János Gönci to do so, it is certain that nobody proposed his name at the plenary meeting.

- I was not present by then because I had given my mandate back. What I heard just now from you was not only entirely new but unimaginable. How could such a prestigious power as the Congress tolerate this drastic move?

- With difficulty; we had to swallow the core. By that time, many of us were extremely tense over many different questions, for example, as to the future of the Workers' Militia, etc. By that time, the reform forces were almost deprived of essential possibilities. Under such circumstances, you make an effort to control yourself. By that time too, many delegates were so tired that they didn't care what decision was made, the only thing they were interested in was going home. János Gönci took advantage of this situation in taking over the chair. During the debate he behaved in a very aggressive and rough manner crossing it by the series of rulings like: "I do not give the floor..., we are not going to vote on the procedural matter..., etc." And he put his motion immediately to vote and made the Congress accept not even to listen to the procedural proposal. This is contrary to the rules of procedure. He disregarded completely the fact that 180 signatures definitely entitled us to discuss this question.

- I know this feeling...

-... so, he had it voted that the Congress shouldn't discuss our motion at all. As a reaction we, about 10 persons, left the hall indicating that we didn't agree with János Gönci's dictatorial and aggressive methods.

—Did the chairman put forward any arguments as to, why he put the Congress in such a tight corner?

- I can no longer quote him exactly, for the atmosphere of the meeting was very tense. But all at once we were standing in front of the microphones

requesting the floor. "I won't give the floor..., won't give ..., etc..., the debate is closed..., we are proceeding to vote..."—we were told.

- And with your departure was the Congress over for you?

- No, we returned but many of us gave serious thought to leaving this whole confused affair. Later on, however, we calmed down. At any rate, the above-mentioned facts indicate in the group which holds the people's democratic platform, there are persons aiming at the removal of the mature well-based program of the reform alliance from the party and the Congress by means of power. Among them I could see people from Budapest, former officials, full-time leaders of the party who...

—**Why do you use the word: "former officials"? They are still there.**

—I don't see it that way. In my view their functions were also discontinued at the Congress.

— **But they are still active.**

—The party ceased to exist at the Congress, so the former functions also ceased, in my view. I am thinking about people like Csaba Hámori. Within this circle Adám Angyal was acting very unsympathetically organizing their own interest very well and spectacularly, like a real professional manager—nevertheless, it is very difficult to imagine he came to be on a "people's" platform knowing his performance as a general manager.

- **Because Angyalföld district of Budapest, the citadel of the workers, delegated him to the Congress.**

-That is an affair for his conscience. He suddenly made a loyalty statement, without any invitation, in support of Imre Pozsgay—after the decision on the new party was adopted—that is, when Imre Pozsgay summarized the debate on the party program. One of the most substantial contradictions of the congress is the fact that it wanted to remove from the agenda such an important problem as the extremely thorough debate of the party's new program. The members of the reform alliance had to enforce the debate reopened, arguing that no good program could be born without such a debate.

—**I can't understand, why do you find it surprising that Adám Angyal made a loyalty in support of Imre Pozsgay.**

- Because I'm not convinced that two days earlier, when it remained to be seen whether the party would only be renewed or basically new one would be born, well, I wonder whether he thought the same way about Imre Pozsgay then.

- **I saw Adám Angyal's name on the list of the people's democratic platform, and he took part in its colours. Now, as is quite well known, this platform didn't support either the reform circles or Imre Pozsgay.**

but Rezső Nyers. Now, tell me where Adám Angyal belonged to? And what other names did you mention as being active on their behalf?

—I think what I wanted to say about the mobility of Adám Angyal is clear. And as to other names? I could mention János Gönci who, to the last minute backed himself, to my knowledge, as the future vice-president of the party, or was the platform's Number One candidate for presidency. Naturally, these are only corridor-rumours. Since we held negotiations with them, *their inside news necessarily reached us, too*. It may appear ridiculous, but nevertheless the dispute about János Gönci's role took the turn in which Rezső Nyers had to decide whether he would assume the responsibility for János Gönczi in such position, role and post. In the reform alliance many of us categorically refused all candidates who were known, whom we thought *had been waiting to see which way the Congress would go*. For them, the direction was only of *secondary importance*. They *cared only about emerging* as leading figures or self-appointed candidates for leadership. Concerning János Gönci, the reform alliance said that if his name were brought up as a member of the presidium, we would break with the conciliation talks immediately.

—What was the reason for this radical opposition to his person?

—On the one hand because because of his type of career so far, and, on the other, the unattractive tactics that in the pre-Congress days and its first-days the leading role was taken over by a handful of Budapest apparatchiks, although this people's democratic movement had been initiated by an old but a true democrat, a president of farmers' co-operative.

How to proceed nor when such basic tensions remained unresolved in the new party, in the movement for which there is a vital need? Béla Katona, Csaba Hámori, Béla Fábry managed to get in the presidium on the people's democratic platform. I wonder how the co-operation within this broad camp would take shape, within it what Gyula Gráner would plan for himself, who from the beginning kept aloof from the more militant forces of the reform circles, who tried to assert an opposite, that is a moderate style?

- On the way back to Kecskemét, during the night, I formed the idea of not wishing to be active any more in this party. As I stated at the Congress, it *didn't accomplished* the task of presenting the *colour-scale* of the Left—in the form of political *parties* in democratic Hungary. For it is not true that from one day to another everybody would belong to the Socialist Party. We felt the disadvantages of this situation; within the movement of reform circles this blurring of distinctions caused an inner tension.

- It seems to me that in all probability one has to reckon now with this multicoloured—scale, since after the Congress a great many currents and parties were created out of the former HSWP's camp. An enormous danger is involved in this situation. Did you rather want to have several parties? And then how to proceed now, that after all one party survived?

—I expected the Congress to create several parties. Within the former HSWP, three striking movements could be distinguished: first, a real hardline communist group; second a *Euro-communist* line, and third, an actually European *socialist* course.

- Would this last one have formed the basis of the reform alliance?

—I include myself in it, but the reform alliance has a mixed composition.

- Could the reforms founded on solid moral basis and initiated by Ferenc Kósa immediately before the Congress maintain their independence? Would they have formed the core of the new party you hoped to see?

-In my view, yes. The militant demands existing in the reform circles were forced out by Kósa's style. Beside a platform holding *socialist* principles, Kósa and—as you happened to know and to do, too—many more of us in the country added the *people's national and ethical basis* to it, which could have formed the foundation for a new party. You personally initiated it earlier.

- Why couldn't this effort achieve a breakthrough?

- There is also a division within the reform circles, and although I myself also have quite considerable practice and past in the congress work, it became clear that the county amateurism was eaten up by city professionalism. The assertion of the interests of Ferenc Kósa and his associates combined with deep humanism fell into a trap set by a professional platform-team of Budapest—as already mentioned—who were manoeuvring hard in every respect. They managed to wear out this effort and compelled it to make compromises that the historians of the future will deal with, in all certainty. So we had to make *retreating* compromises not only in extremely important *political* questions -when, in fact, we took these steps we thought that later our position would be taken into consideration concerning the *composition* of the presidium—but in the personal questions indicated above. I didn't participate at the discussion of the leaders of the two platforms, but for me, it is clear that Rezső Nyers's personality and position played a crucial role in the final outcome.

- In what matters?

In that the composition of the presidium took shape as it did. It is not difficult to prove this. You know well that five hours earlier the size of the presidium was fixed at 21. And obviously, it was not accidental that before the nomination started, Rezső Nyers had announced: the membership of the

presidium was increased by four, and he requested its endorsement. You protested against it hard. These four members presumably were the candidates of the people's democratic platform's leaders whom they wanted to get in the presidium by all means. And although the names of János Gönci, András Bárd, Tamás Krausz and a few others mentioned quite often before were left out, on the other hand, the names of Csaba Hámori, Béla Fábry and Béla Katona were included in it, among others.

- **And also the name of a very honest historian and party worker, Lajos Menyhárt of Debrecen. So, I ask you a question: how to proceed?**

- For the time being, I am remaining in the party. We are going to form an inner alliance of an independent character wishing to struggle for socialist democracy and its own profile.

- I hope together.

Günther Sallaberger is perhaps the best known figure of the political election struggles in Austria. He was the campaign manager of Helmut Zilk for the post of Mayor of Vienna; he handled it as successfully as in the case of the struggle for chancellor by Franz Vranitzky. He has become an exceptionally dynamic leading figure of the new generation who is a well-balanced moderate yet is able to undertake very tough struggles too. Our acquaintance goes back 20 years. From last spring on, I sought his advice on several occasions in the interest of preliminary guarantees for civilized and balanced struggles during the coming elections in Hungary. I didn't treat his advice as a personal secret, but I had the opportunity to share it also with different leading figures of Hungarian political and public life. He is very familiar with the Hungarian situation. Immediately after the Congress, I invited him to come in Hungary to parliament for a quick political survey while the National Assembly was in session passing essential and extraordinarily important laws.

- **We were able to exchange words with leading politicians in the corridors of the Parliament, and I know, of course, that you have followed the post-Congress life of the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP). Please, share your experiences with my readers.**

- *The mood of rising and of breaking out is prevailing* in Hungary. During the last two years, I have formed contacts with many people in your country. Most of them are definitely engaged in politics, much more than elsewhere. In my opinion: the processes are advancing in a favourable direction at a *rapid pace*. Hungary is following the right track in order to change its economic system, to build everything on market demands, to set out from this

on a viable road. Governments—the Austrian one, too—can make a lot of bad decisions if they disregard the market. Many things still have to be done in Hungary to make the market operate effectively.

- Aren't you disturbed by the lack of balance that is such a strong feature of the Hungarian political palette, right now?

- History always shows that if very *decisive political figures* and very dominant *political streams* are forced to renounce power, then the danger always exists that chaotic conditions would follow. I hope that this is not the case in Hungary; that you are going to save what is *valuable and necessary* for you. Saving you, I mean the whole country and not certain persons, parties or groups. It is obvious, those who have so far been in the dominant position are now living in tension. I also see that the new forces have not yet taken shape and their programs are also missing.

- What do you think: why did these dominant persons and the party have to renounce their power?

—Too many things are outdated, and outlived themselves. What was considered as true yesterday, is proved to be untrue today. Power corrupts, regardless of whether its possessors wanted it or not, regardless of whether it is taking place in the CMEA or the European Community. For this reason, the *constraint of correction* is always needed, but only democracy can carry out this correction. Now, since Hungary is going to become a republic, and the parties can function freely, they should be free in showing their strength *only to the extent* that they are supported by the *real masses and values*, because without that unpredictable conditions and even chaos will arise.

- When early last May I invited you to spend a few days in Hungary in order to try to advise the leaders of various parties as to the balance and civilized norms of elections, you had an opportunity to listen to the speech made by Károly Grósz on May Day. I know that you are on good terms with him and had chance to exchange views. At that time you observed that there was something wrong here, you felt a strange tension. Then you thought that something had begun to move downwards. We had similar view.

- That was an event of key importance for me. It is my deep conviction that Károly Grósz is, and will remain one of the figures in the Hungarian history who have done a lot to change Hungary in the right direction. He overcame and averted substantial obstacles. It is quite possible that his work isn't judged in a balanced way at present. Time will correct this. But, then, on May Day, I just happened to be in the midst of ordinary country people and we watched the telecast live, together. And, at that time, I already saw it on the screen too,—I recall, for example, this unbelievable stupidity that over the scene of the mass meeting, the parade square, a TV helicopter—as it was said—was

circling at length, drowning out the speaker's voice and creating a senseless and indifferent situation—so as I said, I saw also on the screen, although I didn't understand that in those days, there his prestige had fallen quickly, and on the faces of the people who stayed with me I observed that just at this very moment, listening to speech, how greatly their respect for the party and its leader had changed in a negative direction. At any rate, Károly Grósz had set many things in motion during the previous year.

- **“To set something in motion”—this doesn't mean anything in itself, it could be an improvement or a deterioration. Did you think that the Hungarian political balance was perhaps in danger already at that time? And what is the situation in this respect, right now, for example from the point of view of the Austrian leader who has to think also in a wider geopolitical context?**

- I wouldn't like to judge, because, after all, I come to Hungary only occasionally. You know your country better. I, however say this: “to set something in motion” is a positive deed in itself, even if, in the meantime, things go wrong. But *the main direction is a step forward, after all*. In its totality, I judge Károly Grósz's activity positively. It was so for the party, too. All the more for Hungarian *society*.

- **Now, on the 20th of October, I read here in Pest in the Vienna Kurier that “in Hungary the period of great words has ended and the actual development of democracy guaranteed by law has started, and very positive changes are taking place”—but also adds that “the situation is already partly uncontrollable, and it could deteriorate further, because all this is happening on an extremely weak economic basis.”**

- **In your view, what has happened in Hungary, was positive or negative in its totality?**

- In my view, the man in the street, is not afraid that the processes are out of control. Nevertheless, he sees that something has happened, that was unimaginable one or two years ago and for decades. I come from a country where people are really very much interested in knowing *what they can do* economically for the stabilization of the processes here. How should we be present, with what kind of technology, how much money? Many Austrian entrepreneurs are thinking in this manner. Therefore, *we would like to see an unambiguous signal from a Hungarian political leader regardless of what party he represents*. We, therefore, are waiting for somebody to show he is capable of leading the country with firm determination in a good direction. We also went through a similar period: when we took advantage of the Marshall's Plan's sources. We were very much determined to achieve improvement, prosperity but we needed immense external sources which

brought the energy confined within us into motion. It is not accidental that afterwards we created a very stable economic situation for ourselves. Hungary is in a similar situation now.

- I also read in the Kurier that Károly Grósz joined Ribánszky's party. You know Károly Grósz. And you are now reading a factual assertion with me in an Austrian newspaper. What is your answer to this?

—I don't believe what it writes is correct.

—Well, then: summing up. Are you an optimist or a pessimist in judging the Hungarian situation?

- I have been a party leader and a member of Parliament for so long that I have developed an instinct. *I am an optimist as a matter of course. My close friendship with many Hungarians brought me into the situation to judge your affairs optimistically, too.*

Since a radio broadcast on 13th November we know that Róbert Ribánszki, Károly Grósz and János Berecz are preparing the 14th Congress of the HSWP, as the leaders of this old-new party. It is strange that just two months ago I would have found it impossible to imagine them cooperating. Less would have been more now. The HSWP is holding its 14th congress at the same time as this book appears in Budapest, Vienna, Bonn and New York. I fear that the personal and political compromises on which this congress is based are not principled. It is a pity. For Károly Grósz and János Berecz are politicians who deserve a better fate. Károly Grósz has made very few statements since the congress of October, even though I too asked him to. Below, I quote extracts in English from the only serious Hungarian interview conducted with him.

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH KÁROLY GRÓSZ

Even the (former) Secretary-General speaks of a coup

At the Parliament Session in mid-October, held immediately after the HSWP's XIVth Congress, Károly Grósz did not turn up. At the late October session, however, we could see the former HSWP Secretary-General who has been the subject of several rumours in the country. One of those rumours supposed that he was on bad terms with János Berecz. It was quite a surprise to find the two of them huddled together in a Parliament corridor, deep in friendly conversations. Our paper asked Károly Grósz, a son of Miskolc, for an interview. He answered our questions willingly.

Q.: Recently there has been a lot of guessing in the press about your future. You have not spoken about that yet. Thus we do not know whether it is true that you must be still regarded as the HSWP Secretary General, as Ribánszky's group claims, or as a Party employee preparing to retire. How shall I introduce you?

A.: Do not introduce me any way. About my future, I have spoken so often that I cannot say anything new. First, as the HSWP's Secretary-General I asked for permission to retire, four months ago. At the time it seemed I would remain in the leadership. That would have meant a seat for me in some executive body, a board, or even the central leadership. Nevertheless, three weeks before the Congress I officially announced I would not take any function. By that time it could be clearly seen that the HSP's political line and expected personal composition would not match my approach. It is true that a group of the reorganizing HSWP regards me to be still Secretary-General. At the Congress I voted against founding the new party, and I knew that a coup was pulled off there. Because they founded a new party, but that does not take over the HSPW's members. And though the HSWP was beheaded, its new leadership will surface from among the ranks. This HSWP will be a workable party and I remain a member of it...

Q.: What's more, you are known to be its next leader...

A.: What a role I will get in this party, it will not depend on me but on the congress that must be called together in 2 or 3 months.

Q.: If rumours are to be believed, that will be the HSWP's XIVth congress. Or is it not true?

A.: Yes. It will be the XIVth congress. And if I am honoured there by the

leader's post, I will do my work in honour as a volunteer worker, not in a full-time job.

Q.: You were approached to take the Secretary-Generalship - of the HSWP.

A.: I consider that as a symbol. A sign that this party is alive. I have received about 40 delegations (of workers and intellectuals) in the last two or three weeks. Letters were sent to me, asking me to appear before the public as Secretary-General. I answered that I considered their request as a great honour but please, think it well over: is it good for the party? Think it over, I said, because I would gladly take part in party organizing and in the leadership, too, but I warned them to well consider all that. You see, I attract a definite circle of people, and there are those who do not find me popular. If these people reckon with me with all that, I am theirs until the Congress.

Q.: In the organizing HSWP there are also other candidates whom the public is suspicious of. Those who—to paraphrase you— attract a certain kind of people. Such as Róbert Ribánszki. Many people do not accept him...

A.: Ribánszki is a talented man. Perhaps more passionate than he should. Perhaps his opinion on some things does not follow the changing times. But he is dedicated, his political intent is clear and honest.

Q.: So you are negotiating with the Ribánszki group and will not enter the HSWP. How would you define your relations to the new party?

A.: The HSP is a valuable part of the Left anyway. I do not accept the opinion that it is a political opponent of the HSP. The HSP and the HSWP may work together in many questions. In the world it is not unusual for several political parties to form a political unity. Of course, at present the HSP is difficult to be qualified as it has not yet formed its individual character.

Q.: You have—let's not walk around it—gotten out of power. Speaking on the Congress, you used the term "coup". Are you angry with those who pushed you out of the party leadership?

A.: No, no hard feelings. There have been so many people pitted against me in politics, I would be angry with half the world if I were angry with those. Politics is like that. Well, some people were dishonest before the Congress, that is a different thing. But not determining from the aspect of the whole. And they tried to *look into the cards of the past*, that they still cannot see.

Q.: To what an extent can you accept that the HSP is the ruling party even so?

A.: That is a transitional situation, lasting only until the elections. In more

sophisticated political cultures a care-taking government takes over for that period.

Q.: Should we have that here?

A.:No. This cabinet is a good one. Capable of meeting the highest professional demands. The problem is not with the government but with the actual situation. The government hasn't the economies to keep house.

Q.: It is mostly the elderly generation that joins the HSWP. Will you have election chances?

A.: I dare not tell the future. I am far more interested in the mid-1990s. This party will have put itself in order by then.

Q.: About a year, a year and a half ago you were extremely popular. You lost some of your popularity when visualizing the threat of white terror, and again when casting away "popular rising" as a definition of the events of 1956. Have you not regretted being inflexible?

A.: I stand by all my statements. Even though I know I made many errors. What I said is increasingly coming true, I'm afraid. I do not like the kind of democracy in which there is so much extreme nationalism and anti-semitism* present as we are witnessing nowadays. I want a democracy in the real sense, rather than racism or incendiaryism. Others' opinion should be tolerated. I do not wish life to prove I was right, but in many respects it seems to be doing just that. So I do not think I was mistaken in judging political processes. Perhaps I spelled out things too early. A sign of that: those who used to rebuke me so often now say that, unfortunately, there is some truth in what I said.

Q.: Is it possible that, when your political career is at an end, you will move back to Miskolc, your native town?

A.: I don't want to stay in Budapest, but I'm not moving back to Miskolc either. A thousand threads of friendship and human connections tie me to Miskolc and I take every opportunity to maintain those ties. I am building a house near Pest, that's where I would like to organize my memories, but I don't want to write a memoirs. All the less because memoirs make my skin prickle. Everybody writes that life justified him. I would not like to write things like that.

* (I don't see any signs of anti-semitism in Hungary.—L. G.)

V. CONCLUSION "B"

I. INVOLUNTARY DISPERSAL

I am afraid that the *most modern left-wing party* of Central and Eastern Europe building upon continuous experimenting on the basis of communist and socialist traditions, was *not only shaken but was in fact destroyed*. There were many who were vulnerable to this process and many simply retreated, became indifferent or fed up with the constant *renewal*—in the *old party*, and in many ways with the *old leaders*. Many were honestly naive.

When I entered employment early last summer in the central staff of the HSWP, I had already noticed that colleagues were leaving in closed formation not only this building but party headquarters in the counties, as well. They did so *like geese flying south in autumn*, in an organized manner, up there, their destination *known only to themselves*.

We were and are witnessing dramatic events. It is not my intention here not to speak about those hundreds and thousands who were offended one way or the other and among whom unfortunately, we find many becoming hardliners in defense of their *old rights and party symbols*. They are doing this much *more resolutely* than they did when they *should have done*: before October, within the united HSWP, in the interest of its natural protection and reinforcing.

Now I am speaking *about and for* the new generation only. Today most of those who have remained in the party bureaucracy are either people who would find it difficult to find a footing else- where since their time is over, or who *struggled with all their strength and ability* to salvage the sinking ship. They did not need to abandon it in panic since they knew: they were among the best swimmers in the country.

And this was how it happened: now they can begin all over again, with a new start.

FREE-LANCERS

But they did not ask for this "freedom". The people I am speaking about now need not worry about their future since they were already convertible when economists were speaking with great bravado about the Forint and its convertibility at big international conferences. The Forint is not convertible. *I am speaking about the new generation. About those, who during the past two years, imposed change on the party both internally and externally. About reformers whose names are known to only a few and perhaps in the most limited circles.*

But they were *to be feared*. It was those elder or in cases even younger leaders, who wanted to avoid embarrassing questions who needed to be afraid: *concrete questions about who, what groups were in command, and who led the country into this situation.* In foreign trade. In ideology. In the internal situation of the economy, in planning and financial control, at forums that were always adjourned, failing to make decisions. In the mass media.

These would have been ugly and unpleasant questions especially if the new generation started to look for the individuals behind them.

In the Central Committee, in the counties and in the majority of the cities young, well-trained people, independently thinking, but *straightforward* in the matter of politics and ethics, joined forces for party work. With the aim of changing the party, the *party which they had joined.*

After May 1988 this party *democratized* at lightning speed. Most of its leaders *not only were serious* about cutting back party control at the expense of the party but for the benefit of the nation and *sharing* power with other forces of the society, the parties in the process of formation, but in fact *acted in accordance with this.*

Early this summer when it was already evident that negotiations with the opposition round-table would become extremely *tough* and that the HSWP was willing to accept *serious* sacrifices, I asked the leader of the negotiating delegation György Fejü *whether he had contemplated the end result of all this?* The multiparty system? The deteriorating chances of elections that perhaps might produce a failure? How would all this affect his personal life? He looked at me with his usual straight face and quietly replied: "I have." And I knew that this short answer meant a whole chapter of a lifetime thought over.

It is probable that the perspective for the party leaders of the *old guard* and for the powerful lobbies also structurally intertwined in Budapest was *not*

promising if this new generation, which had special professional and political skills and perseverance, a generation, the members of the reform generation of 1968 and later—including its representatives from the countryside—wanting to *maintain and establish* the continuous order of the country, *took over*.

How could they see them when Miklós Németh - who was always been in a well-informed position regarding economic policy—became Prime Minister *in the belief* that the net national debt was 11 billion dollars, and then *later* in May this year—and this *repeated* sincerity won further recognition - he declared publicly that the net debt was not what had been announced but something else: approximately 15 billion dollars. And today as well-informed citizens we might add that it is more appropriate to consider the gross national debt: i.e. 20 billion dollars, as he informed the Parliament at the end of November.

There was *almost a breakthrough of the countryside* at the congress. And it almost acquired the political-economic-cultural and moral *position* that should *have always been its right* - but which up till now was only brought to Budapest by its talented *representatives* selected at random. Imre Makovecz and Sándor Szokolay, Ferenc Kósa and many others, individually but occasionally joining forces as well. And of course there was Gyula Illyés with his admonition: Hey “fellas” let’s not look at where we came from but where we are heading!”

But *in spite* of this wise advice, let me add that *after 23 years of living in Budapest we do have to look back at where we have come from*. Since there are *many who would still take to the road* but *without* encouragement and coming up against monopolistic walls they feel just as our ancestor warriors did a thousand years ago: *the era of forays is over*. And the union of this generation would really have been a significant force. Why did there not remain a powerful left-wing party? Is it due to the above? *If it is we can promise: there will be one again*.

Since neither my quick and unexpected departure from the party nor the central building deserted with the sudden departure of others made it possible for me to bid farewell to the excellent thousands working in the party and to the tens of thousands of active fellow party members, I would like to do this—partly with this book here - now. Having been a delegate of Zala I would extend this greeting somehow like it spread from the new party committee in Zala and as I sincerely say myself: *Good morning, Comrades*.

We will be seeing each other often, I hope and believe.

And not like at Philippi or the fate of Pyrrhus, but like we did before: as rivals, sometimes supporting, sometimes attacking each others and also taking the offensive—but doing so in the tight,orderly fashion.

Not the way we are doing it now.

This at present looks more like the troop movements of an illegal guerilla force lacking an enemy.

2) EPILOGUE—BEFORE THE CLIMAX OF THE BOOK

András Fáy: “My fellow Hungarian! The original character is lost in all those amends.”

Lajos Kassák: “In the evening we lower our flags, we are alone, the darkness covers us, Oh estrangement and exclusion.”

Sándor Csoóri already adopted his stand in 1981 in connection with the Polish events and drama. For we Hungarians there is nowhere to retreat. We are moving forward. Or at least I and my fellows are, and we are striving to persuade the best of our nation to join us.

TO POLAND

Poland, Christ-statue struck by lightning,
around your blackening wounds circles the July
sunlight,
your bones constantly kissed by flies.
I suffer for you as if I too were lying bludgeoned
in some stinking shed gazing at a single carnation mirrored
in watery soup.
I might be your Hungarian refugee, little Prince Rákóczi,
unsaddled, a student leaning on your church walls,
or a soldier just arrived home, bringing with him the scent
of the woods,
his loved ones dead, buried naked,
while above him the swallows and dazed insects and the
smoke-bonnets of ruined cities swirl through the sky—but
what am I to you, pale country of deep faith?
Nobody, just a friend, your nettling Hungarian haunting
your princely streets with the cranberry- taste of noon in
his mouth,
and who, in his grief,
seeks a lover among your daughters because, under the
spell of the music of your leaves and light, he wants to
touch, to embrace you,
and to endure for hours at the greengrocer's the stench of
stale beets,
to bear the unbearable,
queuing up for the wildest hope.

July 1981
(William Jay Smith)

I believe it, after all, the time is not out of joint. There has never been so many creative people in Hungary as today. And what is out of joint can be put right.

God save the President and the Premier—and the poor people!

3) MESSAGE FROM TRANSYLVANIA, FROM THE PRISON OF THE FREE

I quoted earlier from András Fáy: "My fellow Hungarian!

The original character is lost in all those amends."

However, there is a pure island of the Hungarian nation, Transylvania, in Romania. The Hungarians who live there—two and a half million people, the biggest minority in Europe—are the most loyal members of our nation. Ceausescu would like to force them out of their country, to drive them to Hungary. But their unwilling spiritual leader András Sütő, The Writer refuses to leave Transylvania: it is his their land. And he does not "lower his flag", as Lajos Kassák, the writer, sometimes did, as we did at the congress of the communist party.

This year too I presented the prizes which are given each year in fourteen categories of the arts by the foundation—known as For Hungarian Art—that I set up in 1987. This year's grand prix for Hungarian art outside Hungary went to András Sütő. He is the greatest Hungarian writer today. But we were unable to welcome him once again in Hungary for the presentation ceremony. Ceausescu will not allow him out— or only if he comes *for good*, that is, if he flees from his native land, Transylvania in Romania.

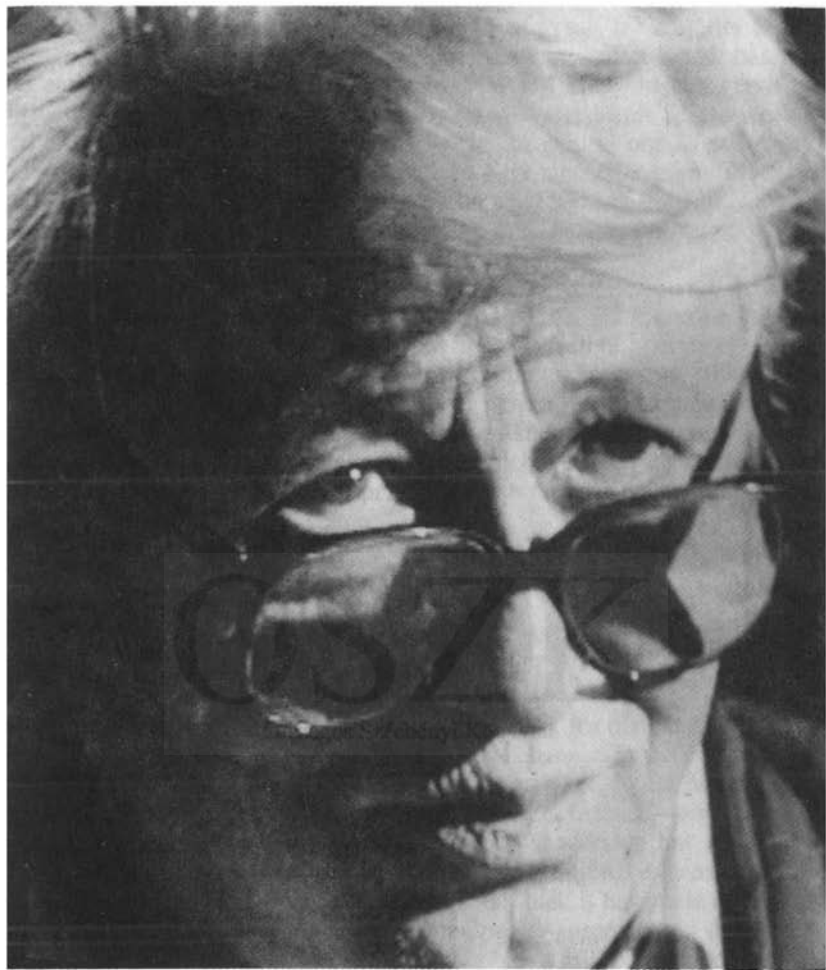
To give some idea of the suffering inflicted on András Sütő, which we who love him also feel, I would like to quote two letters. He wrote the first one to János Vincze, vice-president of the federation of the Hungarian workers in Romania—or, as they are called there: the Romanian (!) workers of Hungarian nationality. It is a cry of pain from the brilliant writer to the official. András Sütő managed to send a copy of it to us in Hungary. Please don't forget, it was in October 1989, in the brutal months of Ceausescu. Letter of tragedy. The other letter was written by myself, a few days after the presentation ceremony mentioned above, to the leading Hungarian daily paper, Népszabadság.

Here then is the letter to János Vincze:

"János Vincze, Vice-President of the National Council of Romanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality Bucharest.

Dear János Vincze,

Since for decades I drew attention, or tried to draw attention in every possible way to the dangers threatening the largest national minority in Europe, the



András Sütő

two million Hungarians in Romania, in their very ethnic existence and since, because of this, all public forums have been closed to me, the majority of my stage works have been banned and publication of my other works has not been authorized for a decade, I am forced to fall back on the genre of information. You are well aware that many texts of this nature I have written since the seventies are lying in the archives of the central organs and every single one of these has gone unanswered. So I no longer have any illusions regarding the usefulness of the genre. My hope in writing the following is merely that the words cried out in vain in the present may be preserved for a more receptive time in the future.

But why have I chosen to address this letter to you? Because you are the only active vice-president of the Council mentioned above. As everyone knows, the presidents have only acted as patrons for the festive operation of this body, while your mandate is more than merely titular. Independently of this, my words are actually intended, through your person, for the appointed body that, until the twenty-sixth of June this year was known as: National Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality, but of which we learned one day later, from communiques in the official press, that it no longer existed under this name. Fuit!

The first question then, that I, together with the hundreds of thousands of Hungarians in Romania, put to you, is:

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WORKERS OF HUNGARIAN NATIONALITY?

You could rightly reply that the question is rhetorical, for the Council has not disappeared, it has not ceased to exist, it has not changed in the composition of its members either, it has simply amended its name or, to use more sacred terms, it has undergone a conversion, or has been rechristened—and to what? To something that would indicate that the party leadership has taken into account our countless proposals regarding the organizational expansion of the Council? And in this way, even if only in a small part, it has made up for the Hungarian People's Alliance that was autocratically suspended in the fifties, in plain words, banned, an organization with a half a million members which was the embodiment of the collective nationality rights proclaimed by the constitution? Nothing of the sort.

The aspiration to transform the Council from a narrow, ceremonial assembly into a representation functioning on a democratic basis, which is elected and can thus be called to account, has remained nothing but a dream. And while all our dreams have faded away, it has become obvious that there has been an *ideological turn* in the policy of nationalities, the essence of which is: the

nationality question has been solved once and for all in our country, such a question no longer exists, consequently nationalities in the sense of yesterday no longer exist and are no longer kept on record according to the old terminology either.

Do you follow the press? The official statements? According to the ideological turn which has never been declared but which is practised in all fields, we can no longer speak of the Hungarians in Romania, of the German or Serbian nationalities, but only of social categories which, from the ethnic point of view, move on the borderline between existence and non-existence and which, in this strange transitional state are described as *Romanians of Hungarian, German or Serbian nationality*, etc.

And this is still a sign of intentions to assimilate with relative concessions! Lately however, our central press blurs the clear concept of Hungarians in Romania by openly presenting the denial of our ethnic being as pure generosity, since it is said that all citizens of this country are equal, "*regardless of who their immediate or more distant ancestors were*". (Scinteia, 4 Sept. 1988). I don't know what your opinion of this is, dear János Vincze, but there can be no doubt that even a child can understand that this formulation relegates our Hungarian identity to the past and excuses us for this former state, but refuses to acknowledge and even denies it as a present reality.

How have the nationalities in Romania reached the point where in their present state it is now only their "*immediate or more distant*" ancestors who are *incidentally* entitled to be described as ethnic groups? According to the justification given in the report of Mihály Gerő, president, which is vague but all the more revealing in its tendency, this has happened because they have already passed through "*several stages of historical development*" in the process of homogenisation proclaimed many years ago.

An amazing process in barely a decade and a half! States of historical development beyond the understanding with which the popular masses concerned have left behind their millennial ethnic- nationality existence to melt into the concept of the Romanian nation. What they failed to do over long centuries they have now done in the space of fifteen years. And an outstanding day in this metamorphosis was 27th June 1988 when it was discovered that the National Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality had given itself a new name: the Council of *Romanian Workers* of Hungarian Nationality. And as though they had reached an agreement, the Council of Workers of German Nationality did the same thing. Thereby proving that

IT IS POSSIBLE AFTER ALL TO SQUARE THE CIRCLE!

I shall not speak here, for lack of space, about the general indignation with which the Hungarian and German masses in our country received your action; suffice it to say that perhaps nobody claiming to speak on behalf of the masses has ever earned such deep contempt as the present one. But let us leave this subject and allow me to ask you: who authorized the Council which, even in the most generous spirit can only be called a narrow circle, to declare the Hungarian nationality in Romania, two million people who regard themselves as Hungarian, to be non-existent, in broad daylight, in Europe? Where, when and in what way did the masses vote for the collective decision that, as from 27th June 1988, the Hungarians in Romania, who are ethnically part of the Hungarian nation, regard their nationality and citizenship as identical, thereby enthusiastically submitting themselves, even if with a delay of two hundred years, to the nationalist demands of the Napoleonic nation state? Obviously this is a rhetorical question too. Such a pitiful example of collective self-surrender cannot be found in the whole history of the world.

But there are countless examples of the contrary!

For example, of how strongly the representatives of the Romanians in Transylvania protested at the end of the last century within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy against their assimilation into the Hungarian political nation. They well knew that all brutal attempts at assimilation begin with a change of name. We too are well aware of this. Is this a case of a loss of historical memory then? Or a pitiful attempt to support the powers that be? Don't you find it absurd that what the Romanians in Transylvania rightly protested against is now being held up before the Hungarians in Romania and the whole world as a positive, communist ideal? And is it possible that what is a virtue in one people clinging to its national identity is, on the contrary, a crime in the other? For it is no secret that those who condemn this spectacular conversion of the Council will obviously be accused of lack of patriotism, and that will be the milder judgment.

And there is no possibility for debate. So no one was able to say in public that, just as there are no Russians of Armenian nationality, no Swedes of Finnish nationality or no Germans of English nationality, it is equally impossible to speak of Romanians of Hungarian nationality since, as we all know, the adjective *Romanian* refers to an *ethnic group*, to the Romanian national speaking a Neo-Latin language. Do the Hungarians who belong to the Finno-Ugric language family speak a Neo-Latin language? Do the Saxons of Szeben speak the language of Trajan and Decebal? But who am I putting this question to? To a South American Spaniard who has just recently

found himself among us, or to a public figure who must still clearly remember the Leninist policy on nationalities proclaimed by the Romanian Communist Party?

And let me add: perhaps his own past conviction too on the matter of the rights of nationalities. But rather than asking superfluous questions, allow me to inform you and all those who in their greed for assimilation think that reality conforms to declarations of principle: the part of the Hungarian people which has been living within the framework of the Hungarian state for the past seventy years and which seeks its prosperity in the common homeland together with the Romanian people who make up the great majority of the population, despite all this remains what it was, and calls itself: *Hungarian nationality in Romania*. This mass of two million people is made up of individuals who declared themselves to be Hungarians even during the most brutal racial discrimination, and who still declare themselves to be Hungarians despite all attempts to change their name. This is not a virtue and not a crime, it is not heroism and, above all, it is not behaviour directed against anyone, it is merely and naturally: an obvious truth. Its collective existence and numbers, the nature of its settlements, its distribution, its historical past can be passed over in silence, can even be falsified, the distribution by nationality of the inhabitants of the towns and villages of Transylvania can be declared a state secret: this largest national minority in Europe exists despite all this and with every fibre of its being is determined to survive in the colourful variety of the universal world of mankind. It is all the more astonishing that your Council now arbitrarily deprives this people, known and recognized all over the world, of its identity and proclaims a mixed ethnicity that, in reality, does not exist. Compared to this, the open or cover attempt by certain historians to prove that the Székely masses, who represent a good third of the Hungarians in Romania, are in fact Romanians who were Hungarianized back in the mists of time and who must therefore be led back to the bosom of the mother nation, is nothing but a ridiculous appendage.

IS SUCH AN ATTEMPT POSSIBLE AFTER THE DEFEAT OF FASCISM?

Yes, that is what all sane people ask in connection with your declaration, well aware that the aspiration of the most varied nationalities and oppressed minorities of the world for equality is undergoing a renaissance, together with the ideal of national sovereignty. Then surely you too must know that the

assertion of human rights is a world-wide process and a reality that can be increasingly felt within the socialist block too. But if we voice the right of nationalities among these rights we draw the accusation of nationalism, when all we are declaring is what the predecessors of the Romanian people also declared: that we will preserve our national identity under all circumstances. Is that a crime? Nationalism? An obstacle to any form of unity in a socialist spirit? Isolation? Nostalgia for the past? Yes, say the fanatics of the justification of only one state language, of the only view of history that has been frozen into a state religion, of the only nation; yes, all that is nostalgia for the past, and not for the past, thousand-year-old Hungarian statehood, but rather for a more recent memory: for the genuinely democratic nationality legal system and structure of the late forties that was created in the short period of the Groza government and that by now has been largely eliminated. As regards my humble self: I tried to resist all illegal measures, not *from without*, but *from within*, referring to constitutional rights and to laws that have not been repealed right up to the present day. The same has been done by all those who, over the years, have been swept out of the Council and from other forums of public life. I am sure that if they had been present the rechristening of the Council would not have received unanimous approval. But what am I saying! Approval? As though you had perhaps submitted our new quality for approval by vote to your lackeys! Who acknowledge everything under all circumstances? And then read the pitiful texts placed in their hands? I am asking superfluous questions again. Instead, I shall close this train of thought by reminding you that this present act by the Council of Romanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality is in reality only a repetition of an earlier attempt that we had up to now attributed to the chauvinist circles of the Romanian bourgeoisie which have disappeared. Allow me to remind you of the moment in the parliament of the thirties when one of the country's leading politicians said to the Hungarian representative, György Bethlen: *"I declare in full sincerity in the name of the Romanian Government that we are believers in equality for the nationalities, but the conditio sine qua non for this is your sincere declaration that you are Romanians, and you forget that you were Hungarian citizens."*

György Bethlen did not have the audacity of today's council members, so he did not declare, either sincerely or deceitfully that the minority Hungarians are Romanians. In this way he did not win government supporters for an equality that can arise from the pitiful humiliation of collective self-surrender. In contrast, what have you won with this action that more than one council member has dared to describe as a rational compromise, *horribile dictu*, as a wise tactical move in the manner of G. Bethlen? Assuming that you dare to face the reality, you too can see for yourself that you have won nothing but

the contempt of the Hungarian masses in Romania, and let me add: my human-thinking Romanian fellow writers have expressed their sincere sympathy on this occasion, at the sight of such nationality representation.

After all this the question rightly arises: why would such a phantom nationality as, according to your declaration, the Romanians of Hungarian nationality, or even, more recently, the Romanians of Hungarian or obscure origin, need an unequivocally Hungarian native language culture?

Why indeed? The ministry for education has been asking for decades, and accordingly injects into the brains of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian children the strict dogma that they too are the direct descendants of the Daco-Romans. And why? Because it has always been a fundamental condition for the training of janissaries that all awareness of their origin must be eradicated from their souls while they are still children. Then why did Mihály Gerő, president, declare at the recent plenary session of the renamed Council: "In Romania the unimpeded use of the native language, the development of the distinctive culture of the nationalities is not merely a constitutional principle to which special importance is attached, but it is a tangible reality of wide impact that applies to education and, in general, to cultural and intellectual life?"

Yes, these are all principles, and laws too, that have long been proclaimed, with a dual role: on the one hand so that any post office manager or personnel officer can ride roughshod over them all, and on the other hand so that they can be cited in case of any criticism. Endlessly! Until the final solution, until the nationalities disappear. And I could marshal an epic body of facts on a Balzacian scale to refute the above bombastic claim made in such awkward terms. Statistics could be more convincing. If—with the exception of a few elementary figures - nationality statistics were not a state secret. What our orators repeat times out of number nowadays, has long marked only the remnants

OF A NATIONALITIES SUPERSTRUCTURE THAT ONCE EXISTED.

According to the claim, the use of the native language is unimpeded. The "tangible reality" however, shows that the possibility of speaking in the native language in public has long been banished from all fields of public life: from the meetings of the party and mass organizations, from the production conferences in industry, and even from the body that, it is claimed, was set up to represent the Hungarians in Romania. The Romanian Radio's very modest Hungarian programs in Marosvásárhely and Kolozsvár were, in fact, set up in the spirit of the unimpeded use of the native language. And where

are they now? Who gave any reason and when for their closing down as though under orders? Romanian Television's three-hour weekly transmission for the nationalities, in German as well as Hungarian, was introduced in the spirit of the unimpeded use of the native language. And where is it now? Its banning was "justified" by the energy crisis, the possibility of its reintroduction is prevented by the one country one nation principle. Should I raise as an example the nationality television programmes of the neighbouring countries? But I know the answer already: there is no model of socialism of universal validity. But what has the banning of nationality radio and television broadcasts to do with socialism?

I have so much to say I hardly know where to start. My problem is not what I should mention to refute the so-called unimpeded use of the native language, but what I should leave out here for lack of space. Personal dramas? Cases that have ended in tragedy because of the use of the native language? The daily increasing and in some cases already vandal manifestations in village and town, in restaurants and on trains of the majority nationalism? Or in the schools where, in order to make the learning of the Romanian language more intensive, Hungarian children have been forbidden to speak Hungarian among themselves in the breaks? Or should I fail to mention now that in numerous cases young men on national service have been beat into cripples in the army for speaking in their native language? Should I leave it to others to tell how, also in the army, books in Hungarian were burnt, including a work by my humble self that was also published in the Romanian language by Kriterion of Bucharest? Shall I describe for you the party activist who, in a frenzy, tore down and stamped on the bilingual sign, Deschis-Nyitva (Open), on a theatre ticket office, as though it were a terrible instigation against the order of the state?

It is impossible here to mention all the increasing signs of xenophobia fanned in the spirit of national fanaticism. I could tell you enough stories for a tragicomic novel about the officials who believe they are serving their national mission by banning any chance appearance together of the red, white and green colours of the Hungarian flag, such as on textile clothing, in city flowerbeds, on stage scenery, on coloured mock-ups of apartment house blocks. And if you were to tell me not to mix flippancy with the serious things I have to say, I will send you the novel written by an author who holds, among other things, that he does not feel like eating in a restaurant in Marosvásárhely because the chauvinistic behaviour of the Hungarian waiters is intolerable. And the principal manifestation of this is that they serve red tomatoes, white radish and green peppers with his roast lamb.

One could laugh at this if xenophobia were not a disease. In this case, as you can see, it is a writers' disease, a journalist's disease, but let me add: a disease

of dilettantes. The best of Romanian literature of yesterday and today has nothing to do with this. The Romanian colleagues whom I esteem also regard the novel mentioned above, entitled *Ademenirea*, to be rubbish. But who are they to publish such rubbish nowadays with the subsidy of the state? I believe that in their mentality they are the same as those who banned Hungarian songs and poetry reading in Hungarian from our school ceremonies, such as the graduation ceremonies; who do not allow the art shows in Transylvania to be opened in two languages; who banned the printing of graduation cards by the students this year; who do not allow the use of the name of our institution in Hungarian on posters of the Hungarian branches of our theatres; who, in Marosvásárhely, for example have had even the last signs in Hungarian scraped off the shopwindows with razor blades; who considered that after 40 years is it now intolerable to have such street names as Ady, Vörösmarty, János Arany, Lajos Kossuth, etc. (Outstanding figures of Hungary's history.—L. G.)

Nowadays many people ask me, personally and in writing: why, as the editor-in-chief of *Uj Élet* ("New Life"), I accept the humiliating constraint that we cannot print our place names in our native language. This is a stigma branded on the language itself. This is true. And I have protested against it—in vain. So, together with all my colleagues, I bear this stigma myself, just as Sándor Kacsó, Gábor Gaál, Károly Kós or Aladár Kuncz did at the end of the thirties. In their time they hoped that with the victory of the democratic ideals, linguistic tolerance would also be revived. And law decree No. 86 dated 7th February 1945, of the Romanian Government's Nationality Statute did put an end to the discrimination against the languages of the nationalities. Paragraph 13 of the Statute states: "*Daily papers and periodicals appearing in languages other than Romanian may name the place in which they are published and other localities of the country in the language of the nationality concerned.*"

And we exercised this right for 43 years. Now we have lost it again. If you, as the acting vice-president of the nationality council, had raised your voice against this flagrant injustice, then you could be identified with the János Vincze who, as an underground communist, was sent to prison in the kingdom of Romania.

The most obvious refutation of the unimpeded use of our native language is the regulation issued this year forbidding the nationality press in our country to use the Hungarian and German form of place names. What reason was given? None. On the basis of what law? There is no such law. However, the old laws that annulled the regulations brought in this direction in the infamous time of Antonescu fascist diktator, are still valid *in theory*. But only in theory.

Why not in practice too? Because according to some people, who have never been able to accept, either the bourgeois, or the socialist or even less the communist principles of equality, these laws were nothing but concessions made to the nationalism of the minorities. Does this mean that the mere names of the 600, 800 or even 1000-year-old settlements of the Hungarians or the German population in Romania have conserved some sort of nationalism? Others claim that these terms injure the national self-esteem of the Romanian people, slandering the Romanian people in saying so. The Romanian people never regarded it as injurious that while Eminescu stayed in the town of *Tirgu Mures* (*Romanian name*), Petőfi set out from *Marosvásárhely* (*Hungarian name of the same-Hungarian town*) for the Fehéregyháza battlefield—to die for world freedom. The Romanian people never regarded it as injurious that, while their best sons united in *Sibiu* in the spirit of the national ideal, a man by the name of Bruckenthal collected highly valuable art treasures in *Hermannstadt*. Countless examples could be listed, if it is at all possible to put forward rational arguments against an absurd ban. And if I think that in Europe, the continent that was the cradle of humanism, at the end of the twentieth century, I have to protest in my native language in which I am prevented from exercising my most fundamental rights, against the racial discriminations in South Africa, then I am almost ready to agree with those aestheticians who consider that the absurd is the only modern form in drama.

ON THE ELIMINATION OF A SCHOOL NETWORK

What do the reports of the president constantly claim? That the development of the distinctive culture of the nationalities is also a “tangible reality”. This was in fact the case until, simultaneously with the dissolution of the Hungarian Popular Alliance, the theoreticians of cultural policy sounded a warning over the danger of the isolation of the nationalities, and made our careerist Hungarians sound it too. Isolation! they said in the Ministry for Education and eliminated our independent network of Hungarian schools that, up to then, had been regarded as a democratic achievement. Isolationism! and they revised the principles justifying the foundation of the Bolyai State University in the Hungarian Language at Kolozsvár, then merged it with the Romanian Babes University. It became the Bases-Bolyai, and even later, it was neither Babes nor Bolyai, only the Cluj-Napoca University where teaching in Hungarian was practically totally ended. The fact that of all the many disciplines, barely a few are still lingering on in our native language makes no difference to the essence. It was under the banner of the struggle

against isolation that all our important educational institutions were subsequently merged, then fully or partly eliminated. We have often listed all this to you and the other members of the leadership at bureau meetings of the Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality. This was the fate, among others, of the Gábor Bethlen Teachers Training College at Nagyenyed, the Agricultural College at Kolozsvár, the Hungarian Arts Institute (with music and fine arts faculties) at Kolozsvár, the Teachers College at Marosvásárhely; after 400-500 years of existence, our colleges looked on as the pride of our cultural history, ceased to exist in this way, including the Reformed Church College of Kolozsvár, the Reformed Church College of Marosvásárhely, the Majláth College of Gyulafehérvár, the Mikó College of Sepsiszentgyörgy, the Wesselényi College of Zilah, together with other similar bastions of minority culture in Várad, Szatmár, Arad and Temesvár, Csikszereeda, etc. That these have not ceased to exist but have only been transformed to meet the requirements of the age? In fact they have only been transformed and are being constantly changed. They operate with fewer and fewer classes taught in Hungarian each year, while the number of Romanian classes are being increased even in places—especially in the Székely region—where this is required by the interest of only 4-5 students of Romanian nationality. In the spirit of the infamous *numerus clausus* vast numbers of Hungarian students, whose numbers amounted to around 40,000 twenty years ago, are being forced out of the nationality quotas set and obliged to enrol in Romanian classes. How many such students are there today? That is a state secret. So much so, that this year the printing of the graduation cards containing the class rolls was banned in a number of county seats. For they betray the rapid loss of ground of education in the native language. But even in the absence of class rolls, this is reflected in such phenomena as, for example, the gradual elimination of lectures in a number of disciplines in the Hungarian language at the medical university of Marosvásárhely, regarded for many years as a “nationality achievement”, and simultaneously with this, the reduction of the proportion of college students of Hungarian nationality by 70% this year compared to the original level; the ban on entry examinations in the native language in all the other colleges in the country, as a consequence of which tens of thousands of panic-stricken parents are transferring their children to Romanian schools at lower levels too so that they can sit for the entry examinations with a better chance. And growing numbers are beginning to seek this chance right from kindergarten level. These parents have long been experiencing themselves the application of the conception that was formulated many years ago at the level of the state leadership in the form of

a question: can the immigrants to America demand Hungarian, Serbian or any other so-called native- language college in Chicago? Isn't it their obligation to adapt to the English-speaking society?

That is a radically new conception in judging our nationality existence and our rights. I could say that the question itself was more than revealing. But our so-called immigration to this land took place not two hundred but more than a thousand years ago and our ancestors found themselves not in an Eastern European America of the time, but in the Carpathian Basin which over the stormy centuries became the scene of independent ethnic groups and national cultures, but was not a melting pot of the peoples. So if I raise an example that the beginnings of the school network of the Hungarians in Transylvania reach back to the 14th century and the traditions of our college-level institutions of the 16th century, I am not boasting of our ancient origins, but merely showing the complete inapplicability of the American parallel mentioned. But our arguments, complaints and protests have had not the slightest influence on the school policy, the determined aim of which has long been clear to everyone: the complete elimination of the nationality educational network set up in the time of the Groza government.

Over a period of many years this has largely happened. Without your ever having openly criticized it. In the course of the silent but stubborn practice that operates with countless different tactics, the scope of teaching in the native language has been largely restricted to the field of primary education. I say *largely*, because as few secondary and higher- level quotas still remain which, in case of necessity can be used as examples. Their proportions compared to the real needs could only be shown by the statistical survey of the number of Hungarian children of school age compared to the number of places provided for them by the "nationality quota" set by the ministry. In the absence of statistics, hitherto the now banned matriculation cards had shown that, for example, in the towns of the Székely region, 90 per cent of the students in the classes taught in Romanian are of Hungarian nationality. Freedom of choice, the cynical brains in the ministry for education say to that. No! That is the choice of compulsion. Is that what the president's report calls the "real right and possibility to study in the native language of the nationalities *too*?"

In this consciously vague formulation, the misleading role of the little word *too* remains, even if this "real right" is justified by only a single child. The arrival of this state of affairs as soon as possible is being hastened by such measures as:

—the elimination of the working groups editing textbooks in Kolozsvár and Várád

—the mass placing of students and teachers who do not understand a word of Hungarian into the towns and villages of the Székely region, and in many places in such a way that teachers of Hungarian nationality are dismissed, or are transferred to distant smaller regions far from their homes;

—the placement of students who have graduated in Hungarian from Kolozsvár University, on the pretext of their second subjects— which are Romanian, French, or German and English—to the remotest Eastern and Southern counties of the country, from where thousands of Hungarian intellectuals have been trying for decades now to find a way of returning to their Transylvanian native land;

—the transfer of history teachers of Hungarian nationality to jobs that do not correspond at all to their qualifications, with the *open justification* that the history of Romania can only be taught by persons of *Romanian nationality*. I ask you: has the latter nothing to do with racism, with the mentality of first and second-rate citizenship?

I could go on listing examples.

Instead, let me close my experiences of educational matters with an epic scene. I was a witness when a Hungarian teacher from Kovászna dismissed from her post, in tears embraced the Romanian teacher from Bucharest who had been appointed to her place, and who said to her: forgive me, you know very well that I am sinning against you involuntarily. My appointment here is just as strict an order as your dismissal.

I am sure you will not be surprised to learn that the Hungarian teacher from Kovászna ended up as a dissident, in Sweden.

And how many more are there who are waiting for their passports and their final departure, for such reasons!

And how many are there who, for similar reasons, undertake the mortal dangers of crossing the frontier illegally! I say similar reasons, but what I mean is the legally unjustified house searches that have been conducted regularly, for years, mainly in the homes of intellectuals. When, on the grounds of a search for gold, books on history are confiscated from medical professors of European fame, from writers and teachers; when a few newspapers and periodicals from Hungary are sufficient cause for police harassment and human humiliation; when a “Hungarian coat” with hussar-style braiding is sufficient cause for beating by the authorities.

But it is more important than all these for me to ask you now, respected János Vincze:

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE PROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION?

It exists in the parliament. At the level of the county, town and village councils too. The press informs us about this at the time of each elections. The way our representatives serve their offices is not a univoquely nationality problem—except for the members of the Council of Romanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality. That is, those who speak not on behalf of electors of mixed native tongue, Romanians, Hungarians and Germans, but on all occasions exclusively as the representatives of the Hungarians in Romania, about its “never before experiences prosperity”, the “unprecedented flourishing of its culture” and similar things. But, in contrast with this, what is the proportional representation in the actual exercise of power in the counties where the population is at least 50 per cent, or in cases 80 per cent of Hungarian nationality? You know better than I do that there are now very few secretaries of Hungarian nationality in the county seats and in the operative party organs of the towns described as municipalities.

I shall not speak here of the state police force or the security organs, but merely of the directors of plants and factories who have been replaced on a mass scale, the secondary school principals, the “replaced” heads of commercial, health and all kinds of state supervisory bodies, libraries, museums and social organizations, whose successors may be better or may be worse, but they are certainly not to blame for the fact that they do not know the local nationality language. However, we have the right to call to account those who appointed them, for respect of the provision of paragraph 22 of the Constitution, that in areas inhabited by nationalities, officials “*who know the language and way of life of the local population*” must be appointed. This constitutional requirement has long been forgotten, like so many other laws, the mere mention of which produces only an ironic smile in potentates of all ranks. But a taxation official still finds it easier to make himself understood in the language of figures than the theatre director who does not know either the language or the culture, the contemporary or classical authors of the Hungarian section entrusted to him; or the museum director who treats our 1848 relics as though they were so much bric-a-brac bought on the flea market and relegates the masterpieces of Transylvanian Hungarian painting to the cellar. I could tell you a separate little horror story about the arbitrary closing down of the Imre Nagy gallery in Marosvásárhely, in violation of a state contract.

Now, as I list all these things, I can almost hear the well-known official answer: nationality allegiance is not an essential question in our society. What is important is that talented leaders should emerge to the fore. Alright! But

who believes that the two million Hungarians in Romania are able to "produce" only "replaceable" officials, and only insignificant numbers of people who can be appointed to responsible posts in the proportions set by the law. And without the least intention to undervalue anyone, by responsible person here I do not mean the head of a bricklaying brigade, but, for example, the secretary of state in charge of nationality education.

DUTY TO OURSELVES, OR SINE QUA NON? THOSE WHO DO NOT SPEAK ROMANIAN CANNOT EXERCISE THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS?

These questions are being asked now with deep and not unjustified concern and even alarm by the Hungarian masses in Romania, especially the elder generations, on reading such sentences in the report of the President presented in the Council as: "*For Romanian citizens of Hungarian nationality learning the Romanian language...is far from being a simple duty, but is one of the conditions... for the full exercise of all civil rights...*"

What does this mean? In the course of all the language campaigns so far the emphasis was placed on the self-interest of the nationality in order to avoid the suspicion of any form of constraining pressure and also in view of the fact that not even the neo-racist aspirations can count on success in Europe today with a slogan of inequality of the languages. In this way, the question of acquiring the best possible proficiency in the Romanian language was linked mainly to school education. Among other things, with the pretext that even at the lowest level the teaching of the history of Romania was not allowed in the native language, and we never succeeded in persuading the ministry for education of the pedagogical impossibility of this. Things proceeded as they still do today and at the most the parents commented on the consequences of the absurdities when—especially in the Székely villages—even in the late evening and dawn hours, often with the help of relatives, leafing the dictionary (if they have one?), they try to puzzle out the 17th century Romanian chronicle set as a lesson for the youngsters.

But on this occasion something quite different is involved. Namely, that learning the Romanian language "is far from being a simple duty" such as, let me add, paying taxes, military service or the respect of public morals. It is more than that: it is one of the *conditions*, the sine qua non "*for the full exercise of all civil rights*". Let us consider what follows logically from this. Does this mean that for the nationalities the human rights guaranteed in the Constitution are linked to the knowledge of the Romanian language? Without this then, there is no right to work? No right to vote? No equality before the law? It would appear that the editors of the text of the president's report have grown tired of proclaiming the principle of voluntarism and the persuasive

tolerance of self-interest; let the stubborn Székely veteran note well, once and for all: he should not dare even to step outdoors without a knowledge of the Romanian language. And however much they may have exaggerated with this: in reality they have sanctified a practice that is being applied on an ever greater scale. Namely, that thousands of matriculated students are failed at entry examinations on different levels for which they could have sat a few years ago in their native language, on the pretext that they do not know the Romanian language, or do not know it sufficiently well. Here is one of the contradictions, as a consequence of which the *right* to study in the native language is negated by a so-called *duty*. And if you were to warn me now that I am committing the error of false generalization, then I could tell you a whole series of stories about the navvies who were not hired for pick and shovel work on the regulation of the Maros River on the grounds that they did not know Romanian. The written reply of the work supervisor that they were not interpreters but labourers did nothing to help them. (I can provide you with photo-copies of the written documents involved in one such edifying dispute.)

To sum up my train of thought: the above quoted text of the president's report is objectively nothing more than the open denial of the constitutional laws adopted on the equality of the nationalities.

In concluding my letter, allow me to make a few remarks.

ON THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCE OF THE NATIONALITY GRIEVANCES

that has not only been mentioned so far in passing. This is the series of dramas of the mass emigration. Because you too must know that as regards the Hungarians in Romania it has long been more than a matter of individuals requesting their final departure from the country for the purpose of family reunification. If the Council of Romanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality had wished to inform with responsibility the party and state leadership on the grave questions of the state of the nationalities today, it should have spoken above all of this phenomenon. I am well aware, of course, that the attitude that if we do not speak about something it does not exist is still a factor existing and acting in our public life. Reality has long laughed in the face of this variant of the policy of burying one's head in the sand. Laughed? It is refuted daily by a flood of tears at the railway stations when, beside the containers loaded with their furniture, family libraries and all the odds and ends they can salvage, parents bid farewell to their children, and brothers to brothers, for these family amputations can be regarded as permanent. This is

the third major wave of emigration of the Hungarians in Romania in half a century, and perhaps the most dramatic, because its potential scale is immeasurable. For the number of those legally submitting applications to leave for good is far from being identical with the mass of those gradually forming the intention to emigrate. You should know in view of your office that there is a county seat where, according to the estimate of eye-witnesses, on a single day close to one thousand persons wanted to appear before the emigration committee with their petition to leave for good. And does it matter that the majority of them are rejected in the first instance? That they are qualified as ungrateful and even as traitors? They besiege the authority with their respectful petition—in which they make no mention of their real reasons—until it is finally approved and, leaving behind their relatively good material circumstances, houses and loved ones, they set out into the unknown, accepting all the tribulations of beginning again, even living in waggons with small children. What is this János Vincze? Let us use plain words: *mass flight from the thousand-year-old native land*. Flight—illegally too, facing the mortal dangers of escape.

And why? You would no doubt say that these people are the victims of materialism based on vain hopes, the desire for adventure, misinformation. This may be possible in part. But those I have spoken with—hundreds of people—revealed tragic facts, seemingly incredible examples of human indignities, admitting that the reasons for their departure were far from the same as those they raised before the emigration committees; not the old and sick aunt, not the deeply beloved third cousin and the inherited apartment, but fear for their children's future.

In face of what? The education policy which, after so many cautious tactical manoeuvres, now openly and unscrupulously deprives more and more masses of students of Hungarian nationality of even the remaining possibilities of studying in their native language. It is quite incomprehensible that teachers transferred into the Hungarian educational units that had been more or less still functioning, teachers who do not understand a single word in the students' native language, can arbitrarily cast aside the Hungarian language textbooks that had been used previously, as unnecessary, "nationalist" junk. Who empowers them to do this, and why do they not need to fear any calling to account? Because according to the indications, the end justifies any means; even the arbitrary violation of educational norms that, in theory, are still valid.

And what else do the parents of schoolchildren say? That their descendants will become good Romanian specialists in vain if they remain stunted semi-illiterates in their national language and culture, and if all that is drummed into their consciousnesses from the history of their people is that

they are none other than the descendants of Asian hordes who razed Dacian cities. Public education organized along the lines of the American melting pot is the most effective instrument of assimilation, the use of which in many places already begins in the kindergartens, and even in the day-care centres. Compared to these, all other reasons given for emigration may appear of secondary importance. Although the regulation of the State Council No.225/1974 referring to the provision of accommodation which imposes fines of 5,000 to 15,000 Lei on those who infringe it and which above all affects the Hungarian and German nationality, is not an insignificant thing. For members of both these nationalities have extensive blood relations with Hungarians abroad and with German citizens respectively apart from the direct relations between parents and siblings. Quite apart from the moral norms of European civilization, this fact in itself placed hundreds and thousands of people every day before a painful dilemma: can they provide accommodation, even for a few hours, for people who are not immediate relations, for friends, for mothers who are strangers with sick children in dire need, without risking having to pay as much as their earnings for half a year in case of the maximum fine, for their humanism? Despite my inadequate knowledge of legal history, I would dare to say that this "accommodation law" is without parallel.

And to continue: it is not an insignificant matter that as a result of the greatest settlements of outsiders into the towns of Transylvania in all time, the sons of the local Hungarian population are transferred on a mass scale to remote counties inhabited solely by Romanians, while those who refuse to accept this are subjected to the penalties of the law on vagrancy. In the birthplace of our fathers and grandfathers, some of them have received as an answer: "If we have hired a hundred Romanians, we will hire you as the hundred and first." And what is the explanation for the fact that masses of young people who have graduated from specialized schools in their native towns are directed to distant counties under the pretext of a shortage of jobs, while other school-leavers are brought into their places from those same distant counties with new jobs provided for them? The explanation generally rejects the natural feelings of "provincial fetters", and the result is the artificial breakdown of the ethnic frameworks of the nationalities. We learned about this when in the early seventies, hearing that the population of the Székely region is "compact Hungarian", a person in a responsible position in the party and state leadership declared: "That is not a healthy state of affairs. We will take measures to ensure that it is not compact." And those measures are being taken. This is why it is impossible to divorce the settlement reorganization plans from the conception that the compact Hungarian nature of the Székely region is "not healthy". The rapid change in the ethnic composition of

Marosvásárhely, Csíkszereda and Sepsiszentgyörgy indicates the process of its "treatment". How? For example, the proportion of the Hungarian population in Marosvásárhely has fallen from the 80% of 1955 to around 40% at present. Is there any need for comment?

I mentioned a few of the reasons for the final departure of our compatriots that they do not dare to proclaim publicly. Some people have tried. And they were sent away immediately together with their emigration petition. And those who consider that they must remain in their ancient native land under all circumstances are asking: since we have been proclaimed Romanians officially too, is there any way for us to remain as Hungarians in this country? Is there any antidote to the widespread, mass fear?

We can firmly claim that there is.

It is not a miracle cure, and above all it is not the kind of historian's legend that is being spread about nowadays, according to which it is not so certain that in our more distant origin we are *ethnically* Hungarians.

The principal antidote to the efforts to emigrate would be the renewed, and consistent, practical application of a very simple, clear plank in party policy. This is: *"It follows from the fact that the nation still has long prospects, that the existence of the nationalities also has long prospects."* And to continue: *"As I said before, these nationalities will continue to have their own clear and well-defined place and role, and for a long while to come they will preserve their own special character, just like the nations."*

Do you remember those sentences?

They are from a speech in which the theoretical clarification of the relationship between the Romanian nation and the nationalities living together with it in the common homeland, was followed by the enumeration of their fundamental human rights. These included the right to study in the native language *at all levels and in all fields of education*.

The speech, that was received with loud and long applause, also appeared as a publication; I draw it to your attention. The title on its cover is: *Nicolae Ceausescu: Address to the plenary session of the National Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality, on 12th March 1971*.

This speech was published as a basic document of the nationality policy of the party and state leadership. Among others, it includes the statement that the *native* language quotas in college education must be expanded, *"so that*

young people can choose freely what school they wish to attend and in which language they wish to study!" And do you remember what else was said? *"It is our duty...to create the appropriate material basis, to provide the necessary textbooks, so that the young people can study in the language they know best."* And we interpreted this to mean that the Hungarian child naturally knows his own native language, the national language best, and the same applies in the case of German or Serbian. In addition, the well-known Leninists thesis was also quoted, according to which the majority nationalism is the most dangerous, and let me add: especially under circumstances where people of the majority are the leaders and the minorities are the led.

But much water has flown down the Danube since then. The measures that would have applied the above-mentioned party policy plank in practice were not taken. In contrast, under the ideological cover of homogenization, there has been a strengthening of all the aspirations aimed at assimilating the nationalities, as distinct ethnic groups, into the nation of the state at a forced pace. It has become perfectly clear that the "long prospects" of the nationalities were measured in years and these can now be regarded as closed. This is what the shameful self-surrender of the Council of Workers of Hungarian Nationality would have us realise, a self-surrender without precedent in the history of any of the national minorities in Europe.

And since it is not possible to raise our voices against it, many people both here and abroad consider that this Council is the genuine representative of the Hungarians in Romania. It is not. Its present shameful role will be mentioned for generations. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren will cast down their eyes at the mention of predecessors who, despite their best convictions, out of common servility or fear for their careers, proclaimed the opposite of all that it would have been their elementary duty to say, to bring to the attention of the leading forums of the country.

In conclusion, allow me to repeat my strong opinion: the process of national emigration on an ever growing scale that is catastrophic for us can only be halted by the practice of a renewed nationality policy based on the principles of the recognition of the collective rights of the nationalities, on cultural self-determination, on recognition of the fact that, just like the nation, the nationality is also an undeniable social-historical category, a well-defined ethnic entity that wishes to preserve its distinctive, collective individuality on the basis of fundamental human rights. This desire and will is now being drowned in the mass flight and there is no one to appeal to those who are departing: stop and think it over! You will sing in tears: back, back, back, there is no way back! But even if there were anyone to speak: the words are of no help. The only help can come from measures that eliminate the underlying causes radically and in time. Before the remnants of those who

remain can also say: *fuimus Troes!* My hope, seeking its last refuge, tells me that even if we are reduced in numbers, we will not suffer the fate of the people of Ilium. Time is bringing encouraging signs.

Yours sincerely,
András Sütő

When András Sütő wrote this letter in October 1988, I expressed the hope in my paper, Magyar Ifjúság (Hungarian Youth) that the Ceausescu regime would soon collapse and that the Hungarians who had been forced to flee to Hungary would soon be able to return to their native land. Now, a year later, I am forced to observe with sorrow that not only are they unable to return, but that András Sütő is no longer allowed to pay a friendly visit to us. His situation and my personal respect for him can be seen in the letter that I published in a Hungarian newspaper in mid-November, and in what I said on Hungarian Television, in the hope that we can reach him and our Hungarian brothers at least in this way. Because we know that they, prisoners in Ceausescu's jail, are free in their hearts and that the Conducator will disappear. Here is my letter:

DARK ROOM IN THE EUROPEAN HOUSE

(In our Saturday issue we published a communique from the National Press Service—without indicating the source—under the title: András Sütő Harassed. Lajos Gubcsi, chairman of the Hungarian Foundations Association, sent the following reflection to our editorial office in response):

“I read with sorrow the article on the harassment of András Sütő, obviously published anonymously out of necessity. It is quite possible that at exactly the same time on Friday evening in the National Theatre as we were paying tribute to the exceptional role played by András Sütő—and presented to his son the award intended for him—the editors of Népszabadság were preparing for publication this report on the unjust and brutal campaign in Romania against the great writer. We were unable to greet András Sütő in the National Theatre at the presentation ceremony of the awards For Hungarian Art, either last year or this year. Even though we made every effort this year too, so that he could be here. But the border is still a good few steps away. Arbitrary rule is still raging—perhaps until it destroys itself in its self-consuming fury. But until then—in the words of András Sütő—“it will trample on a hundred flowers in its path”.

The Romanian postal services did not deliver my telegrams of invitation sent to András Sütő, because “the addressee is unknown”. In vain the Hungarian

postal services repeated my phone calls night after night, sometimes until dawn. But I knew that he was waiting at home for our call, so that he could dictate at least a few words, a message of greeting to the presentation ceremony. I knew that he was waiting, for the phone call reached him once, one single time. Before I could even say the word Budapest he cried: "What planet or satellite are you talking from? How did your call reach me?" His unexpected joy said a great deal. And then we agreed that I would ring again soon and he would dictate his message. The writer is not a journalist. The writer does not improvise. And then—the calls did not reach him and there was no one to answer the phone.

So, on the 10th November, not only his person but also his words were absent from the theatre. As a poor consolation, I would like to publish here in writing the few words that I read in the theatre and the television on behalf of the board of trustees, explaining the reasons for the award. For what is committed to writing is more lasting than spoken words.

"There is surely no other person in the lands of the Hungarians whose absence so painfully expresses his greatness than András Sütő, whose absence this evening is an indication of his giant stature. More than anyone else, he is a symbol of the Hungarian people wherever they may live. His loyalty and survival, even under unjust circumstances, is a symbol of European creation. Few people have done as much as he has to replace heated confrontation with the spirit of outstretched hands at the foot of the Carpathians. The words Gyula Illyés said of him are more and more true: he is one of the greatest consolations of Hungarian literature today."

Országos Széchyeyi Könyvtár

SUMMONS

"Oh Magyars, stand beside your land
Unshaken, loyal, true!
Here is your crib, your future grave
Which tends and covers you.

There is no other place for you
On earth, beneath the sky,
May fortune bless or break you down,
You must live here and die.

This is the land where many times
Your fathers' blood was shed;
This is the land, a thousand years
Have buried all your dead.

Here Árpád's valiant armies fought
To build your fatherland;
Here were the chains of serfdom torn
By Hunyad's mighty hand.

Here, Liberty, your blood-stained flag
Was carried on ahead;
During the lasting wars our best
Have here been stricken dead.

In spite of many adverse years
And after every strife,
In number less but never crushed,
Our nation is alive.

Oh nations' country, mighty world!
Our people proudly cry:
"A thousand years of aches and pains
Now want to live or die!"

It cannot be that all in vain
So many hearts have bled,
That for their fatherland in vain
These men have fallen dead.

It cannot be that mind and strength
And every sacred will
Have withered forth for vain desires
Beneath an evil ill.

A better age arrives - it must.
It shall arrive again;
For this a fervent prayer is prayed
By millions of our men.

Magnificent when Death must come
Shall be our final end,
When at the burial, in blood,
A country must descend.

That grave in which a nation lies
All nations will surround,
And millions shall with tearful eyes
Bewail a nation's mound.

Oh Magyars, stand beside your land,
Unshaken, loyal, true!
Here is your crib, your future grave
Which tends and covers you.

There is no other place for you
On earth, beneath the sky,
May fortune bless or break you down,
You must live here and die."

(Translated by Joseph Grosz
and W. Arthur Boggs)

VI. MARCHING ON

Kassák—in verse—could lower his flags in the evenings, and on the night of the 9th of October I myself felt that I would do the same and for good. This brought me great calm. The unasked-for tension of the past few days seemed to burst out of me. I felt great peace and tranquillity. I knew: I would remain on the Left till I die and since all such terms are relative, I would be on the Left in the sense that the country people is of the Left. And I would maintain my communistic plans—for others. If they ask for them.

During two hours I spent sleeping till early in the morning everything dozed off in me.

And then unexpected situations came up. In the beginning only sporadically later at a faster pace different pieces of news, remarks, despairs and appeals came flying at me.

That week I visited a few counties, and I was visited from others. By my old, well-known friends or by people hardly known to me but sharing the same principles.

This is how, by chance and the first the idea of a Hungarian book came into my mind—and also the binding commitment on October 13. I believed that I owed this last big effort to members of my family who had had to miss me so often during the last two months, and who had known nothing about my whereabouts or what I was doing; to my old friends whom I may have lost and to my new friends whom I might meet in the future; to my party that I joined as a university student at the age of 22 amidst a five-hour-long debate about me and where I had stirred up debates ever since—because I liked the possibility of public activity arising from the party, though I had never wanted to make it my living. And I also owed a debt to another feeling. This came into life abruptly in mid-October when I started to dictate the first lines of the first book. In January I published an English, in February a German version of this issue.

Mid-october I made a simple and quick decision. Brought about by an inner lack. You can read the rest. Here it is.

POPULART DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE, Oktober 18. 1989. THESES OF THE DRAFT-PROGRAM

The Popular Democratic Alliance formulates and represents its program *within well defined contours* with the aim of bringing personalities into a political situation by strengthening them in their individuality and sovereignty through its systematic program-creating activity. These personalities have the force to shape communities on the basis of this program.

The PDA is not neither electora, nor party. It is a program alliance. It wishes to serve exclusively the social, political, economic, social welfare and cultural development of the nation, of the people—the working people of the countryside and suburban Budapest, in particular.

It considers the force of the *people's writers* and their ideals that appeared between the late thirties and late forties and having an influence even today, as its spiritual source. In our national history it considers March 15. 1848 to be the most important national day. It does so because the events of that day symbolize the struggle for independence and *freedom* of the Hungarian nation, its power to bring about *revolutionary* changes and its endless efforts for *reform* made in the interest of persistent renewal.

strategic questions of the country's *future*. In the process of adopting the theses of the Draft-Program we certainly count on the spiritual power, and support of our citizens living here and of Hungarians living abroad. The PDA lays down *two conditions* to its members, that is to its individual personalities: **outstanding** individual, professional activity and its acknowledgement; strictly **ethical** individual and community life. The PDA is a alliance perfectly free from ideology, thus—on the basis of the above criteria—a catholic priest, the officer, soldier of the people's army can equally become its member. It by no means wishes to operate at places of employment.

I.

1) First and foremost we believe it inevitable that the country consider the early creation, strengthening and functioning of the **self-governments** appearing in the amended **constitution** and guaranteed by **legislation**, to be the pillar of democratic transformation, of the pluralistic society and of the

sovereignty of citizens. Self-government is the perfect autonomy of sovereign citizens organized along particular interests in different *settlements* on the one hand, and *independent* of settlements on the other. It is a system of power matching that of parliamentary democracy. It is the direct democratic pillar of the relationship between the state and its citizens, an indispensable element of the dynamic balance of power, the elected representation of citizens organized along local and other interests. It exercises *ownership rights* over units of nationalized property falling into its competence. The material conditions of its functioning should be guaranteed directly through the system of *taxation*. Our proposal in elaborated form shall be presented at the session of the National Assembly to commence October 17, 1989.

The purpose of our move is that the Assembly in amending the Constitution should take into account and give room for the *legal, economic, and civic* aspects of the self-government in the Constitution. The Act on self-government should already become effective in the first half of next year, even before the *municipal elections*, in order to hold these elections also in the interest of sovereignty, autonomous self-government and thus to *represent the party relationships* taking shape in the settlements. The establishment of local self-governments is the most urgent in the villages, townships, towns and large cities and in the districts of the capital having an independent character. The quick and radical attainment of self-government naturally greatly *diminishes* the competence of the *county*.

Our proposal also includes the *financial* sources and conditions of the independent material viability of self-government.

The development, consolidation and free functioning of self-governments is a fundamental condition of creating a democratic Hungary.

The PDA invites *present mayors* and persons willing to direct *future* self-governments who are generally esteemed, *servicing* their smaller *community* sincerely and who welcome the spiritual, moral and political support of the PDA, *to join its ranks*.

2) In the formation of political pluralism the *political* struggles and co-operations, compromises—carried on in *limited* circles only—necessarily come to the forefront and *have unjustifiably eclipsed those* production and *servicing enterprises—and their managers* - who on occasion work for organizing the *labour and thus the condition of living* of hundreds or thousands of people. It is unjust that leaders of workshops, factories, state and servicing enterprises and communities, in general, controlling production primarily, have a minor, negligible role on the national and social level and in shaping public opinion.

We find their diminishing role in directing public life *harmful* and

dangerous. They *cannot be replaced* by anyone, and if groups or aspirations *without roots* attempt to do this—as is the case now—an alarming vacuum is created, since a very *real force* is limited within their sphere of control.

Not violating but in fact supporting the corporate systems of different leaders and managers and their enterprises, the PDA in its program *wishes to represent explicitly* the position that their economic activity should be perfectly free, and should not be limited by the present and unhealthy administration; while their activity is to be controlled and assessed by *market forces*, the state and its economic policy should bear a *greater strategic responsibility* in the rational development of economic processes, instead of maintaining a system of subsidies apparently devoid of logic.

The PDA wishes to give direct political support to the *public role* (and its enhancement) of managers working in the economy, and thus giving such support indirectly to the people directed by them. This is why the PDA *welcomes* and invites leaders and those led, who share this objective.

3) We deem it *unacceptable, the way women* have been forced out of public life and thus out of the process by which they could *define* the solution of one of the most urgent, almost dramatic problems of our times: namely how to build the organic functioning and balance of the society on the *family*.

The ability of women to create an equilibrium, their calm, cohesive force and ability is well known in spite of the fact that the public life of the past decades destroyed their role. The *unstable* situations within families, the obvious *lack* of the stability that could be created by women is a *serious problem*, since this circumstance is the cause to a large extent of the breaking up of families, the decreasing of the population, the disordered individual life of members of the family, the inadequate social attention to the *child* and to the cause of *children's education*.

We are for women. Even though, on the other hand, we regard as unfair the existing social and judicial practice by which it is the man who is at a disadvantage when it comes to the breaking up of the family.

When we say: we are for women we mean that we are for women expecting a child or raising an infant child. We want *political and social* together with *economic changes* in their interest and in the interest of their children.

We welcome all and invite those—women and men alike—who agree with us on this issue.

II.

There are three *strategic questions* pertaining to the theses of our draft-program.

1) In the plans of the government and the different parties it has still not been possible to form a clear picture on what is the *main priority in the economy*. The way attempts are made to harmonize these steps on an equal footing by the most varied, often contradictory aims of economic policy, leads to confusion in theory and practice, as well.

The PDA wishes to take a firm stand. For us the major danger is represented by **inflation and unemployment**. In our program we wish to work out - and to place in a *managable system* with the help of independently thinking specialists—the ways by which top priority is to be given to the radical curbing of inflation and the clear reduction of the mounting danger of unemployment, in the economic policy formulated by the parliament and the government. We wish to take a stand on defining the acceptable rate of inflation and the *upper limit* of the rate of inflation is unacceptable, and also on defining the acceptable *minimal* danger level of unemployment. All this can be solved only by an economic policy organized for the increased *generation of income* and by a market force having the same effect. In the government managing of the balance of the economy and the budget—and this imbalance appears to be a fundamental question today—and in its assessment by the society, averting the danger of inflation and unemployment should become top priority.

2) We believe that the most natural region for the *foreign policy and foreign trade* strategy of Hungary—together with its aspirations for cultural co-operation - is the **Danube basin**, the special ability of peoples, nations and countries to co-operate. Traditions should be reviewed in this field and co-operation should be started in regions where history failed to give as chance in this respect.

This region includes Southern Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia—as a special projection the zone where the Adriatic and the Alps meet, including Northern Italy -, Romania, hopefully getting rid of its own shackles and putting an end to its international isolation, together with the Northern region of Bulgaria and the Black Sea border-zone of the Soviet Union.

Supporting the idea of the Vienna-Budapest *world exhibition*, we believe that the conditions for this co-operation can be significantly improved, **special economic and trade measures** can be worked out that would provide the natural, self-organizing economical profile and potential of this region: here we have in mind special trade benefits, the creation of duty-free zones, the special forceful advancement of capital also supported by **concessions**.

Naturally all this partially touches upon our relations within the CMEA. In the outdated system of the CMEA we still do not have the chance for radical

improvement. For this reason Hungary should remain a member of the CMEA but in a status of **observer**.

At the same time Hungary should continue to maintain bilaterally its power and significance of economic co-operation with the socialist countries, with the Soviet Union, in particular. In accordance with the above, elements of **foreign policy and military strategy** should also be modified. We should remain a member of the Warsaw Treaty as long as the European military alliances exist. At the same time there should be **no international military exercises** on our territory and troops of the Hungarian army should not take part in military exercises held on foreign territory. The Hungarian People's Army should be made more efficient: its numbers should be reduced significantly, with an obligatory military service reduced to a period of 12 months, (accepted and introduced since then)—but this service should be extremely effective; equipped with modern military hardware ensuring self-defense in conformity with the size of the country.

3) **We are for the youth.** Generations were lost in the monolithic society. The new generations do not want to represent the parts of heritage of their ancestors unworthy of them. Thus the youth breaks away from the past and believes that the era from the late forties marked by successes of some sort and by numerous failures is over.

The youth **should take over** to build its own country effectively. In a democratic way. Successfully even by European standards knowing that the heritage forced upon this generation is such that the economy and internal social force of the country shall find itself in an impossible situation at least till the turn of the century.

Without violating the international scope for action of Hungary, the youth, the new generation should seek **internally** the sources of successful crisis management and possible recovery, within the yet unreleased constructive force of the country and the people.

In the view of the PDA a new force, the creative force of the **new generation** is needed for building the country. For this reason it appeals to the older generations to consciously and voluntarily surrender power to the most outstanding representatives, strata, professionally outstanding and thinking in terms of the nation, groups and individuals of the young generation.

The PDA does not intend to work out a youth policy of its own. It shall always support concretely and separately those youth organizations that are the most sincere and militant regarding such questions as the home, education and work, the establishment of a family.

* * *

STATUTE

1) Membership of the PDA is open to all *individuals* or persons who accept the Draft-Program and the Statute of the PDA and who meet the other two requirements formulated in the program (outstanding performance in work and credible moral conduct)

2) Joining the PDA—except for founders—is done by an *individual application*. The application must include the declaration contained in paragraph 1.

3) *The PDA is a community of sovereign individuals. Its activity is free from ideology. It wishes in no way to limit its members in their work, in their other personal ambitions and views. In this regard its members need not form local organizations. Concerning this latter question it is for the individual or a group to take a decision. If the membership made up of individuals makes it necessary the PDA shall establish regional centres. The creation of such centres may be initiated by members living in different regions, as well. If permitted by law, non-Hungarian nationals, people with dual nationality and Hungarians living abroad may become members.*

4) *The PDA is not an electoral party* It is a program coalition. Nevertheless its members—at their own sovereign decision—may be *nominated* and *elected* at different local and parliamentary elections, but primarily and independent candidates. They may also accept the support of parties *but* its elected candidates must represent the program of the PDA in their activities. Furthermore they can enter into program-coalition with independent representatives and representatives belonging to parties to the extent that this coalition does not violate the objectives, and spirit of the program and the aspirations of the PDA.

5) The founder members have elected an acting president Lajos Gubcsi. After the increase of the membership the first National Conference of the PDA shall elect by secret vote as Presidency small in number, and also a *Committee* of proportionate size. The same National Conference (NC) shall take the final decision on the Program, the Statute and the directing structures. The Alliance shall be represented by the acting president.

6) Members of the PDA—within the natural framework of the program—may make statements *freely and independently*, express their *own personal* views, comment on the social and political issues of the country, including the right to take a personal stand as regards the opinions on the PDA. If these statements concern the substance of the PDA, the leader or the directing body of the PDA may formulate a *common position* criticizing the possible opinion of the individual. Leaving the PDA will have no consequences, or disadvantages whatsoever for the former member.

7) The NC of the PDA responsible for drawing up or modifying the program and for electing the leadership should be convened at least *once* every year. At the initiative of 50% of the members, the NC may be convened at any *time*. *Only the president, or the directing bodies, and persons, authorized by the directing bodies may make statements in the name of the PDA, upon decisions made each individually. If the President is to make a statement he/she must seek in advance or subsequently, the consent of at least 50% of the members of the Presidency.*

8) The PDA may create the infrastructure of its activity solely on the basis of its own incomes and the financial *support* of business organizations functioning on an *economic*, thus profit-oriented basis. *The PDA does not ask for and does not accept financial or other support either from the state budget or from abroad.*

The founding general assembly of October 18, of the PDA formulated its relevant position in Request No. 2 of the PDA and *having forwarded this to the session of the National Assembly, put forward a similar proposal to the parties*, as well. Namely, the PDA had its position presented in the debate of the Bill on the functioning and economic management of parties by which parties could not accept *foreign* or *budgetary* support of any sort; at the redistribution of the property of the HSWP-HSP they should not apply for any part of the real estate and assets since the bulk of this *property is the property of the public, of the society*, for it was created mainly by their effort, the production of national income. Today no party has the right to make use of this property.

Members of the PDA shall pay their dues on a quarterly basis. The amount of the dues is the same for everybody. This amount shall be fixed by the first NC.

9) *Leaders* of the PDA for the time being and in the for seeable future cannot claim *any remuneration*, fee or any other sort of financial benefit for discharging their responsibilities.

10) This draft of the Statute—together with the theses of the Draft-Program - shall be discussed, assessed, modified further by the founder members and by those joining later and both documents shall be adopted in the final form at the first NC.

At present this and all other documents of the PDA should be considered to be drafts only. The founder members and those joining later can formulate and make public different proposals under the heading "Request" until the convening of the NC.

11) The founder members of the PDA decided on October 18 for the time being, before the further thorough and manifold deliberation of their two

major draft documents, not to make their names public. Their Drafts and Requests can only be made public signed "People's Democratic Alliance". The members shall decide when to appear in public.

Request No. 1 to the National Assembly

October 17, 1989

Recommendation for the amendment of the Constitution concerning self-governments

We recommend to the National Assembly to consider the cause of self-governments as an issue of major importance and to decide on self-governments in a separate paragraph in the course of amending the Constitution.

"In Hungary by the end of the eighties the situation of the rural regions and partially that of certain zones of Budapest became distressing in terms of *economic* backwardness, *political* independence, and the possibilities of the *sovereignty* of the citizen. All this is the result of the fact that in the social structure that was *unhealthy* in the past as well, today the *influence* of the monolithic, highly centralized, administrative power, with Budapest as its centre has *increased enormously*. This monopolistic centralization thrived *at the expense of the country-* side, often leading to the decline of rural regions, with the exclusion of small villages, townships and towns.

We consider *the comprehensive, organized system of self-governments* be one of the major conditions and requirements of democratic transformation. This includes the *perfectly free self-governments of sovereign citizens* organizing along different interests in the different settlements on the one hand, and independently of settlements on the other. This is a power system having *values identical* to a parliamentary democracy. It is the direct, democratic pillar of the relationship between the state and its citizens, and is an indispensable element of the dynamic *balance of power*. We consider the legislation creating self-governments to be a *fundamental law* and this law should if possible be passed by the existing parliament. The October session of the National Assembly, in amending the Constitution should give room for the legal and economic as well as civic aspects of self-governments in the Constitution.

The establishment of local self-governments is most urgent in the villages, townships, towns and large cities and in the districts of the capital having an independent character. The Act should already become effective in the first

half of next year, even before the municipal elections, in order to hold these elections in the interest of sovereign, autonomous self-governments and thus representing the party relationships taking shape in the settlements.

This means that the *quick* and radical attainment of self-governments naturally and significantly reduces the competence of the county. The elements of self-government existing in the present practice cannot be eliminated immediately and totally. In the period of transition decisions on the county-level are needed to establish the conditions for forming self-governments in *underdeveloped* small settlements and villages, by redistributing as part (that is very limited) of the financial and other sources. The objective can only be one: *it is the right of the community and population of settlements to create a local self-government.*

It is desirable that if local self-governments come into existence early next year under the new act, the servicing and state-administrative task of the county should be *limited* as of January 1991. Due to the special situation, the conditions and modalities for creating self-governments in the capital, and the capital and its districts, should be dealt with separately.

The *independent material viability* of self-governments is of fundamental importance. The sources of this are: the fully independent utilization of direct taxes; that state property should become the *property of self-governments* through a single legal act, and this property should be freely managed; it is also needed to clearly *distinguish* between the property of the state and that of self-governments; free management and enterprise is made possible for the self-governments, which can also freely dispose of the dividend arising from property; in the same respect we find it necessary that those companies, subsidiaries, etc. located in the countryside which have their centres in Budapest, but carry on their subordinated and dependent business in the countryside, should be allowed to become *independent* more quickly and extensively—and thus the profit and a part of the tax arising from their activity should strengthen the funds of local self-governments; the most under-developed regions, and small settlements that are unable to live an independent life today should receive *special support* for their functioning. The legislation serving as a basis for self-governments is a vital interest of our pluralistic system and of our constitutional process and this is closely linked to the democratic political institutional system represented by us. *The establishment, strengthening and free functioning of self-governments is a basic condition for creating a democratic Hungary.*

We shall submit our position to the parliament and to the government through Representative Gyula Szűcs to help legislation.”

Request No. 2 to the National Assembly

October 18, 1989.

Honoured Parliament,

At the request of and in full agreement with the new alliance founded October 18, 1989, called the Popular Democratic Alliance, I would like to put forward the request or proposal of the PDA mentioned above in the debate of the Bill on the functioning and management of parties.

1) Chapter IV on page 4 deals with the property and the management of parties. The PDA requests the National Assembly to amend article 4, paragraph (1). In the current situation of the country and the state budget the PDA finds it unacceptable that any party (or movement) finance—even partially—its functioning through financial support originating from the **state budget**. The source of this functioning can only be the *party dues* and the support of profit-oriented business enterprises.

The coalition called the Popular Democratic Alliance finds *paragraph 3 equally unacceptable*. In its view and according to its proposal the Act should stipulate that **no party or movement may accept any kind of foreign contribution, financial source or material support**. For the PDA any kind of support arriving from abroad is *contradictory to the sovereignty of the parties and violates the interests of the people and the nation*. The State Audit Office should strictly control that *no such support enters the country even through "attempted legalization"*. (This latter statement is applicable to cases like that of the Soros Foundation which gives support to the functioning of parties and extends financial support to their leaders.) The parties must be forbidden to take into account any kind of assets and estates from the HSWP-HSP fortune, not even the letter. They have to start everything from scratch.

2) Pursuant to the above, article 5 obviously loses its validity and thus the People's Democratic Alliance recommends to delete it altogether from the Act. It further recommends to reaffirm: *parties are not entitled to budgetary support*.

Budapest, October 18, 1989.

At the request of, and in full agreement with the PDA:

Gyula Szűcs
Member of Parliament

P. S.: On November 20, 1989, we decided that after the new Parties' Act has

come into force, we will apply for registration as an association rather than a party. The kind of party dictatorship realized nowadays by the FDA and the YDA, notwithstanding the quarrel that emerged among the HSWP's successor parties, do not encourage us to pursue our activities as a party. Our programme and statutes will, however, remain unchanged.

In a freak development of the political battles raging in Hungary, the population went to the polling stations on November 26, 1989, not to elect a President of the Republic but, pressured by the FDA and YDA, the two organizations that had collected enough signatures to initiate it, to vote on a referendum, having to say YES or NO to who should elect a president and when: the people before the parliamentary elections or in the new Parliament. In the last week before the referendum, the association led by me launched a double campaign in a letter. On the one hand, we wanted to convince the population to stay away from this forcedly held referendum. On the other hand, we wanted them to support us in making the Parliament to modify the law to the effect that the parties should not receive any financial support. As you have perhaps noted, 42% of Hungary's population stayed away from the referendum and only 50.1% of them accepted the radical opposition's proposal. As I know this moment the President of the Republic will be elected only in summer. Hot summer - once more. Pity. It is a victory but a Pyrrhic one: we need, and badly, a President of the Republic - and a dignified population electing him. We need a close cooperation of those two. The following letter was our third official appeal.

Request No. 3

November 18, 1989

Thank you for your attention (Look out for item 6.!)

Dear compatriot and friend,

In September 1989, the participants of the round-table national talks laid down the foundations of constitutional public life and sovereign citizen's rights. The referendum to be held on November 26 after the FDA's and YDA's initiatives is harmful in our opinion, and the respective initiatives irresponsible. Why? Because:

1. The initiators violated a majority agreement.
2. With their campaign (of obvious self-interest) they further delay the

election of the President of the Republic and of the new Parliament. Deepening the politically instabile situation, they do not wish to negotiate on economic and social tasks.

3. They are intensifying the infighting among the parties that are, yet, politically immature for leadership anyway, while we are in a continuing vacuum-situation in which it is always the most aggressive forces that grab most of the power - of course referring to you, to the people.

4. Life has long overtaken three of the referendum's issues. Those who collect votes against the HSW's armed force, power in the factories or privileges of wealth are threatening us with ghosts. Are there still such things? If there are, it is you and not those referring to you that will put an end to them.

5. Even the ruling party and its representative government have lost courage in connection with the referendum, they are in deep silence. You find yourselves alone now in deciding whether you should go to vote at all. Man, however, is a reliable ally of himself. Sovereign. And makes up his mind.

6. We suggest that you should not participate in the false vote. The people should not be a disguise. Hold your votes and patience until the real elections come round, where you will, through your genuine votes, take your stolen power back.

7. Do not step onto the path of political fatigue. If you do, others will go on deciding matters over your heads.

PDA

Lajos Gubcsi,

Acting President

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

(For consideration at home)

On October 18, 1989, we submitted our proposal concerning the Parties' Act to the Parliament. Although our request was refused, we still do not consider the matter closed. We cannot accept several parties, replacing the earlier one, working and fighting each other with finances gained from the wealth created by the people. This is why we repeat our suggestions here:

1. Not a single party should receive any budget subvention, as none has done anything for creating a larger national income.

2. Not a single party should receive any part of the HSWP-HSP fortune. Not even the latter: until the end of this year they should hand over all their assets and estates, starting everything from scratch, like other parties do.

3. No party should be allowed to receive any finance or support from abroad. How can they deliver fine speeches on nation, people, sovereignty in the shadow of greenbacks?

We do not want to get your signatures by buttonholing people in underground

thoroughfares. Please consider our letter carefully at home - and if you support us in these three issues, help us gain the supporting signatures of others /overleaf/. When 100.000 signatures have arrived at the address featured on the bottom, we will request still the present Parliament to modify the Parties' Act, since we, unlike the FDA, the YDA and others, regard this Parliament to be indeed capable of making responsible decisions, even renewing their occasionally mistaken ones. The battle of Hungary's parties, the process of Hungary's democratic transformation should not be financed by the state of the public or foreign sponsors. A party is strong as much as well as it enjoys the material support of the people.

Lajos Gubcsi on behalf of the PDA"

P.S.: Since, beside the torpedoing of the President of the Republic, the FDA and the YDA are also guilty in my judgement of operating on foreign support, my association will openly fight against that, too. Unfortunately, the support has already been accepted.

OSZK
Országos Széchényi Könyvtár

VII. APPENDIX

No. 1. A list of intellectuals

We are quoting a random choice of the list of 70 intellectuals indicated in the book. As you can see, the persons we meant to invite range from artists of world renown to white-collar leaders of our daily lives, a colourful sample of important personalities. So, a few names, not in the order of their importance:

János Márton (since then President of the People's Party)

Ferenc Kósa (since then a member of the HSP Presidium)

Lajos Menyhárt (then a university professor in Debrecen, since then a member of the HSP Presidium)

Zoltán Daróczy, President of the Lajos Kossuth University

Sándor Gergely, then President of the Karancslapujtő Agricultural Cooperative

Dr. István Szabó, managing director of the Salgótarján Metallurgical Works

András Balczó, one of the brightest stars of Hungarian sports

Endre Czeizel, a nationally known advocate of health care

Ernő Pungor, a world-renowned scholar, Member of the Academy

János Prohászka, Professor at the Technical University of Budapest

Árpád Csurgay, Deputy Secretary-General of the Academy of Sciences

Kálmán Kulcsár, Minister of Justice (since then still Deputy Secretary-General of the Academy of Sciences), Candidate for President

Sándor Sára, world-renowned cinema photographer and director

Sándor Csoóri, world-renowned poet, laterer a leading personality of the HDF

Zoltán Biró (just then he got expelled from the HSWP, laterer he became Acting President of the HDF)

Iván Markó, world-renowned ballet dancer in Győr

György Szabad, a professor of history

Lajos Für, a professor of history, later a leading personality and Presidential candidate with the HDF

Géza D.Hegedüs, actor

Alajos Chrudinák, editor-in-chief of the Hungarian TV, world-renowned reporter

Imre Nagy, then a secretary and President of youth organization, today a member of the HSP Presidium

Pál Romány, President of the HSWP Political Academy

László Boldvai (then a CYA leader in Nógrád county, today the appointed HSP leader there)

Gyula Gráner, director of the AGROBER Company in Bács-Kiskun county

Rudolf Joó, economist, politologist, Hungarologist (later a HDF leader in charge of international affairs)

Péter Korniss, world-renowned photographer

Imre Sinkovits, actor, chairman of the then-founded "FOR HUNGARIAN ART" foundation's Board

Imre Tarafás (then divisional director of the National Planning Bureau, today First Deputy President of the National Bank of Hungary)

Imre Boros (then a department director at the National Bank of Hungary, today Deputy Chairman of the Hungarian Credit Bank)

Mrs Éva Öveges-Terjék, a schoolmistress

Csaba Csáki, President of the Karl Marx University of Economics

Dr János Rapcsák, a researcher, teacher

Ferenc Somogyi (then Main Department Manager at the Foreign Ministry, today a State Secretary)

László Kovács (then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, today a State Secretary)

Péter Balázs, Main Department Manager of the Ministry of Trade

Sándor Elek, First Secretary of the HSWP-HSP Committee at Győr, now free lancer.

Imre Szekeres (then Deputy Chairman of the Council at Veszprém county, today the HSP's first Secretary in the county)

Imre Forgó, First Secretary of the HSWP-HSP Committee at Balassagyarmat.

László Zeöld, Chief adviser of the University of Economics, a computer engineer and mathematician

Miklós Dobák, Teacher at the University of Economics

Tamás Mészáros, dean at the University of Economics

János Bródy, songwriter, musician

Levente Szórényi, composer

József Bayer (then General Manager of the Hungarian TV), today a full professor of the University of Economics, Acting Manager of Axel Springer Ltd., Budapest

László Kovács (then an economic policy adviser at the HSWP CC), now adviser of the Prime Minister

Sándor Szórádi (then a Secretary of the CYA CC), today a divisional general director at the Ministry of Trade

Imre Kovács, an agricultural cooperative's leader at Kiskunhalas

András Váci, then manager of the State Farm at Balatonboglár, today a deputy managing director of a press company

László Vitézy, a film director

András Domány, reporter of the Hungarian Radio

András Erdélyi, chief columnist at "Magyar Hírlap", a national daily

József Fazekas, Deputy Managing Director of MALEV, the Hungarian Airline Co.

István Gyenesei, Chairman of the Council of Somogy county

Zoltán Király, Member of Parliament (later expelled from the HSWP)

Imre Makovecz, world-renowned architect

István Mátyás, General Deputy Chairman of the Council of Tolna county

Gyula Laczkó, President of an agricultural cooperative in Kiskunfélegyháza

Lajos Szabó, managing director of the Machinery Works in Kiskunfélegyháza

No. 2. Visiting Card at Zalaegerszeg

At the party conference in the town of Zalaegerszeg held on **9th September** I was among those who took the floor. On the basis of my address drawn up in nine items, I was elected a congress delegate and authorized to put forward my views accordingly.

"Honoured Conference of Delegates, although I would have much more to say I propose not to go into details because it would be a "foreign body" considering the tasks before this party conference. This is the brief summary of my views:

1. Should the party stay in the *workplaces* or not? There is a heated debate on this issue. This is a question, in my opinion, which should be decided by each party branch organization and by each workplace itself. We must not allow ourselves to be bullied into a decision (from top politicians) or let inward cowardice influence it.

2. In workplaces where the party organization was used as a sort of "fig-leaf" to cover the manager's body, either the fig-leaf should be discarded, or the manager re-elected or dismissed. While I have due respect for the laws of economy and of economic activities, I do believe—more than ever before—that we need social control over managerial autocracy. So far this task has not been met by the fig-leaf function of the HSWP; now and in the

future we should exercise collective *control* together with the trade unions and sensible people in other responsible parties. We cannot sell our kingdom for a horse. In the past few weeks this has been done by quite a few people abusing the loopholes in the laws, some of which were put there deliberately.

3. This question has a direct bearing on us. No one, either the members of the "four-in-hand" or of the negotiating delegation, (negotiating with the opposition) should *discard* his shield, armour and sword in advance, without even being asked to. It would be unwise to throw off our dress, too, lest we should find ourselves defenceless having nothing on.

4. There are aspects which have not been mentioned at all today. We have not spoken about *women*, their unique ability and possibilities in holding together families and in creating balance in today's hysterical world. We have not spoken about the *rural* areas, which have played a basic, decisive role over the centuries in Hungarian history contributing to equilibrium. We have not spoken about the outstanding figures of culture, arts and science whose person and performance are often elbowed aside in the scramble for positions.

5. We are living in *Central Europe* and there is no way to move the country to a place a little further off. As our history has shown, the countries which were our supposed or expected allies and friends, including sometimes big powers, were always too far away and kept aloof from us. On the other hand, in many cases our foes were too near us, and we paid a high price for this. We should not take the same path now. We have to find peace, and now is the time to find peace with **nearby** countries, before it is too late.

6. I find it very pertinent to our case what Machiavelli said: "The middle course is not good!" The middle course is the road on which the foe cannot be defeated, but the allies can be lost. There have been too many *compromises*, which may confuse—and already confuses—the party membership. The negotiations in the parliament should be closed, their consequences be shown, indicating also the areas where no further concession can be made. It should be made clear that this government, for the time being, is the government of our party, and it should serve the party's objectives, even though, fortunately, it is becoming more and more a government of *experts*. We must *not allow the legitimacy* of the constitutionally elected government and parliament to be *called into question*, and their members who work for the public good humiliated. If others call it into question, as it is happening now in the course of the struggle for power, let them do it, it is their business. We will see the consequences of it at the elections. I have mixed feelings when I hear our leaders say that "there is no such party in the world" as the HSWP which is sharing power, and maybe distributing it, of its own accord and at its own initiative. This is fine, but if we are not careful, we will keep saying that "there is no such party" until we find that "**there is no party**" at

all. We must not allow our allies, our party members to lose courage to the point where, when asked this question: how much do two and two make, they answer: "Never mind".

7. We must convince people that what we have been defending and what we are concerned about is not our power, but the country and its ability to **operate**. We should not allow anyone to dispute this. Political power is not measured in decibels, but in the effective operation of guiding organizations and bodies. Don't degrade the work of our predecessors, of former generations, don't brush it away with a gesture just because this is now in vogue and it scores half a point with FIDESZ (Alliance of Young Democrats). The only people who make no mistakes are the ones who do nothing.

8. About the **press**, the media. I have been active in this field for a long time and I intend to work in this area in some form in the future too. Who does the press belong to? Obviously it does not belong to the *government*. It does not belong to the *party*, either, not even its own newspaper. In many cases it seems to belong to certain journalists, on occasion it is in the service of their desire to retaliate, or the justification of those who... I am looking for the word for the part of the anatomy... let's say, who paid lip service to the leadership in the past and now, having made an about turn, are looking for new opportunities elsewhere. Why are we too shy to approach the press? We are almost offering it as a wide open field because we are ashamed and embarrassed. The former monopoly was easier and we find it difficult to get used to the fact that there is competition now in all fields of life. We are afraid to compete, we do not know how to compete and seem to lack determination to compete. However, nobody will teach us how to do it.

Where can we find our party members in public opinion? Why has HSWP gone underground, why are its members hiding? We should create a situation in which the workers of the media find our best people. The power of the media rests with the reader, the radio listener, the TV viewer, and not with the media men. If they do not find us - which will not happen by itself—this is due to one of two things: either to the fact that we can only be seen through a magnifying-glass or to the fact that the media man forgot to put on his glasses. Both are grave technical mistakes.

9. Because of the shortness of time I cannot give new *election* advices apart from what I have already pointed out. I would underline, however, that elections cannot take place in the old spirit. Whatever the post, election managers and candidates alike must be tested thoroughly, scrupulously and with the strictest and most pragmatic methods. We must make sure that they want the victory of this party and they have the will to want it. We must ascertain whether the unity of word and personality characterizes their work.

As to the question of the meaning of the abbreviation of HSWP—which will be also an issue of the elections, that is, the meaning of the second “W”, I believe that this party will remain the workers’ party in the future, too, and the letter w should be there in this sentence. When I say workers I mean the person who *creates* intellectual or physical products for the common good. In this sense this dispute is not about ideology, but the question of giving recognition to the role of people working for the good of the community. I hope there will be such people in the party in the future too.

The managers and candidates of the election should be characterized by the balance of the individual and the efficiency of collective work. This is a precondition without which we cannot let them start fighting, otherwise the defeat for the individual and for the collective will be ignominious. The bureaucrat is the curse of our times. Although my voice is hoarse because I have flu and fever, I feel I must speak up and call on all of us to eliminate this curse every moment from our lives, otherwise the bureaucrat will liquidate us and then we have nobody to curse but ourselves. Thank you.” In the evening the party conference dealt with nominations. Antal Tóth, president of the council of a little village, proposed that I should be elected as delegate of Zalaegerszeg at the congress, and gave at length the reasons for his proposal.

In response I said this: “In the past few months I was in a situation several times when what I said was not actually what I wanted to say. I suppose all of us sooner or later face this distressing feeling. This proposal is as unexpected for me as it is honouring, and even if it is made by only one delegate present here and even if he remains alone at the end, all I can say is “thank you”.

A few hours later, after drawing up the list of candidates, one of the leading members of the official nominating committee, Sándor Sárga, requested his fellow-delegates not to elect me as a candidate as I was not a resident of Zalaegerszeg. To this I answered: “Dear friends! A short while ago I expressed my sincere thanks for the words proposing my candidacy, even if uttered by one person. The same way I consider it characteristic that there is one delegate here who is opposed to the proposal.”

Around midnight I was asked to read the draft of my letter to be addressed to the Central Committee by the conference:

Honoured Central Committee,

The majority of the membership of the HSWP is paying the penalty for the lack of unity within the party leadership. We, members of the conference of delegates of Zalaegerszeg, urge that a clear position be taken at the Central Committee session on 12th September on the following decisive questions:

1. The situation regarding the **assets** of the party should be made unambiguous. The financial situation of the party should be made known to the congress in accurate terms, including the portion which the party is willing to hand over to the society with fitting dignity. This should meet the requirements of those who need welfare, educational and health assistance.

It must also be made quite clear what the party regards as *its own, indisputable assets* required for its operation and to be used for the public good. We must not allow an unfair campaign to be waged against us on this issue by unauthorized persons and parties. On the other hand we *do not need* properties which are not *rightful* ours. We urge that the Central Committee session adopt a precise resolution on this question prior to the party congress and make it public.

2. There is a heated debate in the country as to whether the party organizations should quit the **workplaces** or not. Some members of the party leadership made statements in favour of leaving the workplaces, without asking the membership. Our position is this: we do *not* intend to authorize the Central Committee to decide an issue of such great significance. This should be decided by the congress after debate. In the meantime we consider it appropriate that the party organizations of workplaces form their position themselves. It is desirable that during the next month, before the congress is held, as many organizations as possible present their views to the congress actively. If, in the long term, quitting the workplaces will appear to be the right course to take, we consider it necessary to state already at this stage that in the future too, we should exercise an open, social control over the work of economic leaders, co-operating with various forces at workplaces, above all with the trade unions.

Today we can already see the distressing signs of the sellout of *state wealth*. Due to the great importance of this issue, it is the congress that should draw up the standpoint of the party. However, in the meantime the attempts at "salvaging power", at sellout should be suspended, or at least their open control should be organized. We consider that in these questions as well as in other matters of great significance, we should achieve co-operation with the trade unions instead of confrontation.

3. It is a task important for the society as a whole to establish the autonomous

local authority of villages and towns, to ensure the necessary financing and economic conditions and to accelerate as early as in 1990 the related legislative work. Without this, references to "rural Hungary" will be nothing more than a political and tactical weapon. The population of the *countryside* forming the overwhelming majority of the country's population constitutes the *main* force, the centre of the Hungarian society, yet this is not recognized in actual fact. Self-government, that is sharing financial power at national and county level means proportionately with villages and towns, is the only possible way to restore the political, economic and moral self-esteem and importance of rural areas.

4. We do not support, on the contrary, we **reject** the endeavours aimed at **delaying the election of the president** of the republic as a basic political institution. We believe that the amendment of the constitution should be accelerated so that the decision of the members of parliament makes it possible to set up the function of the president of the republic. We confirm the earlier decision of the HSWP Central Committee nominating Imre Pozsgay as candidate for the post of the president of the republic. We consider his person a guarantee for the strengthening by this function of processes in the direction of the stability of our society."

No . 3. "A SELL OUT OF COMMON (STATE) ASSETS" Sept . 10. 1989

The Minister of State, Mr. Pozsgay too, was compelled to face the question in connection with the sellout of state assets. An urgent clarification is required regarding the question of whether the government and the HSWP leaders are aware that the sellout of state assets is under way in what seems to be a proper manner from the legal point of view, but which is rumoured and believed to cause tremendous losses.

When meeting the congress delegates of the counties in North-East Hungary, the following question was put to Imre Pozsgay: If the government leaders know about these transactions, what means are there at their disposal to stop them? Public pressure can be expected to emerge with impatience at any time, and its first public outburst is sure to occur at the congress.

The issue is a most complex one. On the one hand there are justified emotions, the national grievance of being left out in the cold. On the other hand is legislation adopted by the parliament at the initiative of none other than the Party and the government, that is, by the body where there is an overwhelming majority of members of the HSWP. What is happening now is that an increasing number of party forums are challenging the decisions of its

MPs and political leaders and, in particular, the laws on companies and on their transformation.

We have heard the shocking news of the privatization of Tungsram (through the efficient "co-operation" of, and profits for, the Credit Bank), of Ganz Vehicle Works, of ÁPISZ, the paper and stationery company, of Ganz Electricity Meter Factory, and now Hollóháza and Zsolnay, the world famous porcelain factories, are also said to contemplate the same road.

It is in our vital civic and political interest to prevent exploitation of the loopholes in the legislation in spontaneous economic processes in a way that is irrational for the country. As a result of these transactions, the managers who offer for sale their own enterprise and their foreign partners are acquiring ownership positions, at unreasonably low prices, which will be hard to reverse. Is it the nominal way of things that this "big racket" is being organized first of all in downtown **Budapest?**

The buying or sellout of national wealth has been carried out in the past few weeks without public opinion knowing about it or, at best, information was given only after the event and incompletely. Those who voiced their criticism received at first aggressive responses and remarks from the "managers" concerned, proclaiming themselves the absolute pioneers of the reform and labelling critics as "retrograde forces" and anti-reformists.

It is not by chance that an increasing number of politicians are turning their attention to this sellout at bargain prices and the suspected corruption. It cannot be dismissed as mere hysterical protest. Even at first glance it is clear that in most of the cases, the establishment of new forms of joint stock companies, the partial sale of companies to foreign shareholders, are far from resulting in the more rational operation of assets and in the participation of operating capital. It is by no means certain that this so-called sale of shares will automatically result in new factories and new production facilities being put into service. Often the managers are simply "salvaging" their power in what is called an "up-to-date" way which, in effect, is difficult to follow and their aim is to forestall the establishment of the system of the management of state assets.

Obviously the government has served a "sitter" and does not care a damn who smashes it and how. The formation of the institutional framework for the management of state assets is being carried out bureaucratically. (The government commissioner who was given this task has handed in his resignation.) The result of the passivity of government and political leaders will sooner or later be that *not the artful dodgers misusing* the laws will be called to account, *but the government itself* and the policy and passivity of the party behind it. Those who will do this will be acting rightfully. In the rivalry of the parties, it will also be rightful for the opposition and many of

its parties strongly criticizing the sellout of state wealth to obtain an advantage.

In the operation of state companies turned into share companies the sellout does not bring about a visible change, the interest in assets is not enhanced, management and *production do not become* more up-to-date. Most irritating of all is that certain factory or company directors join forces *with* the partner foreign firm to obtain shares, but this time *as private* persons.

The objection to behind-the-scenes connections, undervaluation of shares and selling at bargain prices is fully justified. Where is the state? Is it aware of this? Is there no means at its disposal to stop it? Is this what freedom in the economy means? The first deputy of the general manager of the Zsolnay factory would welcome the sale of the factory because—as he pointed out—“he had to stand by and watch during the past 30 years to see countless extraordinary ideas being wasted”. The manager who could have done a lot during the past 30 years or at least during a decisive part of it, to make the factory more capable of meeting the market demands now expects as miracle from selling it maybe to some US bank.

The reform state property, the emergence of owners who are capable of real and rational operation of the assets is a national interest for us all. What is happening instead is *detrimental* to the interests of the community. I do not believe that the government has no adequate legal, political and economic means to prevent and put an end to this sellout. I do not believe that it is not possible to stop this harmful “transformation” or to control it by suitable bodies to be set up with independent experts. Nor do I believe that it is permissible to shut out the public and competition in this question; I do not believe that we must put up with parts of the state wealth being “spirited away” quietly, incontrollably and covertly. On what basis are the assets appraised? On what considerations is the contribution of capitalists (over)valued? Isn't it a *distorted exchange* when the Hungarian assets are undervalued and the foreign ones overvalued? Why are the state asset funds not being operated? Who is responsible and for what? For the time being no answer is given to this questions. While there are operational troubles, sales are going on trouble-free.

Lajos Gubcsi”

(To emphasize the importance of the honest foreign investments, I quote **The Economist**, October 21, 1989:)

“Foreign investment in Hungary

Testing the water

After dithering between offending East Germany by letting fleeing East Germans cross its western border, and offending West Germany by keeping its border closed, Hungary decided that offending its Warsaw pact ally was the lesser of two evils. A look at which side Hungary's *brot* is buttered these days makes it clear why. Eastern Europe's most persistent wooer of western businessmen, Hungary is at last reaping some real benefit from years of experimenting with a variety of joint ventures and direct investment.

Attracted by the country's reformist zeal, cheap labour and new legislation allowing 100% of foreign ownership of Hungarian enterprises, western companies are making the kind of investments that Hungary's ailing economy needs. So far this year the number of joint ventures has more than doubled, to more than 600, although many are tiny. Earlier this month the Tengelmann Group, one of West Germany's largest retailers, together with other western investors including Finland's Nokia and Holland's Philips, spent \$9.8m on an 18% stake in the Skala Co-op, a large Hungarian retailer. Hundreds more deals are under negotiation. A group of western financiers and the National Bank of Hungary recently set up the First Hungarian Fund, which will initially raise \$50m for direct equity investments in Hungarian companies.

This flow of deals still represents a drop in the ocean to a country with a net foreign debt of \$17 billion, no economic growth and inflation estimated at 16%. Nevertheless western investors, whether as joint-venture partners or owners, bring not only working capital into the country, but also know-how, technology and needed management skills. Existing joint ventures have achieved sales per employee three times higher than the average for Hungarian industry.

Investors not wishing to set up a completely new venture are finding that Hungary, despite 40 years of socialist mismanagement and misinvestment, also has a few rough diamonds to offer. In August Britain's Telfos engineering company took a 51% interest in a new joint venture formed by its subsidiary Hunslet Holdings at the state-owned Ganz Railway Engineering. It thus became the first western company to control a Hungarian manufacturer.

Other ground-breaking deals in the past few months include: a consortium of western banks buying 49.65% of Tungsram, a Hungarian light-bulb producer with 5% of the world market; a software and computer company, Novotrade, becoming the first company from a Comecon country to launch a share issue on a western market; and Citicorps joint venture bank in Budapest putting

together Hungary's first management buy-out of a state-owned company, that of Apisz, the country's largest stationery supplier.

Despite this progress, western investors rightly remain wary, investing only tiny amounts in most joint ventures. The government's continued taste for interfering in industrial management, and Hungary's lack of infrastructure—the telephone system is a disaster—are the biggest problems facing western businessmen. Future problems may also be caused by opposition to privatisation from the Workers' Councils, which run three-quarters of Hungary's state enterprises. Finally, Hungary's inability to provide each access to the potentially lucrative Soviet market—through no fault of its own—also discourages foreign investment, although this may be changing. If Hungary's government is going to turn the present modest inflow of foreign capital into a flood, it will have to put a telephone on every desk and get itself out of every office and factory.”

No. 4-5. The new Party: HSW

“The party is a political organization in the Marxist spirit, fully embracing the universal values of human development, humanism, freedom and democracy. It is the continuer of the traditions of the socialist and communist movement that have stood the test of time, it embraces solidarity, the principle of social justice and respect for work that creates value.

It builds on the tradition and values of the Hungarian people and is one of the inheritors of the best aspirations of the Hungarian forces of progress, the ideals of country and progress, the idea of the common fate of the peoples along the Danube. It wishes to serve the entire nation with its activity. It is the party of those who receive income from their own work, small entrepreneurs, our compatriots of Hungarian and other nationality. It relies on the members of the different generations, and its counts on women and men alike.

The aim of the party is a democratic socialist society.

It strives for people to be able to live in security, freely exercise their human and civic rights, develop their abilities, and, relying on these, to be able to ensure the most human living conditions and prosperity that can be achieved at the given stage of the development of society. It works for an independent and democratic Hungary that develops in a balanced way, taking advantage

of the possibilities offered by the world economy. It takes a stand for cooperation among the nations on the basis of equality and declares solidarity with all those in the world who are struggling for their freedom, for their rights and for progress.

The party operates within the framework of the constitution, respecting the law and accepting the will of its members, and it does not strive for hegemony. It offers cooperation and alliance to all political forces that are prepared to join efforts for the advancement of the nation. It is open to all ideas and initiatives that serve progress, and promotes peace among people and harmony between man and nature. The HSP regards itself as an integral part of the international labour movement and the European Left. It wishes to maintain close and integral ties both with the left-wing parties of Central and Eastern Europe striving for reform, and with the reform communist, socialist and democratic parties of the world."

No. 4–5. "Program Declaration of the Hungarian Socialist Party"

1. At the end of the eighties Hungarian society has reached a historical turning point. The political system of Stalinist origins exhausted its reserves and the situation of crisis that has arisen can only be overcome through the radical transformation of social, economic and political relations. The forces of reform that have existed in the HSWP for decades—at times openly, at other times as an undercurrent—also encouraged by the appearance on the scene of other forces in Hungary with an interest in reforms, taking advantage of the favourable external conditions, have opened the way for the peaceful transition from state socialism to democratic socialism.

It is due to these initiatives too that a historic chance has opened for the creation of parliamentary democracy based on a multi-party system and a constitutional state, for the consolidation of self-governing forms of social life. In this way the will of the people expressed in free elections will become the source of power and in this way the nation will be able to control the functioning of power.

2. The Hungarian Socialist Party is publishing its program declaration with the purpose of defining itself and inviting all those to join it, who, agreeing with its principles and aspirations, are seeking the path for the betterment of society. In our program we approach the political problems in a comprehensive way, concentrating on the major issues of society and thinking in long-term perspective. Our positions are not a substitute for programs on specific questions elaborated in greater detail, but a starting point. Our Program Declaration is linked with documents covering all important areas of the life of society and the party and defining the tasks for today, tomorrow and the

more distant future, including the Rules and Election Program of the Hungarian Socialist Party, and later a strategic program that sums up all the specific programs.

I AT A TURNING POINT

3. Hungary—like the other countries at a middle or lower level of development—has to face a decisive challenge. So far, we have given an inadequate response to this challenge because we have postponed action or failed to act. Science, intellectual achievements and innovation have become the driving force of growth in the world, the principal source of prosperity. Suitable performance on the world market also depends on this. The enormous risks of modern research and development require a sophisticated decision-making and financial system and demand that information flow at a previously unaccustomed speed. Boldness, flexibility, independent thinking and a high level of qualifications are the decisive factors in success. Changes releasing these forces are an urgent necessity for adapting to world development.

4. Bureaucratic and dictatorial state socialism brought Hungary into a state of crisis. Dissatisfaction is growing in all strata of society, confidence in politics and those in power has been shaken. All this is intertwined with a deep moral crisis. The crisis is also undermining faith in the possibility of attaining the socialist goals.

5. A radical transformation of all the essential elements of the political, economic and cultural system is unavoidable. The party above all dissociates itself from all variants of Stalinism and neo-Stalinism. With this decision it is setting out on the path of reforms and taking the first steps towards democratic socialism. It accepts responsibility for the crisis and regards it as its duty to play a part in overcoming the crisis. However, it consistently preserves all those ideals and values of the socialist and communist movement, the attraction of which not even Stalinism has been able to diminish: the fulfilment of human freedom, the assertion of the common will of society organizing from below and self-government, true collectivity, social solidarity and justice, equality of opportunity and social security. In the course of the structural reforms our party wishes to achieve not less but considerably more of the above than it has until now: it wants to change them from slogans to practice.

6. Our goal is democratic socialism that we wish to achieve on the peaceful

path of people's democracy, preserving the capacity of society and the economy to function. In this way we can avoid a state in which the crisis becomes unmanageable and create the conditions for national renewal and catching up with world development. We can find the way out of the crisis by releasing the energies of society and through the competitive cooperation of the forces that assume responsibility for the fate of the nation.

7. We want a state with a developed and just welfare policy based on the results of an effectively functioning market economy, in which welfare policy is not an adjunct to the economy but an integral part of social reproduction. We want a society in which people feel at home; are able to develop their abilities, assert their interests, create undisturbed living conditions and ensure their children's future. Easing the situation of families, young people, pensioners and women, and expanding job opportunities deserve special attention. One of our important goals is to improve the quality of life, which, besides raising the material standard of living, also includes intellectual fulfilment, a healthy environment, the improvement of law and order and the state of public affairs, respect for political rights and human freedoms and for human dignity. However, the efforts at overcoming the crisis impose heavy burdens on society. In calling on the nation to accept sacrifices, our party is at the same time opening up the possibility of calling its program to account, by creating the multi-party system, social control and openness.

II.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

8. The basis of democratic socialism is the harmony of individual and community development. Our goal is a communal society which is based on the voluntary associations of free individuals. Our task is to rapidly overcome the political and social crisis through the radical expansion of direct and indirect democracy, expanding people's political and social rights and their possibilities for asserting their interests. An essential condition for democracy and of respect for human rights is to end and limit monopolies of all kinds—economic, cultural, political, etc. Our party is taking firm action to achieve this. Over the longer term—taking advantage of our endowments—through organic development we will raise our country to a modern level of civilization.

9. We wish to ensure the socialist nature of the social system by placing the emphasis on the free development of individuals and communities, by

eliminating the alienated, bureaucratic and overcentralized exercise of power that neglected the rural areas, through:

- dynamic social development which leads, in the historical perspective, to the full attainment of human freedom;
- a sound system of social justice and fairness, equality of opportunities and social security, social solidarity;
- self-government based on the principle of popular representation;
- the development of voluntary activity, participatory democracy, a democratic political culture and social control at all levels of the political system.

New system of political institutions

Democratic constitutional state

10. Our program is the creation of the system of political institutions of democratic socialism, characterized by:

- a democratic constitutional state based on broad social consensus;
- introduction of institutions of direct democracy—referendum and popular initiative;
- balanced division of power among the various organizations and power centres, prevention of the excessive centralization of power and the use of force in political affairs—a freely elected parliament electing the supreme power by democratic public opinion, with the highest court safeguarding the constitutionality of legislation;
- a president of the republic to preserve the balance of the different branches of power and a government responsible to parliament;
- the judicature as a separate branch of power, and a supreme audit office to control state finances;
- a multi-party system serving the expression of civil liberty and political intentions, the free rivalry of the various political organizations and trends;
- independent social interest representations and professional interest organizations, constitutional guarantees for the defence of the interests of all the minorities in the country—ethnic, religious and other;
- an open political system that can be seen and controlled by the citizens; a public forum for all opinions that do not run counter to constitutional prohibitions;
- autonomy of local power functioning as a separate branch of the division of power, the local self-governments and regional self-administration; priority of popular representation over the functions of state power in the operation of the councils.

Market economy based on mixed ownership

11. In the transition to democratic socialism, the fundamental condition for economic renewal is the reform of ownership. We want freedom to acquire property and freedom to dispose of it. It is our conviction that the accumulation of wealth within the possibilities provided by the law does not infringe on the rights of other citizens and does not represent a return to capitalism. What is needed is a system of ownership that serve our economic development and social security at once. The basic elements of this ownership structure are already present in our economy. State ownership providing public services, communal ownership organized in cooperative and social forms, ownership by the social institutions and self-government bodies and private property together form the varied structure of ownership. Through market competition, this system of ownership becomes the driving force of development.

12. Over the past period we mistakenly regarded state property as social property, whereas actually it was the property of state administration and as it was guided by considerations outside the economy it could not function efficiently. The task of the reform of ownership is the socialization of state property. Intrepreneurial assets concentrated in the hands of the state must be passed to the new owners in a manner that is regulated by the law and controlled by society. In transforming the state ownership of enterprises there is a need first to define and separate through legislation the functions of the custodians of the assets who have an interest in the growth of capital, second of the entrepreneurs and managers who operate the enterprises and utilize the capital, and third, the workers and employees. The squandering away of the national wealth, the consumption of the assets on the basis of the short-term interests of the employees, and the abuse of managerial power must all be prevented. In addition, the possibility must also be created for the ownership of enterprises by the workers and employees.

13. Communal ownership also exists in a number of forms in our economy and we wish to increase the number of these forms in the course of the ownership reform. Cooperative ownership freed from state tutelage and based on free and voluntary cooperation is an important form of communal ownership. Ownership by the settlements is beginning to take shape in the course of the ownership reform by state administration, where the functions of ownership are exercised by the local popular representations, the self-governments. Ownership by the different associations, organizations and foundations further expands the range of these forms. This process must be strengthened.

14. The appearance of ownership by the social insurance institutions is of

special significance for security of existence. With ownership accumulating from the payments, the institutions themselves should dispose of the property for the benefit of the insurees. The investment of social insurance funds in enterprise shares could be one of the ways of increasing the assets of the institutions.

15. Private ownership is one of the indispensable driving forces of growth. Cooperation is necessarily growing in modern economy, and this can draw private ownership too into the communal ownership systems, ensuring its utilisation for the benefit of both the own and the whole of society. The real significance and acceptability of different forms of ownership must be measured on the basis of how their operation contributes to the prosperity of society.

16. We commit ourselves to a colourful variety of ownership forms, and we wish to provide constitutional guarantees for equal economic opportunities for the different forms (including foreign ownership) and for the security of ownership. Adapting to the rapidly changing world requires the constant creation of new forms. Individuals and their communities must have the right to freely choose and change the form of ownership. We consider it important to unfold the new forms of communal ownership. In the competition on the basis of equal chances among the forms the more efficient should win in all areas, and the unsuitable forms should be eliminated. The yardstick of efficiency is the yield and the long-term growth of material and intellectual wealth. Together with the appearance and increased role the owners of capital and entrepreneurs, the sensible participation of workers and employees must also be ensured in management affairs. The workers' interests are protected by the trade unions and other types of vocational interest organizations. Our party supports their activity.

17. Our economy must become a market economy. In addition, there is also a need for operation not based on the profit principle. The market must extend not only to the products, but also to the fundamental factors of production: to manpower, capital (shares, bonds), the land and information. A land marked based on the actual value of land, the fee tenure of land are an indispensable condition for the upswing of the agrarian sector. The modern market will organize and correct itself in many respects if the participants are able to prosper by satisfying the demands of consumers and users. For this reason, an important condition for the emergence of the market is the phasing out of unjustified state support, the transformation of the system of subsidies, and the elimination of conditions that permit some participants in the economy to evade the assessment of competition. Protection against the harmful concentration of economic power must be ensured by stimulating and regulating competition. We are struggling against impoverishment and not

against enrichment. Our party is making efforts to assist outside the economy—the workers of enterprises which have failed, to create training and retraining opportunities, and new jobs. In the course of restoring the market economy, special attention must be paid to the moral values of the market, such as readiness to cooperate, credibility and reliability. Work that creates value must be given respect it deserves and thrift must again become a virtue.

18. The fundamental condition of a developed market economy must be created: a modern, predictable, stable and flexible financial system. The guarantee of the effective operation of the money market and at the same time of the entire economy is the convertibility of the forint. Without convertible currency there is insufficient interaction between the external and internal market, and without an opening toward the external market, a genuine internal market cannot take shape either.

19. Enterprises based mixed ownership forms must stand in the axis of the economy, and an enterprise-friendly policy is needed for their wider spread. Both economic and legal means must be used to promote the advance of small and medium-sized enterprises, while the development of successful large enterprises must not be restricted either. Equality of economic opportunities must also be ensured for farms and for enterprises in the agrarian sphere. In keeping with Hungary's endowments, greater development possibilities are needed for the up-to-date areas of food production. For this, the irrational regulatory restrictions and the exploiting tax system should be eliminated immediately. The export of highly processed and quality foods should be assisted. Small-scale agricultural producers, whose activity not only contributes to supplying the population but also to improving the balance of trade, should be encouraged.

20. The role of the state must be changed with the creation of the market. As in all developed countries of the world, the state must undertake to create market conditions, to encourage new technologies, and to provide protection against the harmful effects of the market. Modern state and market economy require each other and at the same time restrict each other. A state economic policy expressing the interests of society is not in contradiction with the expansion of market economy; on the contrary, it promotes the attainment of social goals and guarantees the stability and transparency of the economic situation. The primary economic function of the state budget is to promote the development of the infrastructure.

21. On the threshold of the 21st century, technological, scientific, market and financial information provides the main source of energy for the economy. For this reason the old heavy industry and energy structure based on mass

production, must be abandoned and the transition begun towards an economy based on information and up-to-date services. Conditions must be created to make society receptive of innovations and intellectual values. The flow of information in all areas of economic, cultural and political life must be accelerated. The development of industry, agriculture and other productive areas depends on the state of the infrastructure. It is in the national interest to close the gap as soon as possible and this is also a fundamental condition for international integration.

22. Our economy is in a grave situation today. We must carry out the tasks of modernization and overcome the crisis simultaneously. To do this, the structure of the economy must be changed, bringing it into line with the main currents of world economy. At the same time, the growth of inflation and unemployment must be restricted, though we cannot do without preserving our international liquidity or using new methods of debt management. We must expand our relations with the international financial organizations and economic groups. By placing the relations on a market basis, we must effectively assert our national interests in our cooperation with our CMEA partners too.

Just distribution of income

23. Our goal is that the distribution of incomes, increasing individual incentives—should effectively encourage performance and at the same time ensure greater security of livelihood. We must realistically value the factors making up the national income: labour, capital, land, information and innovation. Return on capital, entrepreneurial profit, the rewards of innovation, agency and commission fees have also appeared as sources of income other than wages. We recognise the legitimacy of these incomes if they express effectiveness and are of benefit to society. However, the strictness of the law must be brought to bear on incomes acquired to the detriment of others, by fraud and corruption.

24. It is in the common interest of the workers, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, youth and pensioners for real incomes to rise. Well trained people, ready to undertake risks and seeking new paths are the driving force in all strata of society. They are entitled to a higher income for their successful activity. This is not in contradiction with solidarity and equal opportunities; indeed, it creates the real material basis for them. We are striving to create a social policy, an economic and distribution model in which the diligence of citizens and welfare benefits guaranteed by the state are the basis of a decent livelihood. Even in the period of rapid transformation

of the economy, no social state must be allowed to fall lastingly or permanently behind the average for society.

25. The taxation system must also guarantee the fairness of income distribution. This must not be subordinated to budget considerations at any given time. Taxation must not hold back performance. The incentive to more and better work and intellectual performance must not be strangled by an excessive burden of taxation. Unfair overtaxation must not be allowed to strangle culture. The taxation system must be enterprise-friendly, it must encourage the owners of income to invest, save and set up foundations for public benefit. Ventures that assist restructuring and are located in crisis zones should be entitled to concessions.

Human society

26. For the development of a modern and humane society it is indispensable for the state to assume a new kind of role in culture, education, health, sports and environment protection. These are decisive short-term conditions for the life of society and at the same time for a high standard of economic activity, and in the long run they are the most profitable areas of investment. We are for a definite improvement in the standard of education, health and basic welfare services.

27. Our party regards national education and the development of learning as the fundamental condition of progress. An immediate and radical change is needed in the material and moral recognition of intellectual work and the activity of the intelligentsia. Culture must receive a share of material resources corresponding to its decisive significance. The advancement of culture is a task for which the program can be elaborated successfully only with the cooperation of the profession and the participants in public life. Our party does not stive for an exclusive role here either. It supports and embraces all efforts that serve the development of education and culture; and at the same time it opposes the exposure of cultural interests to short-term political struggles and pasimonius economic considerations. It is the fundamental task and obligation of the state to ensure the material and intellectual conditions for respect being shown for basic individual and communal rights associated with education and high- standard schools. However, we are opposed to the monopoly of education by the state. We support competition between differing educational programs and the establishment of a system of education providing scope for autonomy and the principle of freedom of study. Only the tasks of the necessary regulation should be left to central guidance.

28. We regard the right to health as a fundamental human right; consequently

it is indispensable to improve the conditions of the health institutions and to increase the share of the national income going to health. Preventive activity, primary care, maternity and child welfare, public health and epidemiological services—at a rising standard—continue to be the task of the state. Access to primary care is the right of all citizens; however, its institutions are in need of radical reform and the substantial improvement of their level of equipment is indispensable. We support the spread of voluntary individual insurance for those who wish services above this level. In addition to the expansion of its financial sources, the standard of care must be improved by the increased application of rationality and the performance principle, while the material bases must be expanded with the introduction of modern social insurance forms and the involvement of foundation and enterprise sources. Privately-owned clinics must also be given a place among the institutions to give the patients greater choice. The conditions for a healthy way of life must be created through the combined efforts of society—with the improvement of human relations and living conditions.

29. A healthy and safe environment is a decisive element for the quality of life and the development of society. Our party initiates the development of a system of economic conditions which results in environment-friendly, energy-saving economic activity. Preservation of nature and the valuable architectural environment must become the generally characteristic behaviour of our society and a moral value.

30. It is the fundamental task of welfare policy to moderate the extreme differences in the standard of living. An effective welfare policy must also be applied to avoid mass unemployment. Through a job-creating economic strategy, education and retraining programs, the stimulation of entrepreneurial activity, the expansion of opportunities to work abroad, job sharing, part-time work and other solutions, the number of those who are excluded from the world of work must be restricted as far as possible. We continue to regard the right to work and social security as a fundamental value; however, we do not wish this to mean the security of inefficient enterprises, but of individuals and families.

31. It is the firm intention of the party to spare no efforts in changing change the economic and social conditions that reproduce poverty. Preventive measures are a rational need from both the humane and economic points of view and do not arise from the intention to be charitable. Through such measures we can save the enormous costs of the human burdens of such serious social phenomena as crime, suicide, alcoholism and drug abuse, and the struggle waged against them. In addition to programs for health, education and sports, the strengthening of the family and of communities and assistance

for social adjustment also require the modification of the entire system and of the public welfare system.

32. The family is the basic institution of society, it keeps alive the nation. Priority must therefore be given to support for families and institutions that assist families in the distribution of resources. The application of a consistent family and population policy is important for the historical survival of the Hungarian nation and the country. Our party is striving to ensure that over the long term women can decide freely whether they wish to enter paid employment or choose motherhood—also materially recognised as their vocation, or try to combine the two—also taking advantage of possibilities for part-time employment. Women should be given a greater role in public life. Their equality must be achieved in practice in the workplaces and in all areas of life.

33. Youth are the future, not only of the nation's but also of the party's. Our party's program and its entire activity must be imbued with a sense of responsibility for youth; this cannot be narrowed down to youth policy and cannot be regarded merely as a generational, educational or welfare problem. Our commitment to democracy, reform and radical changes coincides with the natural aspirations of youth, expresses their desires, and at the same time is a guarantee of a secure future for the young. The state policy on children and youth should be an integral part of the government's social policy and should serve to bring about a change in their situation. It is an urgent task to improve their chances of obtaining housing and to expand the job opportunities for school-leavers.

34. We are committed to the solution of the problems of the elderly, to increase respect for them and to expand their role in society. The transformation of the pension system is imperative. All citizens should be entitled to a basic pension, irrespective of their earlier work. However, the differing performances must also be recognized: the basic pension must be supplemented by a pension determined by the work done. In addition, the spread of voluntary, individual pension insurance is also desirable. The party wishes to act for the preservation of the real value of pensions, for a calm and meaningful life for the elderly.

35. The contradictions of the earlier development and distribution model appeared in concentrated form in the neglect of the Hungarian rural areas, in the uneven development of the different regions and in the backwardness of certain parts of the country. We wish to make a firm break with the model that levied and concentrated the resources generated in the different areas of the country. We adopt a stand for the interests of the rural areas, for their self-government and economic development. The transformation of the

council system should be accompanied by ending disproportions in the support for the counties. All communities that wish to, must be able to create their own autonomous council, economic, cultural, health and commercial institutions.

III THE NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

36. The most important aspect and guarantee of our reform aspirations is the foundation of the Hungarian Socialist Party. Our party wishes to operate as a modern socialist political movement, respecting the constitution, in rivalry with other parties and functioning as an alliance of platforms. It respects the national common will expressed in the elections, and at the same time, like our political rivals, it is striving, through non-violent means, for a decisive government role. Our new political organization is

- a left-wing socialist party which strives to attain a synthesis of the lasting and fundamental socialist and communist values, the goals of a society that is capable of development, is environment-friendly and humane. Its intellectual roots reach back to the Marxian ideological system, but it is open to all new, scientifically sound ideas and, it invites into its ranks, regardless of differences in world outlook, all those who actively support its political program;

- the people's party which represents and expresses as political will the interests of the overwhelming majority of society—above all the workers, physical and intellectual, who live from their work;

- the party of reforms which concentrates its efforts on the epochal tasks of the present period, structural reforms and the peaceful transition to democracy; seeking a way out of the present crisis, it is already beginning the preparation for the transition to the civilization of the next century and into the new type of community of nations. It is committed to and the initiator of the renewal of the Hungarian nation, the attainment of a communal and welfare society.

In this way it will be

- the party of the nation, which links the cultivation and further development of the values of the Hungarian nation and the ethnic minorities with international solidarity, undertakes the protection of the political and cultural interests of Hungarians living abroad;

- a democratic party representing its members, a party which—rejecting

democratic centralism but preserving its unity of action—also applies in its own internal structure and organization democratic principles - the principle of self-organization, creative debates and the freedom of platforms, and the control by the members of all elected bodies in the movement.

IV OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

37. As a part of the progressive and democratic forces of the world we wish to contribute to the solution of the problems of the world at the end of the century. Facing ourselves and our past, we are opening up new paths. There is no historical example of the transition from dictatorial state socialism to democratic socialism based on a market economy. For this reason we cannot expect to come closer to our goal by copying foreign models and applying abstract ideologies, but wish to draw on international experiences.

38. Without the reassessment and transformation of our system of economic relations, we have no hope of catching up with the main stream of world development. We are striving to build mutually advantageous political and economic relations with all countries, with integration and cooperation organizations. We urge the far-reaching reform of CMEA by spreading commodity and monetary relations that reflect the real value of goods and services, and at the same time make efforts to become firmly linked to the developed and dynamically developing regions of the world. We think it is necessary to create a just international economic order.

39. If we do not want to be the unskilled labourers and poor relations of Europe and to be forced onto the fringes of development as the victims of a lop-sided industrial civilization, we must base our strategy for breaking out of the crisis on high qualifications, our advanced services and scientific production. However, knowledge-intensive production demands educated people and a new social structure. We wish to advance together with the developed countries of the world in the creation and application of new scientific achievements. We wish to benefit from international contacts in the fields of economy and science, in culture and in the everyday lives of people.

40. Our party wants an independent Hungary. It urges the government to consistently represent the interests of our county in international life. It regards the sovereignty and equal rights of states, their territorial inviolability, the ban on the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of friendly relations among the peoples as fundamental norms. It wishes to support the foreign policy that has already enhanced our

country's international prestige: efforts to create democratic, peaceful and secure international relations favouring cooperation, to build confidence and give full respect to human rights. Our party is guided by the recognition that national interests can only be asserted if international realities are considered and the country's treaty commitments respected.

41. It is our conviction that our country's national interests required and will require untroubled and balanced relations with the Soviet Union. The similarity of our aspirations nurtures the hope that our relations will develop into voluntary cooperation on a basis of equality between countries freely choosing their social systems.

42. Our party strives for rapprochement instead of confrontation in the relationship between the alliance systems still existing. We encourage all political and military steps that serve the strengthening of European detente. It is our goal for NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization to become superfluous and at once eliminable before the end of this century. As a member of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, our country wishes to act with independence and initiative to support agreements between the blocs, to promote confidence, and urge the elimination of ideological differences of views from relations between states. We consider that the time is ripe for the internal reform of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, for its democratization and the strengthening of the defensive character of military doctrine. We are convinced that membership of the alliance system cannot be the basis for interference in the internal affairs of state.

43. It is the conviction of our party that the security of our country can be guaranteed only by our membership in the alliance system but also by the whole of our international relations. Our defence policy is based on the principle of economically realizable and sufficient defence. Our party urges the soonest possible implementation of the reform of the Hungarian armed forces. It is our firm position that the Hungarian armed forces may not be used except according to the provisions of the constitution either within or beyond the borders of the country.

44. We wish to contribute to the unification of Europe. The development of Hungary, too, depends principally on the future of Europe. The security of our continent cannot be based on weapons, only on political, economic and cultural cooperation, or direct contacts among people and on confidence. Our party supports the idea that all foreign military forces should withdraw from the territory of the European states, and that the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary should also be withdrawn as a part of the disarmament process. We propose that our state should continue to play a part in the unfolding of the Helsinki process. Our party sincerely desires the cooperation of the peoples along the Danube, the improvement and deepening of relations. It is our

conviction that it is not the changing of national frontiers in our region but their opening that serves the real interests of the people living here.

45. It is our fundamental moral duty to raise our voice for human rights, for equal rights for the minorities, and for the defence of these rights and their full implementation in Hungary and everywhere in the world. Our party takes a firm stand for the full attainment and respect of the individual and collective nationality and minority rights of Hungarians living beyond our borders, and condemns their violation of those rights wherever it occurs. All possible efforts should be made to assure cultural autonomy and the possibility of political participation according to the international norms to the national and ethnic minorities living in Hungary. We must devote special attention to the problems of the Gypsies, supporting their own initiatives for advancement. In the process of the democratic renewal of Hungarian society we count on the active support of the Hungarians living in various places of the world. We urge the further improvement of their relations with the mother country.

46. The Hungarian Socialist Party—as an integral part of the European Left—is prepared to cooperate without ideological restrictions with all democratic political forces that assume responsibility for the future of Europe. It expects to work above all with the communist, socialist, social democratic and other left-wing trends committed to reforms and interested in the success of our historic undertaking; it expects to share in the efforts of the new type of environmentalist, youth, peace and women's movements. We wish to build our party relations on full autonomy and equality, on the full freedom of thought and action of all partners. We wish to preserve our complex relations with the parties of the international communist movement. Our common traditions and the important achievements of the movement foster a special interest in the experiences of social democracy. We are also seeking possible areas of cooperation with bourgeois political forces. We highly esteem the efforts of the progressive bourgeois humanists in the interest of peace, democracy and equal economic relations, and we are prepared to embrace their values that have proved lasting.

No. 6

To Comrades László Vári and Miklós Balogh

The method of nomination, its form as stated to us and the experiences of its operation in practice do not make it possible for me—as well as for a number of other fellow-delegates—to take part in substance in the nomination of members of the presidium, in view of my being an independent delegate (not belonging to any of the platforms). The moment has come when I no longer see any point in carrying out my function as a delegate. Thus, expressing my thanks for the privilege, I hereby return my mandate. Consequently, I am not in a position to participate in the work of nomination and in voting.

Budapest, 9th October 1989, at 18.25 hrs

Congress of MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party)

Dr. Lajos Gubcsi

No. 7 Echo

I am interested in victory of the Hungarian democracy. My generation and my daughter's and son's friends have no other choice. The best Hungarian politicians are aware of this, and the risk, too. I hope so. The international press is realistic in evaluating both sides of our situation. I quote the **International Herald Tribune** and the **Newsweek**:

“FOR HUNGARY, THE GOALS ARE WORTH THE LARGE RISKS”

by William Pfaff

BERLIN—Democratic reform is at greater risk in Hungary than in Poland. If reform fails, the consequences would be grave for the other East European countries and East Germany, and for the Soviet Union itself. Forces in the USSR opposed to reform, even now appalled by the upheaval provoked by Mikhail Gorbachev, would find decisive vindication in a Hungarian debacle. The transformation now under way in East-West relations could collapse. Much rides on Hungarian success.

But Hungary lacks a force comparable to Poland's Solidarity—a mass

movement with a structure of leadership, discipline, a program, a system of debating and making policy. Hungarian opposition groups have existed in public for the last two years or so, notably the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the Hungarian Parliament gave opposition parties legal standing in mid-October. As yet ail are groups of uncounted membership and unsure programs. They are alliances among divergent opinions.

The Democratic Forum has ideological roots in a prewar movement of writers and intellectuals attempting to ally themselves with, and speak for, the peasantry. Its members today are largely from the provincial intelligentsia and professional class. The Alliance of Free Democrats is a more urban affair. Both are untested, with unknown popular resonance. Some prewar parties have recently been reestablished—the Smallholders, for example—which might win votes simply on their names.

The Communist Party has reinvented itself as the "Socialist Party", although a conservative wing resists the change and professional party functionaries are hostile to moves that threaten their careers. The Communists and their auxiliary organizations, the paramilitary Workers' Militia, the youth movement and so forth, have surreptitiously tried to transfer real estate and other party wealth to private hands or to newly formed private companies—a form of privatization of public assets that free market economists had not anticipated.

It is a confused situation, if an exhilarating one. There is no solid moderate force yet which seems capable of winning the national elections set to take place next year, and of leading a new government on the course of intelligent reform. Government reorganization is contributing to the problem. The current place of transition from the single-party state means that it could be as late as next summer before a new government is formed. Poland gave itself a new government in a matter of weeks. (Date of elections: end of March.—L. G.)

Hungary's new government, when it does come, may be perilously weak, resting on coalition and compromises among immature parties. The plan for the presidency would have the president appoint cabinets but be unable to dismiss them. The president will initially be popularly elected but his successors will be named by the parliament.

Much in all of this recalls the unstable Third and Fourth Republics of prewar and early postwar France. It is very democratic, and the choice of a weak system is easy to understand, given what Hungarians have been through since 1949. But it does not seem what a nation needs in a time of great and disruptive change.

Hungary is not in any case a country with strong democratic traditions (even

though its parliamentary history can be traced to the 13th century). Its prewar government was authoritarian and reactionary. Liberal movements in Hungarian history have repeatedly failed—crushed in 1849, and again in 1949 and 1956.

The problem of internal minorities, which dominated Hungarian politics throughout the 19th century, was brutally ended by Hitler's slaughter of Hungary's Jewish minority, and by frontier changes after the first world war and population transfers after the second. Now there is a problem of external minorities. A quarter of the Hungarian nation live outside Hungary—in Transylvania in Romania, in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the Ukraine in the Soviet Union. All are possible sources of future troubles.

Nationalism is a powerful force, and could certainly explode against the Russians. Anti-Semitism is a factor of some significance, linked to the fact that a disproportionate number of Jews were among the Communist leadership installed in power in Hungary in 1949. Most people prominent in politics and public life have compromised pasts. No one knows how tolerant the public is going to be. As in Poland, much hatred has been stored up against Communists and their collaborators.

The economic situation is better than in Poland, thanks in considerable measure to West German as well as Japanese assistance in recent years, as Hungarian reform developed. But difficulty lies ahead and there are illusions about the West. There is a widely held assumption that the Western countries—above all the United States—will step in to solve Hungary's problems. When that does not happen there will be trouble. When trouble does come, if a coherent and capable moderate leadership has not emerged, a veer toward radicalism is possible. Radicalism in turn can provoke reaction, the call for a party of order. The goals, though—free votes, free parties, a free government and a free economy—are worth any risk. It would be a shame if the East Europeans, in their justifiable eagerness to shake off Lenin, went to the other extreme.

It was a Hungarian who wrote the definitive history of what happens when market society runs rampant. Karl Polányi, the late historian and political-economist, observed in his magnificent book "The Great Transformation" that the breakdown of European society with World War II, the interwar depression and the rise of Bolshevism and fascism originated "in the Utopian endeavor of economic liberalism to set up a self-regulating market system".

The radical idea that citizens simply had to accept whatever verdict the market system spit out proved too terrifying to bear when depressions came "in the social and economic suffering of our age," Mr. Polányi wrote in the fateful year of 1944, "in the tragic vicissitudes of the depression, fluctuations

of currency, mass unemployment, shiftings of social status, mass destructions of states, we have experienced the worst.”

By all means, tear down those statues of Lenin and Marx. But before rushing to erect statues of Adam Smith and Milton Friedman in Warsaw or Budapest, Poles and Hungarians might consider building ones of the late Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme or the great economist of the middle way, John Maynard Keynes—or thee historian Karl Polányi.”

The Newsweek:

“Imre Pozsgay, Hungarian Politburo member and a leading reformer: A crisis prevails in Eastern Europe. There is no political or even geographical unity. What you call the East bloc is an artificial linkage, a hybrid imposed after Yalta. The crisis of Europe lies in its division. Protracted problems here will lead to protracted problems in Western Europe as well. We have an unprecedented opportunity for creating a united Europe. It’s not a matter of money. We want access to Western technology, to economic innovation and foreign investment. We want entrepreneurs who can teach us management skills as well.

We have seen no sign that Moscow wants to pull us back. To the contrary, Gorbachev’s perestroika is a wind at our back. Hungary has reached a point where there is no going back.

The Hungary of the future will be similar to West European social democracies. The party state will cease to exist. Dictatorial socialism will disappear. We must create a constitutional state ruled by law. The goal should be a parliamentary government freely elected from among competing parties. If defeated, the party will transfer power as in any democracy. Hungary is not an oligarchy: we should be able to change our leaders at any time.”

The International Herald Tribune:

“The Quiet Hungarian Revolution”

In trying to rally support, a bloodless revolution, like the one in Hungary, suffers from a terrible handicap. Reforms announced with the regularity of mail delivery do not explode with the same impact as Molotov cocktails. Barriers against the free flow of ideas, when tumbled, do not crash as forcefully upon Washington’s consciousness, as collapsing barricades. Bodies do not litter the streets of Budapest in 1989.

Perhaps it is the undramatic and incremental nature of this revolt that accounts for the Bush administration’s sluggish response. Yet, for those of us

who experienced Hungary's first attempt at reform, this evolution has achieved stunning results.

We who lived on the other side of the line during the chilliest of the Cold War years did not find the experience as rewarding as distant specialists now feel. For example, Lawrence Eagleburger, deputy secretary of state, has recently professed to nostalgia for those bad old days.

There came the sublime moment for my generation. October 1956, the moment we as a Hungarian nation, more than a little encouraged by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's stirring exhortations, momentarily achieved the impossible dream of freedom. "Budapest, President Dwight Eisenhower pronounced, "is no longer merely the name of a city. Henceforth, it is a new and shining symbol of man's yearning to be free.

Washington's eloquent *cri de coeur* was not quite loud enough to mute the rumble of Soviet tanks. The Red Army decided that the region was better suited to gray uniformity than reckless experiments in democracy.

In the months that followed, Mr. Dulles was uncharacteristically quiet, while 200,000 of us took to the border. Like those East Germans now bounding over the Austrian-Hungarian border or coming from Prague, we left all possessions, friends, jobs and families to gamble on democracy.

But exile, however comfortable, is not a natural state. And so this year, observing my old country take its clumsy steps toward democracy, I have again felt a surge of hope.

With thousands of other Hungarians, including ranking members of the Communist Party, I stood on Heroes' Square last June and honored those who had tried and failed in Hungary's first attempt at Revolution.

We reburied Prime Minister Imre Nagy and the other heroes of 1956. Lie that this was a People's Democracy. The funeral, an explicit admission by the party of its wrong in the past, marked a significant station on the road to revolution.

* * *

"You must be interested in how the Democratic Forum (MDF), the biggest opposition group which is widely expected the main coalition party next year, created its program on different political and economic issues. Let's see some of them.

Their program is a mixture of liberal, Christian Democratic and rural traditions.

The topic debate of their November congress was when and how to choose the President of Hungary.

The MDF overwhelmingly elected Mr.Lajos Für, a little-known 58-year old historian, as its presidential candidate.

MDF officials said that given the anti-communist mood in the country, it was wise for the party to distance itself from Mr.Pozsgay.

Mr.Antall, a politician finely attuned to Hungary's traditions of compromise and pragmatism, declines to say which parties the MDF was prepared to work with in coalition.

The MDF pays particular attention to the question of which party would in future control the defence, interior and foreign ministries.

It rules out any withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

The MDF agreed on that reconstruction of the economy, which would entail attracting foreign capital, rebuilding the infrastructure, a privatisation policy, subject to close monitoring and the re-introduction of private ownership in the agriculture, is important. Its long-term goal is neutrality in foreign policy. In the short-term, the MDF wants Hungary's role in the Warsaw Pact to be similar to that of France's in Nato—not part of the command structure.

On ethnic questions, the MDF—which is sensitive to (untrue—L. G.) allegations of anti-semitism—calls for full protection both for minorities within Hungary and for Hungarians in neighbouring Romania.

My Popular Democratic Union shared the view of the Forum in the importance of an early election of the President. We proposed the voters not to support the Free Democrats' initiative in delaying this election.

We were successful in convincing millions of the voters. The radical "free democrats" won the war a la Pyrrhus. I have common view with "The Economist's" columnist, that I quote:

"Countdown to democracy"

"Politicians from all sides are queeueing up to try their lucks. Mr. Imre Pozsgay, until recently the hot favourite, is the candidate of the new Socialist party, the successor to the officially extinct (but still breathing) communist party. Another leading Socialist reformer, Mr.Mátyás Szűrös, who is rather enjoying the job of acting president, has declared himself ready to run if enough people press him to do so. Mr.Kálmán Kulcsár, the reformist justice minister, has decided not to join the new party, but he has been nominated by its umbrella body, the Patriotic People's Front. The biggest opposition party, the Democratic Forum, is backing Mr. Lajos Für, a historian, and other parties are fielding Mr.Sándor Rácz, chairman of the Budapest Workers' Committees (which resisted the invading Russians in 1956).

Sometimes I feel, new real forces are emerging in Hungary. But I am embarassed, if I see old forces emerging. Former foreign minister Frigyes Puja claims that many people still want the old communist party because the other parties including the Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) are pushing the country into a disaster. The three other leader figures are János Berecz, formerly top ideologist of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP), the party's one-time general secretary Károly Grósz and Róbert Ribánszky, once secretary to the late János Kádár. All four are regarded as hardline communists by the press and the public opinion.

The four do not conceal the fact that many big differences separated them on essential issues, a thing they consider less important in what they describe as the "new and dangerous" situation, than their cooperation.

Many members of the one-time HSWP find it rather hard to accept the shocks of disappointment. The question that emerges now is to what extent it can be allowed and to what extent it is decent to unfold a new old flag by appealing to such feelings, as sorrow and anguish. Even if by making corrections and patches, the flag contains the slogans and goals of a programme that failed to materialise. A policy harks back which pushed the country to the brink of total economic collapse.

This is a policy which, with its debt of \$20 billion virtually dashes our hopes for quite a few years ahead to achieve a realistic and tangible economic advance. The practical implementation of these goals and values has left behind a legacy of bankruptcy.

P.s.: We Hungarian try to avoid bankruptcy. That is the task and responsibility of one or two new generations.

Thank you for your attention and kind fellowship.

We together with you started this book with János Kádár and we finished now—or only interrupted—with Imre Nagy.

Between the two old gentleman between their names and the events, they symbolized and headed there is almost 4 decades, with successes that were born in blood; and losts that were born in funny days. My generation was born 4 decades ago. 4 years ago we realized that something went wrong. And 4 months ago we knew: our party, more exactly, its leaders lost the coming elections.

Good bye to you Dear Readers, I assure you that Hungary will overcome. But where is a revolution? Are we waiting? Or we are ready to fight?

Yours sincerely,
Lajos Gubcsi

(A man, sometimes elected, sometimes self estimated, but always ready to expand and to represent other's interests, always hopefully, so with inside spiritual power that it is not an unrealistic exaggeration if he writes: "on behalf of a new generation.")

OSZK

Országos Széchényi Könyvtár



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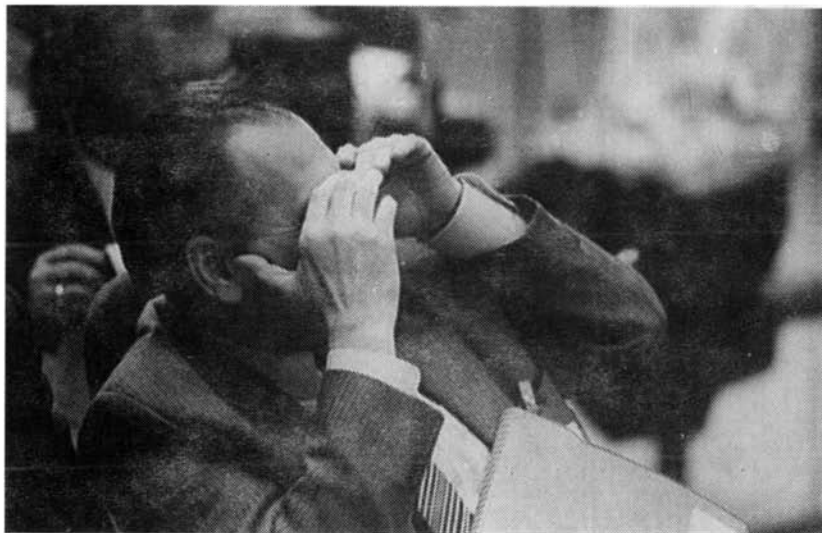
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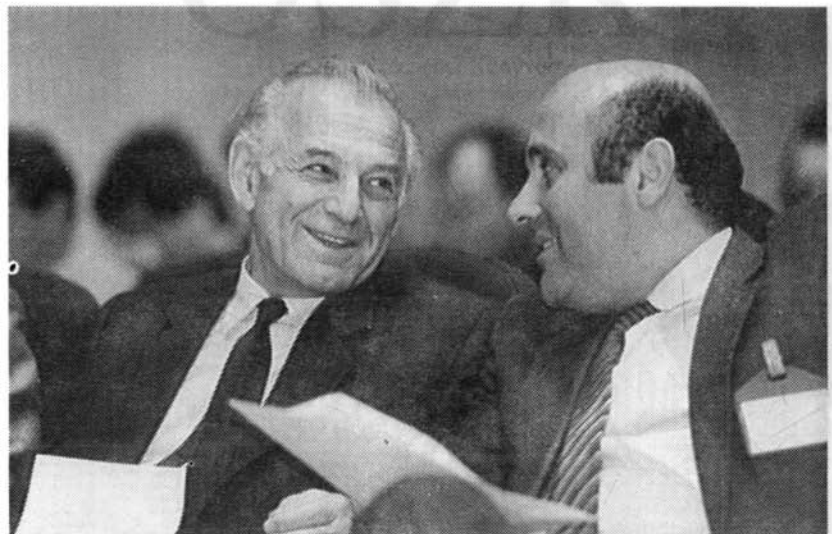
Károly Grósz
Scanning the horizon



Imre Keszérű
Is this left or right then?



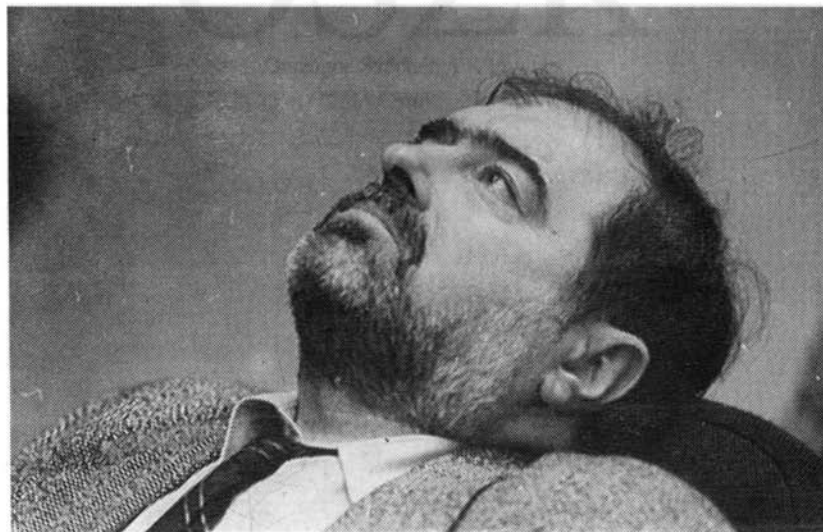
Dialogue (?) between Imre Pozsgay and Róbert Burgert at a meeting of the movement For Democratic Hungary.
The other adviser is János Barabás



Rezső Nyers, János Barabás
Harmony and good cheer



Rezső Nyers, Jenő Fock
Exchange of views of the generations



Pál Vastagh
Where will all this lead?



László Kovács, Rezső Nyers, Jenő Kovács
Council for Mutual Aid



Károly Grósz
It's not over yet. . .



Delegate comrades! The first day was a disappointment!
Don't hurt the hundreds of thousands of hopeful HSWP members!



The congress hall
Landscape after a battle





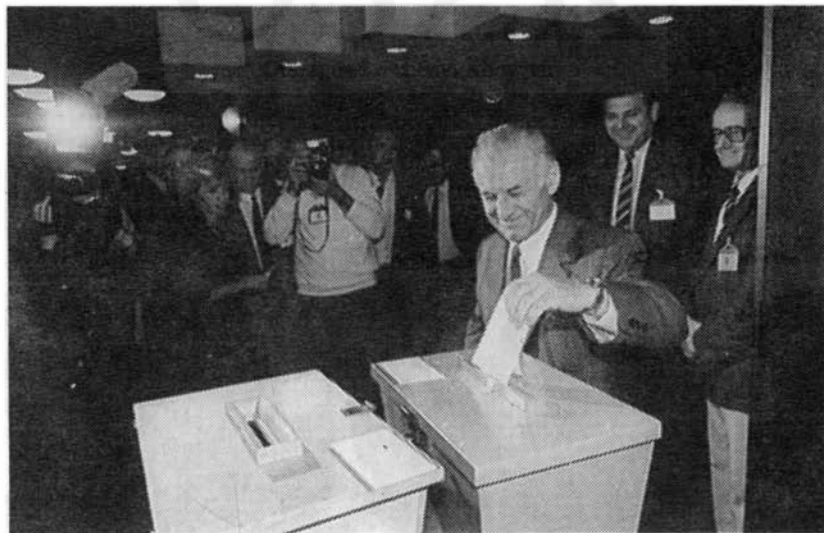
Lajos Gubcsi
"My last tango in the congress hall – without a microphone"



Imre Pozsgay, Miklós Németh
Will there be an axis?



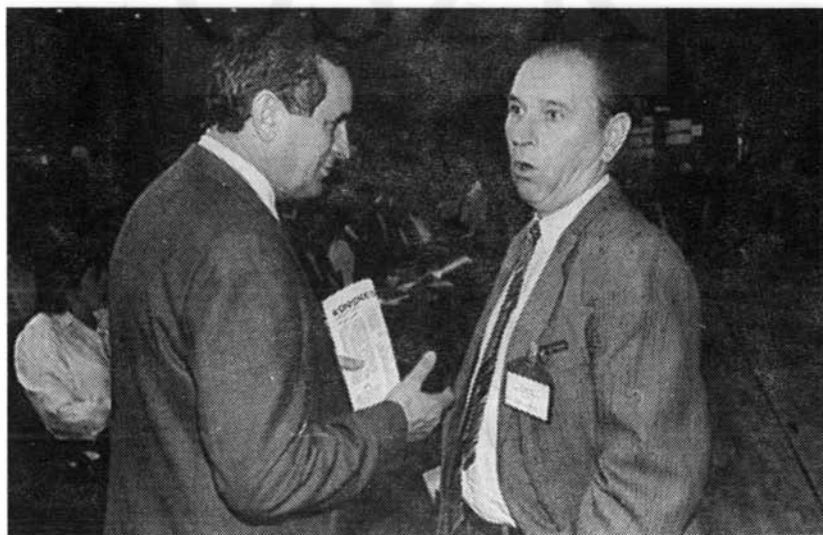
Imre Pozsgay, Miklós Németh
To choose or not to choose? And together or apart?



Rezső Nyers
"Who would you choose?"



Members of the government
Shall we go or stay? We're staying for the time being . . .



Károly Grósz
That's asking too much!



Above: Resting in peace (Attila Gubcsi)

Front cover: In Transylvania (Attila Gubcsi)

**„The name of its vehicle is not
a criterion of truth „**

ANDRÁS SÜTŐ