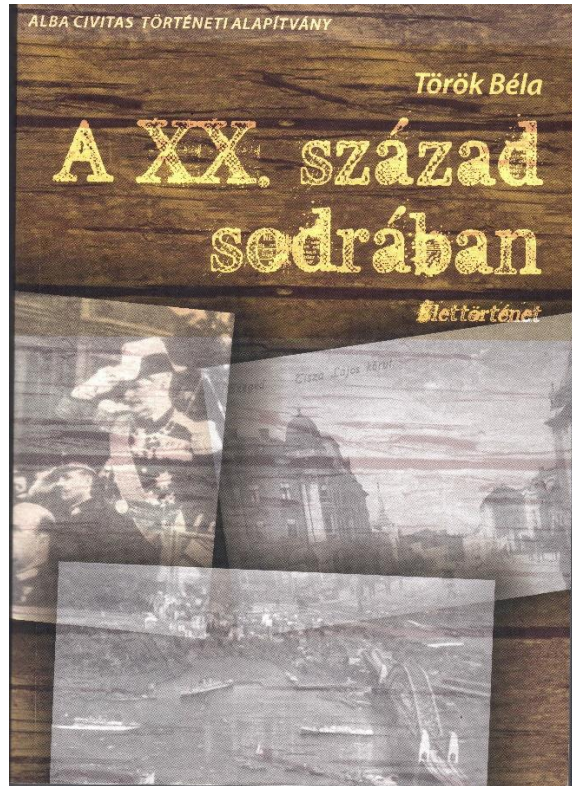


IN THE MAINSTREAM OF THE XX CENTURY-Living History



I dedicate these remembrances to my beloved wife Ica, who was my loyal partner during the decades of our exile.



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(The published book in Hungarian has been translated by Leslie (László) Török into three parts. In Part 1, the author wrote extensively about his father, childhood, tertiary education, his university degrees and early employment. Part 2 of his book is about his family as Refugees in Germany and Migrant Life in new Home in distant Australia. Part 3 is assessment of the politics of that period and how he sees the future possibilities.)

Editors: Maureen and Christopher Torok

Part I -Childhood, University and Career in Hungary

FORWARD

In the twilight of a human life, it is natural that almost everyone looks back to the past, trying to evaluate their achievements and endeavors in order to pass on their experiences to those after them. This is an especially strong feeling of my generation. We have lived through one century and right now at the beginning of the new millennium we are witnessing much change in the world around us and I feel that it is important that future generations are given a better understanding of their past. Life histories and memoirs are often written by those who themselves have played a leading role in the hustle and bustle of life and so might be better equipped to explain the events of the past. The question arises as to why I now find the need to record my life and thoughts into this log. I left Hungary when I turned thirty and so as a child, student, university graduate and new government employee was not able to play a role in the country's political life. I have always been interested in political philosophy, not so much in academic study but rather in research work.

My military service too was limited to service in peace time and as fate would have it, only in the last months of the war.

At the end of the Second World War, my family and I, after a period of four years in refugee camps and emergency housing in Europe, found ourselves abroad seemingly at the end of the world Australia.

With hundreds of thousands of countrymen, I never gave up my Hungarians roots and have used all my talents and opportunities to keep my connection to the fate of the Hungarian nation.

During the final months of the Second World War, we had to make a decision whether to look to the east or west, the ancient sentiment declared cried out:

"Rather be a hero for a moment, than a slave for a lifetime."

Many people bled to death in the fighting during the last months, but the ones who stayed behind had to endure a life-long slavery.

Those who stayed at home suffered through the trials and tribulations of the Russian occupation. Their situation sometimes turned for the better and on occasions they had more bread, better housing, and there was a hope for better times. The Marxist utopia, the corrupt leadership used the country's military to continue to further punish the country.

And we, who were in the "free" West, had to struggle to establish economic self-sufficiency and the pressures to assimilate in these new circumstances.

For many decades, many people at home believed that we were in lands of milk and honey, but knew nothing about our problems and struggles.

Perhaps we too did not fully understand the situation at home nor the pressures the occupation placed on those remaining compromising their spirit of freedom.

How did many Hungarian exiles ended up in distant lands overseas, how did we see the fate of Hungarian peoples and how did we see the world political situation?

The writer wants to answer these questions in this book through the events of his life.

Maybe after the resurrection of the nation this will assist a Hungarian historian to correctly reflect this generation living victims.

My first memories

When astrologers produce their horoscopes, they establish where and when the person was born. They think that everyone's fate is determined by the attraction of celestial bodies towards the earth. When using scientific methodology, you cannot agree with this view, but we cannot deny that a person's date and place of birth is of great significance. We have to consider other factors as well. A man's destiny is also governed by his nationality, religion, social status, and the history at the time he is alive.

To be born Hungarian has its own fate especially when you look back to the nation's thousands of years of history, it is significant that the people lived in peace for only two decades of its history. There was almost no one Hungarian generation which would have lived his earthly course without having to suffer because of his nationality.

My generation who lived in the Twentieth Century had to face most serious upheavals and who is to say that if we reflect that every step taken was correct.

Each time when we have to decide whether to turn left or right, we will naturally be influenced by our faith. The Christian Hungary as a result was limited in the exercise of its free will as it could not deny its faith. Often the decisions and compromises turned out to be incorrect, but peace of mind can only be found in the Lord.

Family traditions and social situations define and limit the freedom of one's actions, no matter how much one rebels you must always consider the circumstances of your society and family.

I was born on 6th day of October 1914 in the city of Szeged. Franz Joseph was the emperor and the historic Great Hungary was then complete. Ferenc Deák the country's respected statesman was responsible in achieving reconciliation with Austria which gave subsequent decades of peace to a nation which had almost bled to death. The people were under the illusion that this was the beginning of the second millennium of a development and growth for the nation.

A few months before my birth the guns were again fired, but at this time it was still the age of European cooperation, the wars had a dynastic complexion and overwhelmingly with racial interests, the soldiers marched to the front covered in flowers.

The various faiths were not independent from the state. The state specifically identified itself as Christian but was liberal in dealing with the historic religions and provided protection to the Jewish and Muslim faiths as well.

The parliamentary life gave limited freedoms to the people, but individual freedom was not affected by these limitations but gave a free path for future progress.

Szeged at this time was not as advanced a university town as it is today. The great flood scars were still recognizable by all. Areas outside the main ring road were more rural in nature. I saw the light of day in Fodor Street in the 'koroda'. This area contained the city's maternity hospital and I remember that in my youth people still talked about the 'koroda'. Later this word became out of date due to the language reforms introduced to eliminate artificial words. The word 'hospital' won over the word 'koroda'.

The Török family's house was in Zrinyi Street. In its place the Bishop's Palace was built in the 1920s. Our first home was in Fekete Sas Street (Black Eagle) and belonged in the parish church of St. Demetrius and it was here that I was baptized. Today, only the "Broken Tower" reminds us of the memory of this old church...

My father was 34 when I was born. He opened his attorney's office in 1912 and his practice developed nicely but was interrupted by the war. As a lieutenant he went into military service. In his memoirs, which are in my possession he describes the winters of 1912-15 with a recurrent severe arthritic condition and the Army assigned him to the Pöstyén spa for recovery where both my mother and I spent a couple of months. All this, of course, I do not remember, but I know from my mother's story, it was a lovely Slovakian nurse who took care of me. My father was eventually decommissioned and declared unfit for service on the front. In 1916, we moved to 22 Deák Ferenc Street a beautiful four-bedroom apartment that also became my father's law office.



Author and his father

First memories – scattered images - come from this period. Family tradition says that I was particularly fond of my father's mother, but of course I have no memories about this ... Only when she was taken to the Budapest hospital for treatment, I felt a great loss and I remember standing there near the hem of the curtain which showed interlocking squares and in my imagination, I transformed it into a train which was taking away my beloved Nagyanya (grand mummy) ...

I also have memories that on 17th of March 1917 Kata my little sister was born, and while the family was anticipating a boy to be named Miklós (Nicholas) I declared that "I do not mind, just that she had arrived safely ..."

I still remember my parents and I watching from our window a zeppelin airship passing over the city. The Zeppelin trajectory suggested that it was probably connected with German plans against Romanian disturbances.

It is understandable that the tragic outcome of the (first world) war and the historical significance of these events took hold of the little boy's attention. I have strong memories that the population of Szeged feared that the Serbs who occupied part of Újszeged wanted to blow up the main bridge. We lived nearby at the Milko palace and we children hid amongst the furniture.

In my memory I still have the image of the colorful Moroccan French troops walking on the Promenade trying to make friends with the public.....

My father remembered that the French occupation and administration sought justice and were not opposed to the general public. My uncle lieutenant ittebei Kiss Miklós, who was fluent in French was assigned as a liaison officer to the Headquarters and thus had the opportunity to translate the needs of the population who were living in difficult circumstances.

I did not understand the political aspects of the Chrysanthemum Revolution but learned about it later from my father.

In my school years while walking with my father we met people who he welcomed heartily. Later he explained that these gentlemen were exposed as revolution sympathizers but at the end of 1918 simply no one could see clearly the political situation. My father believed that these people were driven by feelings of pride in the independence of Szeged and saw the (Chrysanthemum) Revolution as a way to shake of the Habsburgs.

When the 1919 the events occurred, I remember that my father was a member of the recently set up officers' patrols and I was very proud of my soldier father.

I later found out that my father was an active member of the ABC, the anti-Bolshevik alliance and with his friends played an active role in policing and organizing a new political life.

My father was very proud of his role during these months, but stressed that the communist opponents were mostly honest people who bravely confessed their political beliefs and sometimes faced death without fear.

During the warm summers my family lived on the shores of the Tisza and family pictures that show when I was 1-2 years old, I splashed happily in the waters of the Tisza.

There are also memories from those times of Szatymaz. My paternal grandfather owned a grape farm in 1917 which was later inherited by Aunt Kálmán Falcione as her dowry. We went there a few times on vacation and the sweet fruit, hot sand and neighborhood pals are still fresh in my memory.

In the early 1920s, my memories included the night when a lot of military material was placed in the basement of the farmhouses and surrounding buildings.

Later I understood that Hungarian patriots were

attempting to circumvent the Entente representative inspections as they could not tolerate the idea that Hungary should not be able to stand up against any invading neighbors without weapons.

I also remember Horthy Miklós visiting Szeged which I assume took place in the first part of November 1919 following the entrance parade of Budapest. My father had a good friend on a second-floor balcony where we viewed the event and my young sister Kata cried out with a loud voice, "Long live Horthy the helmsman..." (As the daughter of a member of the Szeged Rowing Association this could not be taken the wrong way ...)

I did not see much of the First World War loss of life, hospital admissions and sufferings. However, I do remember that over many weeks visiting my uncle Miklós Kiss in the Calvary military hospital. Fate had it that after four years on the front was eventually wounded. While serving in the inaugural Trans-Danubian national army his service pistol went off in his pocket and we were afraid that he may have to have his leg amputated.

I also remember my maternal grandmother, Widow Baron Podmaniczky Béláné at her River Tisza home... The relationship with her was not as warm and familiar as with my beloved Nagyanyikó (paternal grandmother) which I did not understand at the time and the visits were quite formal.

My parents later explained that she had objected to my father's marriage plans. My father was a talented man, very good-looking and his law firm started well. The likely reason for the opposition was that the ittebei Kiss and the ebeczki Blaskovich families belonged to the gentry whereas the nemescsói Török family was of the nobility. In addition, my mother was



Szatymaz cottage -pic 2004

very beautiful and accomplished young girl but it seems that my grandmother was hoping for a marriage that would increase the family fortune... My mother's aunt, Ilona (Helena) Blaskovich hosted my mother at her Banat estate hoping that the long absence from my father would alienate the lovers.

My grandmother was forced to give in and the young couple were wed on January 7th 1912. We called her Gross mama and often spent time with my uncle who we called Niki bácsi (Uncle Niki). He was an excellent soldier but very careless. The family often recalled that on one occasion while cleaning his service pistol it was pointed in the direction of his mother and was reprimanded by Mama. He declared that the gun was unloaded and pointed the unloaded gun in the direction of the ceiling, pulled the trigger, it was loaded....

Gross mama's first husband, my mother's father ittebei Elemér Kiss died at a relatively young age, Gross mama married the second time to Baron Béla Podmaniczky, who was the commander of Mezőhegyesi Stud Farm. To this marriage was born my mother's half-sister Judith, who was in our childhood 10–12-year-old girl. We loved her very much; she often took care of us and played with us in the park or the banks of the Tisza.



Mezőhegyesi Stud Farm

The park was of course Stefánia walkway, which is now called the Castle Gardens. Our nanny took us there and I have family memories that I ate some berries which caused a stomach upset but I recovered quickly. From our Milkó apartment it was easy to run down to Stefánia and when I was a student this was our wild west where we enjoyed all varieties of games.

My childhood's most significant experience, which also impacted my later life was that my parents divorced in 1922 when I was 8-year-old.

I still do not know what caused them to separate. I have a faint recollection that there was intense argument and some reference to my mother's side of the family.... My mother moved to Budapest and my sister Kata and I stayed with my father. He tried using housekeepers to solve the problems of maintaining a household with children.

It is interesting that neither I nor my sister ever got to know the reason for their separation. Both my mother and my father just said that they did not understand each other, but they remained friends and we never heard a bad word between them and about our parents. Later I will write a few words about their friends.

As I wrote, I was born on October 6. Later I pointed out to my friends that this day represented a national disaster. But this date of my birth also has another significance.

An ancestor of the nemescsói Török family, my great-grandfather's cousin was Ignác Török one of the martyrs of Arad. From my early childhood it is understandable that I was influenced by my family history and having received a strong nationalistic education from my father my development took an almost pre-determined path.

To this is added a trick of fate that my mother's family were descendants of ittebei Elemér Kiss. The history of the Banat Lords (Western Rumania) is inextricably linked to the 1848 War of Independence, as is Ernő Kiss another of the Arad martyrs. My mother's paternal grandfather was my great grandfather's cousin. The Török family was not wealthy. Their estates were dissipated by 1848 Revolution as family tradition has it that it was Török Ignác who convinced his cousin, my great-great grandfather to sell the estate and invest all the capital in Kossuth bank bills ... My



Ignác Török



Ernő Kiss



father was therefore a member of the Hungarian middle class with no assets. However he was conservative-minded and I was raised this way. This is the way I started out on the long and bumpy road that eventually led me to the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

Lajos Kossuth Governor-President of the Kingdom of Hungary during the revolution of 1848-49

My Father and his family

My father was born in Szeged on the 19th of April 1881. He was young when he lost his father who was only 42 when he died with pneumonia. His childhood memories were captured in his memoirs penned in his old age while living with my sister Kata and her husband dr. Béla Csabai in Székesfehérvár. In the decades following the Second World War until his death in 1969 he lived in retirement without a pension under very difficult circumstances but on my request wrote his memories and which he gave to me. With regard to the political situation in Hungary at that time it is understandable that these writings focused on just personal histories and the political situation of the time was omitted. Yet these records were very valuable to me because it reinforced my memories of Szeged and formed an image of life during that period.

Thus, the following pages will often quote my father's notes as well.

My father wrote about his father, Török Sándor (Alexander) a lawyer in Szeged:

"He was a much sought after lawyer who was successful and he built a house in Szeged and purchased a vineyard in Szatymaz and invested in government securities. His first wife was Anna Vadász but soon became a widower and as fate would have it the children of this marriage died young. Then he married péterfalvi Etelka Koór who was a young widow. Interestingly his brother János (John) married Etelka's sister Teréziá Koór."

Török Sándor died young and therefore he could not influence the fate of his children; family stories have it that while on one of his knees was young Sanyi (Sándor) and on the other knee was Béla my father. He kept repeating an ode that Sanyi would be a general and Béla would be a Bishop... This had the consequence that when my father reached the appropriate age my father entered the priest seminary at Esztergom. My father completed year VI and VII but eventually quit and transferred to the Szeged Piarista (Pious) Fathers school for the rest of the high school years.

At that time, exchange of children between institutions was very fashionable and this consisted in that the southern exiled Hungarians sent their children to Szeged to speak Hungarian and Szeged residents in turn sent their children to the Southern Regions to learn some German. It is questionable how successful this system was in terms of learning another language, but in any event it helped the exiled to maintain their ties to Hungary. My father spent time in a high school at Temesvár.

My father's memoir continues: –

"My grandfather Antal (Anthony) Török was a wealthy man. His father was also named Antal Török and was the governor of the estates of Earl Károlyi and later was a county judge. But my grandfather had sold all his estates at the time of the War of Independence and invested the proceeds in Kossuth Bank bills. These after the loss of the revolution in 1849 became worthless. The family was now impoverished and after the Compromise of 1867 (with the Austrian Emperor) he undertook a financial advisory position. His wife was Hermina Preiszler who was the daughter of the Mako salt merchant and it was through this union that Török family became related to the Verdes family whose ancestor was Ritter von Tannenwald Preiszler. István (Stephen) Verdes was a prominent figure in the management of the Tisza River.

My mother's first husband was Lajos (Louis) Czettler a teacher. From this marriage, I had a half-brother Gyula Czettler who we all really liked and who became a pharmacist. His cousin was Jenő Czettler a university Professor and a Member of Parliament and who maintained his paternal family relationships. "

My grandfather's brother, János (John) Török after the reconciliation also became a Financial Officer in Szeged, Transylvanian Nagyvár, Désen and Besztercén. After serving in World War I he settled in Veszprém as a refugee and worked as tax office officer until retirement. He died at the age of 87, and I even met him in 1933, but by then his memory was blurring.

About my paternal grandmother's family my father writes:

"The family comes from the County of Ugocsa the village of Péterfalva. Janos (John) Péterfalvi Koór was a doctor of Jászberény and landowner. His wife was Terézia (Theresa) Lachmann a daughter of German descent from Buda. He was manager of a 600-acre estate but despite a busy schedule had 21 children. Of these, only six survived and my memories are focused around Aunt Flóra (Flora) who was my godmother and her husband Sándor (Alexander) Nagy an attorney in Szeged who was my godfather. Sándor (Alexander) Nagy was a very talented writer and was editor of the Híradó (News) of Szeged and in his later years under the name Senex was a writer of the portfolio Newspaper Budapest.

A truly beautiful article fare welled my brother Laci's heroic death in which he is embraced by the martyr Ignác Török (his ancestor) taking him to heaven.

His writing resulted in his neglect of his legal profession and in his old age was supported by his daughter Ibolya (Violet) Nagy, a life member of the National Theatre. Both Sándor and daughter Ibolya lived to their 90's. Ibolya had a great friendship with the famous Mari Jászai and Kornélia Prielle artists who sat by my bedside when I was recuperating at with my godmother's house sick with an inflamed appendix."

After graduation my father joined the army. As a foot soldier he received training in the joint Army Corps. He completed his officers' exams with distinction and was discharged as a reserve lieutenant. After several military training courses, he enrolled in the law faculty at the University of Budapest. He admitted that he lived an easygoing, rollicking life at Budapest. This also contributed to eventually moving from Budapest to Kolozsvár because this was a rural campus and it enabled him to concentrate more seriously on his law studies and gave him better access to the teaching professors.

After obtaining a doctorate in law he chose a career as a judge and he worked in Szeged for four years as a clerk in the district court. He completed his judicial exam in March 1909 with honors. He however decided to become a lawyer instead as he was in debt and hoped that a law practice would bring him in a better financial position. He had a partnership with a lawyer from Nyiregyháza. As he writes, he decided to terminate the agreement because he was homesick and he came home to Szeged.

On return to Szeged, he opened an office and this talented and hard-working young man became quite successful.

In 1913 he met my mother. After the death of Béla Podmaniczky he moved to Szeged from Mezőhegyes with my grandmother, my mother and her half-sister Judit. Uncle Niki was at the military academy at this time but he often spent the holidays with his mother.

My father had two brothers, Sándor and László. Sándor became a railway official but died young. László was a bank clerk; he died a heroic death in the Carpathian Mountains in the 1916 Russian offensive during the first World War.

Both his sisters Etelka and Margit (Margaret) were married in those prewar years.

Etelka's husband Dr. Kálmán Falcione was a teacher. The family is of Italian descent and proudly wore the de Cardezza name. They lived in the Southern Region and were good friends with Dömé Sztójay, who later became one of the last prime ministers of the free Hungary. I will discuss the family's fate in more detail later.

Margit (Margaret) married Jenő (Eugene) Faragó an army officer, who died in the Second World War, her second husband was Zoltán Pápay an officer with MAV (Hungarian

Railways). Aunt Margit's son from her first marriage was my cousin László. I will discuss his problems later.

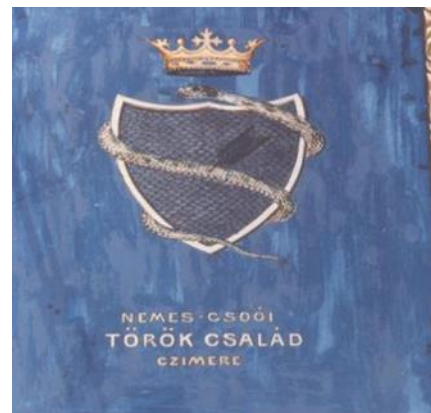
The nobility of the Török family was not in dispute. My Great grandfather and my Great-great-grandfather's birth certificates both displayed the nemescsói name. My father explained that in the nineteenth century and the last two decades of the twentieth century people often did not explore their roots. It was the age of liberalism which arose from the French Revolution's; 'liberty, equality and fraternity' and these basic ideas reached the broad strata of the society. Contributed to this state of ignorance was that the family did not have a father and the boys were influenced by their sisters and mothers. Later, my father also complained that the women of the family had on occasion refashioned the legacy of the historical Hungarian jewelry into fashionable pieces of the day.

It was a surprise that the interest in genealogy started at all in our family and it became one of my father's loved occupations. His in-law, Jenő (Eugene) Faragó accidentally read in the Official Gazette that a nemescsói Béla Török graduated as a lieutenant. The young lieutenant contacted my father and it turned out that we had found the Western Magyar (Hungarian) branch of the family. The young



Paining of Section of Family Tree

lieutenant's father was the Chairman of the Orphans Organization at Szombathely and possessed all the family records dating back to 1720 nova donations. They knew about our branch of the family and with their help we were able to complete a full nemescsói Török family genealogy. Interestingly, it was found that while the coat of arms of the Great Plains branch of the family was an arrow piercing a snake and that this drawing is preserved among the family papers, while the western branch of the family used a different coat of arms. My father proceeded to the National Archives and there he was reassured that it was customary, when families were separated to different branches the main branch would pick up a new one and that in their opinion the use of the coat of arms was sanctioned by the Legal Custom of the day.



Török Family Coat of Arms

My father acquired copies of the relevant documents from the National Archives and they are still in my possession. So the family should be considered as the descendants of Mihály (Michael) Török. He was a landholder in the village of Nemescsó and whose nobility was with several other noble families confirmed by Károly VI (Charles) in 1720.

The nova donation said "the Nemescsói noble estate owners and residents who had not once and not one place answered faithfully the requests of the Hungary kings be granted the nemescsói noble estate in its entirety, this estate is located on lands in Vas County and was in their peaceful possession, use and ownership (there was formal evidentiary documents pertaining to the Vas County), and their predecessors, who lived only by the memory of its descendants and they themselves who are now living had sufficient evidence and attests not long ago, but only recently because Hungary's recent strife was destroyed. These parishioners and their descendants were donated a new gift ... "(No. 33, royal original book, pages 280-281.)

It is also possible that the crest that our branch of the family used was the original family crest and was even used before 1720. My father wore this coat of arms on his ring and Count Pál (Paul) Teleki (later became Prime Minister of Hungary 1941)– who was close friends with my father, said that the coat of arms in its simplicity suggested that it originated a few hundreds of years ahead of the Nova donation. Missing from the coat of arms is the baroque ornament putting the crest's origin to the XV - XVI Century.

My father conducted further research wondering what could be the earlier family history. He raised the possibility that perhaps the Török family name - as is the case in other areas, parts of the country - shows that possibly a Turkish soldier who was so named after stayed in the Hungarian homeland and thus forming a new Hungarian family. This however is inconsistent with the coat of arms which we have discussed and it is also unlikely that a remaining soldier would have so quickly gained nobility. in Transdanubia. The Török family name is widely recognized and it is a fact that the Török family name was known prior to the Turkish occupation. Enyingi Bálint (Valentine) Török (1502-1550) following the Battle of Mohács was one of the most influential and richest noblemen of the country. A Török family name is more a reflection of the historical fact that the emerging Hungarian nation included Turkish tribes and the general perception among historians was that the militant sections were of these Turkish elements.

The western Hungarian branch of the family died out in its male side because as already mentioned, Lieutenant Béla Török died in 1918 and his father's grief over the death of his

son led to his suicide. Mihály (Michael) Török had two sons: György (George) and József (Joseph), but the geographical division had not yet occurred but the two branches lived in western Hungary for 2-3 generations. In the eighteenth-and turn of the nineteenth-century our family branch we split again. One branch ended up in Gödöllő while the other gravitated towards Csongrád county and finally in Szeged.

Ignác (Ignatius) Török an army general was born in 1795 in Gödöllő. He graduated from the Vienna Imperial and Royal Academy of Engineering faculty. He later taught the doctrine of fortification for the Royal Hungarian palace guards. It is not necessary here to discuss his role in the 1848-49 War but I want to mention that in 1849 when he completed the fortifications of Szeged, he was in contact with his cousin Anthony (Antal Török), my great-grandfather. A family tradition has it that he bestowed a crested signet ring to my great-grandfather. Another version has it that he sent this ring to my great-grandfather from Arad. However, as it happened this ring became one of the most treasured family memorabilia and was worn by both my grandfather and my father. In 1967, my father gave it to me for safekeeping, but I will speak about this later.

My father was an otherwise good-looking, athletic man who was above average in water sports. The Szeged Rowing Association was the center of his social life. His sporting performances were featured in the monograph series of Hungarian towns issued in 1927 in Budapest under the city of Szeged.

The book writes about the Boating Association and his achievements and my father writes: ***"The first in the true sense of the word was the Szeged sports association and was the third in the whole country. This club was most prestigious where strict ground rules governed admission. The club played an important role in the social life of Szeged and became a major factor in the Hungarian sport of rowing. In a later era a new provincial competition started and in the 1913 the following were the members of the first eight: Csenky Lajos, Kaszó Elek, Bába Lajos, Balog Tamás, Polczner Erős, Török László (my brother), Szendrey László, Dr. Török Béla (stroke)(me) and Milkó Ferenc (coxswain) wining a large silver cup defeating Újvidék and Eszék. "***

This champion rowing eights counted my father as stroke and also my father's younger brother László Török who died a heroic death in 1916.

My father's memoirs commemorate these sporting events and I quote him:

"My first friends included a rowing four of which I was part. In this team the members consisted of 1st Bába Lajos, 2nd Laci Török my brother, 3rd Sümegi Tivadarbaby and

4th was me. The helmsman was my friend Feri Milkó This was a closely knit group and we always pulled together and amongst other events we took part in rowing to Arad a 130-kilometer trip. We never thought that we would become competitive rowers we didn't live the training life. We were requested by our club to enter the Tisza Association National Regatta rowing competition. Our Club was so confident in us that they ordered a racing size four boat but as it happened a part time helmsman sat in on an occasion and directed us on to rocks destroying the boat.

Nevertheless our association insisted that we take part in the tournament and so we took our relatively heavy recreational boat to Szolnok and were teased by the gathering rowers.... but after seeing our style and realizing that our overall work was excellent, it was decided that instead of two fours against us they would put up only one more powerful four as our opponent. Unfortunately we had a bad start my friend Lajos Bába slipped off his seat and we were behind by three boat lengths. Yet we worked hard and finished behind by only one meter. The competition however was very appreciative of our performance and the metropolitan newspapers praised our performance. "

The peaceful years of Szeged however quickly flew and the tribulations of World War I caught up with my father. He writes thus about this in his memoirs:

"I had completed my 12 years of army reserve service and at the outbreak of World War I and was commissioned as a militia lieutenant but due to recurrence of arthritis was declared unfit for military service. However, the district headquarters of the Szeged military chief of staff was looking to fill a vacancy for someone with legal knowledge so I accepted this military officer's posting and I locked my legal office once again. In the summer of 1916 I became a lecturer to the mobilized troops. In the fall of 1918, after the lost war I lectured on disarmament issues and was discharged at Christmastime.

During my military service I reached the rank of captain and district commander Lieutenant-General nominated me for the "Cross of the Order of Franz Joseph," but since this was at the close of a lost war it was too late to be awarded. "

1919-1920 was an age of revolutions and my father, as I have already mentioned, took part in the preparatory work for the establishment of a new governing system. The Szeged Rowing Association was one of the social centers where the prominent statesmen fled during the French occupation. Miklós Horthy often had discussions in the Association's club

house and my father later recalled that he had lent the future governor one of his bathing suits as Miklós Horthy arrived in Szeged from Kenderes with very few clothes.

My father told us later that he had a good relationship with Gyula Gömbös (also a later Prime Minister) and spent hours walking along the promenade in Szeged discussing and challenging the political situation in Hungary. My father remembered him as a highly skilled soldier who had good insights regarding the future of the country.

As a 38-39 year-old lawyer he had to take care of his wife and two small children he couldn't seek a political career. Later he explained to me that to take a political role you needed some wealth, because if you had no assets, it was impossible to preserve your intellectual independence.

My father participated actively in public affairs of Szeged and in recognition of this work was appointed in September 1920 to the Szeged free royal city as Honorary Chief Prosecutor by the Lord Mayor Károly Aigner.

In 1919, he met Count *Pál (Paul) Teleki*. However about this relationship I quote from his own memoirs:

"The friendship with him (*Count Pál (Paul) Teleki*) until his death remained unchanged. When the time came for the post-revolutionary parliamentary general election he was nominated for the 1st district. His opponent was the liberal candidate, István (Stephen) Bárczy who was the Lord Mayor of Budapest. The consensus turned to me and I became the director of the Teleki election party and I took full responsibility for the running of the party's election process. For three months I did not set a foot in my attorney's office. But the painstaking work had been worth it despite the fact that we had only 150,000 crowns, while Bárczy had 10 million. Teleki won by a majority of a thousand votes. Great was my honor. Teleki offered me a reward by proposing that I assume the title chief government advisor, but I countered this saying that if I do not have enough dignity without the title then you give me the title in vain ... and if I have the dignity, it's useless. Teleki then hugged me, kissed me, saying I respect you from now on even more..."

But my father also had widespread interest in the literature as he writes,

"When I was young and a giant, I wrote portfolios, verses and articles for the newspapers in Szeged. Moreover, I wrote a social drama called 'Feeble Souls' which I sent to Imre Pethes for his comments, Imre was one of the outstanding Theatre and Film Artists in Hungary and who had a close relationship with my mother. The

essence of Imre Pethes's criticism was that this piece was better than most of those written today to catch the attention of a crowd but still requires work. Write better. I was disappointed, but at the request of a theater director at the time in Szeged they ran the piece. It was not successful. Still, when I re-read this play again and again, I am not ashamed to admit that it is mine even after many decades. Many of my writings have been lost because of the war; though from a literary point of view they do not represent losses. A poem, however, still vividly alive in my memory, is recorded here:

*We have forgotten each other...
My path led to the left, hers turned to the right.
I thought she was happy, and she couldn't think otherwise.
Yet years later she wrote me a letter,
There was no sign of sadness in it.
It just said I do not know what's wrong; I just needed to write to you."*

Indeed, these verses are not of significant literary value, but are reflective of my father's spiritual world. Their marriage broke up, but in our long life the love remained, at least that is how I feel, that the above lines clearly express the state of the souls of my parents...

My mother and her family

My Mother was born in 1894 on August 11th at Királyhegyes at the ancestral mansion of ittebei Elemér Kiss. Her father, my maternal grandfather, Elemér Kiss was a wealthy landowner and owned 20,000 acres in the County of Torontál in Begaszentgyörgy (now Žitište Serbia).

I do not have exact data on the origins of the Kiss family, but from my parents' discussions as well as through relationships with other members of the family, and notes from my father I am able to give some information of their family history.

The Kiss family's roots can be considered as those Transylvanian Armenian Hungarians who, after the Turkish occupation of Banat acquired property. They took part in the reconstruction after the liberation from the Turks and were involved in commerce and pig-farming activities which ultimately reached the pinnacle of economic success in the family estate of 80,000 acres in the person of ittebei Ernő Kiss a future martyr of Arad.

Ernő Kiss was a cousin to my great-grandfather on my mother's side. His historic role is the well-known as he also set up a hussar regiment at his own expense and was the one who also scored the first victories against the Austrians. The battle of Perlasz (in Serbia) recounts his historical successes.

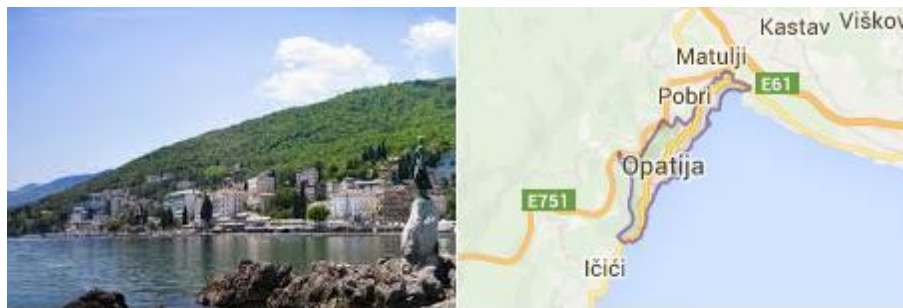
In the first half of the nineteenth century the family was not only very rich but had a good connection to Vienna leadership so that when he decided to side with the freedom fighters he put at risk the interests of the family.

So good were his relationship with the royal family that when the death sentence was inevitable and the method of execution was meant to be the gibbet the royal court changed the sentence to death by shooting.

My maternal grandfather married ebeczki Gisele (Gizella) Blaskovich. I will write later about the family Blaskovich, but now I would just like to point out that the family was also wealthy and great-grandfather had a 7,500-acre estate in Nagykirályhegye in Csanád County. So, my maternal grandmother was from childhood accustomed to privileged living and probably this was the reason that their lifestyle was incredibly extravagant and they truly squandered their wealth, so that eventually my grandfather had to seek support from Stephen (István) Blaskovich (his in-law).

The wastefulness can be characterized by the following story, which was repeated as a family story and has been documented in my father's records.

The couple once read in the newspaper that Patti, the famous Italian singer was touring in Vienna. By telegraph they ordered tickets for a private viewing box costing 5,000 florins (Hungarian Currency). Then they hired a special train, and which took them, and their numerous staff, maids and butlers to Vienna. They also carried with them a four-horse carriage. They rented an entire floor of the Grand Hotel. Then they decided to spend a few days in Abbázia (Opatija Croatia) and traveled there with a small number of servants. However, a few days became a few weeks while they forgot the rest of the staff and the foursome carriage.



Abbázia (Opatija) in Croatia

My father sums up their life thus:

"Elemér your grandfather might not have understood financial management, but it is certain that he did not even care. The result was bankruptcy after the completion of which he was allowed to save 5,000 acres of the estate for himself ..."

I mention here that Miklós (Nicholas) was the brother of Elemér my grandfather and who lived in Vienna. He married Katalin (Catherine) Schratt, the famous Viennese dramatic actress. It is well known that Katalin (Catherine) Schratt later became Emperor Franz Joseph's girlfriend. The Miklós Kiss marriage produced a son also named Miklós (Nicholas), who was later elevated to the rank of baron by the emperor. This Miklós (Nicholas) Kiss died after the Second World War.

My maternal grandfather also died young. They had four children, Ernő, Miklós and two daughters Clementina and Katalin my mother.

The still young, educated widow soon married again. Her second husband Baron Béla Podmaniczky the Mezőhegyesi stud commander. From this marriage was born my aunt Judit (Judy).

My mother spent most of her childhood and young adult age in the Béla Podmaniczky household. She could tell a lot of stories about the Mezőhegyesi years. She received a good education and the children had a French nana and later she graduated from the Institute of Notre Dame de Sion in Budapest.

She was a very beautiful girl and many young Mezőhegyesi young men courted her. Then she also met Béla Hensch of Mezőhegyesi. There was a young student kind of love between them, but my grandmother kept a strict watch over my mother to ensure she did not marry below her rank. Later, they met again...

My mother was “presented” to the community at the Arad County Ball. The family was in friendly relations with the Purgly family and from these times came a good friendship for my mother with Tibor Eckhardt, who was her second cousin.

In 1912 there was a big royal military exercise in Mezőhegyes and my young, beautiful mother showed how brave she could be by accepting a joy flight with the famous pilot Uzelác in his fragile flying machine and the family was often amazed to see pictures of our brave mother in her leather helmet.

At this time Béla Podmaniczky died suddenly and his widow could not stay in Mezőhegyes. Then it turned out that even during the Podmaniczky marriage years my grandmother’s lifestyle was without financial boundaries so it fell on her daughter Clemmy and son in law captain Sándor József to restore her budget and she moved to Szeged.



1912 style leather helmet

This is where my mother met my father, great was their love and despite opposition from Grossmama they were married. Since their marriage only lasted nine years, it is understandable that, as I have already written, I only have snapshot memories of these years. I can only write that my mother was very beautiful, vivacious woman, and perhaps this contributed to the divorce and as my parents had quite a big age gap. My father was 32 years old at the time of his marriage, and my mother had not yet reached the 20 years of age. The war years and my father’s painful joint disease contributed to their eventual divorce.

It must have been very painful for my mother to have to leave us, his children, but obviously realized that it was in our interest to be brought up in an established household with my father. (In those years custody of the children were often given to the male.) But we missed our mother's warm love. Our father tried to ensure that we lived in an orderly

manner, but a mother's love can never be replaced. Maybe my mother's love was a little excessive in those earlier years expressed by her fear for our safety by protesting about sending me to kindergarten and later to go to a public school.

This is perhaps contradicted by the fact in the summer vacations we were with her many times in the river Tisza swimming and splashing amongst other bathers, she was a pioneer in this respect as few women in those days joined in just as she was also a pioneer in the sport of flying.

Grossmama slowly reconciled with my father and us children, but unfortunately she could not control her own spending and frivolous lifestyle therefore becoming indebted again and again. She lived surrounded by the wealthy Blaskovich relatives who at times of crisis helped her financially. But her brother, Aladár Blaskovich who managed the family fortune, eventually came to realize that rather than supporting her by direct cash transfers he pay only for specific needs. Then, when their father, István (Stephen) Blaskovich died, it was discovered that the estate was to be distributed between the two male children and the girls were confined to designated stipends. The girls, including my maternal grandmother challenged the will and this eventually resulted in a compromise. As a result Grossmama also received 200 acres of land, but this small fortune was exhausted in a few years. She then moved to Budapest and lived on a widow's pension.

Of my mother's brothers Miklós (Nicholas) Kiss, our Niki basci was to us children the closest. As a young lieutenant he told us many war stories, and we heard from my mother of his many mischievous activities as a youngster.

He went to school in Szeged and graduated at the Ludoveca Army Officers Academy as a cavalry second lieutenant in 1912.

He took part as a member of the Hussars in the Russian offensive. It is well known that the Hussars suffered serious blood sacrifice in the assault against machine guns of the Russian positions. Uncle Niki's regiment following the charge

had only three officers who survived. He then sought to transfer to the infantry and all you have to mention is that by reaching Doberdón he had the rank of lieutenant and was commander of the assault battalion. Miklós (Nicholas) Bonczos the later Hungarian State Secretary for the Interior and then Minister told us that under him the slogan "**ahead, boys**" was not used but when attacking with a knife in his mouth and hand-grenades in his hands he lead the charge with his troops following him. He received awards on top of



Ludoveca Officers Academy

awards but the culminating achievement of this young lieutenant was when he received the Order of Leopold, which was usually only achieved by generals. For him, this was not enough. He asked that he be transferred to the Western Front and became a flight observer. Near Ypernn (Belgium) he suffered gas burns, but other than that nothing else happened to him.

We as children hardly knew aunt Clemmy and her husband, Uncle Józsi (Ernő/Ernest) was known in the family as uncle Neszti. However, later in my life I had contact with them, but I will discuss this later.

As I already wrote, my great-grandfather on the mother's side was István (Stephen) Blaskovich, a large landowner of Királyhegyes. His wife was zombori Amália (Amelia) Rónay. The Rónay family was of Bavarian decent; Oexel was the original German family name and they were the pioneers of brewery in our country. They established a large estate and in 1826 and gained royal permission by the king to use the name Rónay and the forename zombori. They formed kinship with the Almásy and Karácson families.

I will write a few words about my great-grandfather's children.

I have already written about my grandmother Gizella. Prior to her death in my Budapest years, I met her many times and found her a very clever, precious lady. It is a shame that her previous lifestyle adversely affected her life in old age. She was the only one of my grandparents to whom I was able to say good bye to, partly because the rest of my grandparents died young when I was still a child.

Gizella's sister Jolán's husband baróthy Béla Huszár was a landowner. From their children Aladár Huszár stood out in accomplishments, he became Lord Mayor of Budapest and finally the President of OTI (The National Social Insurance Institute). He lovingly arranged employment for my aunt Judith Podmaniczky as an OTI official.

The husband of Erzsébet (Elizabeth) was gyergyószentmiklós János (John) Kövér, a landholder.

Borcsa married zombori Aladár Rónay. About their children all I know is that Martha's first husband was a German industrialist, and her second husband was Kázmér (Casmir) Vay. Béla their son married Franci Schiffer.

Baron Erneszt (Ernest) Urbán married Elzá (Elsa). Martha's husband was Károly (Charles) Lázár who was the commander of the Horthy bodyguards. They had two boys, Péter (Peter) and Erneszt (Ernest) who eventually inherited the Blaskovich estate. I've never met these remote relatives. My father later wrote that in the 1960s he located Peter he was then the

driver to the Belgian consul to provide for himself and his family. I understand that a Rónay boy migrated to Australia. I did get in touch with him but lost contact since the 1950s.

Aladár's fate undertook some interesting changes. My father said he as a young man lived for many years in a privileged lifestyle in London. Fell in love with Baroness Gizella Fehérváry, the daughter of former grand marshal and "Darabont" Guard of the Prime Minister who however married Baron Ferenc Gerliczy a wealthy landowner. The family stories said that in his grief he went back to his family estate, totally neglected himself withdrew from all social life and worked as a laborer on the farm.

My father met him a few times as a legal client and while he was a military tutor and when Aladár approached him in a military exemption matter and a previously mentioned inheritance dispute. He did not acknowledge the family relationship and they generally treated each other as strangers.

Aladár a few years after his father's death inherited the tápiószentmárton Ernő Blaskovich 10,000-acre estate including the "Kincsem" racing stable.

Ilona (Helen) was my maternal grandmother's sister whom I also met. She was my mother's godmother and was always very attentive to her. When the family tried to stop my mother and father's planned marriage she stepped in and hosted my mother hoping that the relationship would calm down. When it became clear to her that my mother insisted on her choice she ceased the stay over stay. Similarly Aladár had a disappointment in love and never married. The Blaskovich family lived very modestly in a Reáltanoda Street house, with many antique furniture. There was a great hall in the house, it was probably designed for evening parties and dancing, and this room contained memorabilia of the famous race horse Kincsem including trophies, cups and a silver horse statue. During my years in Budapest, we often visited aunt Ilona (Helen) and while there we usually admired mementoes of this famous horse.

The house had a private chapel. In her last years, aunt Ilona (Helen) was only able to think about the afterlife and placed her beautiful jewels on the statue of Mary.

Her estate remained intact because she lived a very modest life and was inclined to forgo expenditure and in her will she left her estate to the church except for 20 acres which was left to her house maid.



Kincsem the most successful [thoroughbred race horse](#) in Europe,

My Student years - 1920-1932

When I was 6 years old, I learnt reading, writing and arithmetic and as I said my mother was very fearful of letting us out into the world and so I studied privately. At our Deák Ferenc address there lived a lady who I think, was a widow, had a teacher's degree and she undertook to instruct me, and a few other people's precious offspring. I do not really remember those years, at least the at school times. Amongst the children was the Machanszky surgeon's children, but my memory of their faces are now blurred.

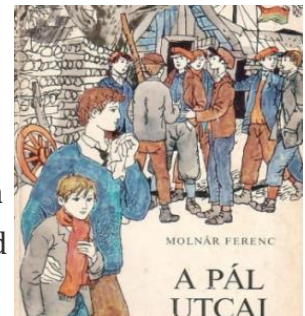
I have more memories of the time when my parents separated and I attended the inner-city elementary school and I can still see the teacher in front of me. Imre Rózsa had a nice manly face and he displayed a great love and effort in dealing with us. I remember well that after the fourth element at the examination celebration, there were many flowers in the classroom, we all sang beautifully, but for me it was humiliating end of the ceremony because at the end of the long celebration I had wet my pants and was ashamed and did not dare to move out of my place.

Stefánia Place (a botanical garden) was where my friends and I (not unlike the real 'Paul Street Boys') committed our rascally activities.

My best friend at the time was Pityu (Timmy) the son of the director of City Theatre, whom I loved. The Kotormány boys belonged to our group. They were lucky because they lived in the Museum as their father was an officer of the Museum. There were two or three other boys who belonged to our group. When I think back the names Pókay, Vida and Grünwald come to mind. There was of course another group of boys who played games against us as police men and robbers. We knew all the hiding

places on the boardwalk. Ferenc (Frank) Móra was at that time the director of the museum and the library of Somogy and we certainly caused a lot of annoyance to him as we were noisy and must have disturbed the readers in the great scientific library room. In particular, we caused a lot of trouble for many in winter as we declared the Museum's entrance our toboggan slope.

Within my family however Sityi Kaszó was my very best friend. His father, Elek Kaszó was the city treasurer at this time and my father's best friend. His mother, Aunt Böske (Betty) was on very good terms with my mother as well and so it was natural that we would, play together. Together we committed various pranks, once we escaped out of the house while the parents were happily drinking and chatting and it was here that I was introduced to my



*Paul Street Boys-
Novel*

father's bamboo stick which he was swinging. I knew that my dad was serious when he had 'Samu' ("Sam") the cane.

Uncle Lexi was a very gentle man, he just flicked his briefcase and Sityi escaped corporal punishment and I envied my friend.

Someone encouraged us to make anti-Semitic slogans in chalk on the asphalt of Promenade while my parents sat quietly in chairs on the Promenade. Of course, they soon became aware of our activities and I was punished by my father, but uncle Lexi uncle just laughed ... He had every reason to be angry. I found out only later that Aunt Böske (Betty), my friend Sityi's mother was of Jewish descent and therefore Sityi was considered half-Jewish.

Szeged did not have much basis for anti-Semitism. Szeged did not fall into the big east migration path and the Jews there belonged to the old Szeged Jewish population. Perhaps this was the reason that the Kun-Szamuél movement in the age of revolutions had only minor influence and so the reaction was also moderate in Szeged.

Later my father also informed me that our family also had Jews by marriage because my Aunt Margit's (Margaret's) first husband Jenő (Eugene) Faragó, a military officer, was of Jewish descent. My cousin Laci was therefore half Jewish. Laci's father died for his country and my father loved and raised for many years the young Laci like a son. As a war orphan, Laci attended a military boarding school and was scheduled to attend the Ludovica Military Academy in 1926. But then his Jewish origin was discovered and his enrolment was rejected. My father's influential friends, both civil and military however enabled Laci to start his studies at the Ludovika Military Academy. I think that he graduated in 1930. My father's main argument in favor of Laci was that his father had fallen for his country and that his blood contained not only Jewish but also the blood of Ignác Török a martyr of Arad. The anti-Semitism of the age also intruded on me. Our Stefania gang decided to establish a proper club and we thought that it was most important to elect a president, secretary, and officers. All this, of course, had to be recorded in writing, and so we went into the paper shop of the Grünwalds, which was located then at the beginning of Miklós Horthy road. We selected a small notebook within our budget when all hell broke out. Pali (Paul) Grünwald burst into tears as it was decided that young Pali could remain a member but could not be an officer because he's Jewish. Aunty Grünwald tried to find out the reason and we explained that the Jews crucified Jesus, so all Jews are responsible. Aunty Grünwald explained to us that it was the Romans who crucified Jesus not the Jews. I do not remember the actual result of our conversation, but the friendship remained.

Of course, this issue was discussed and, in an attempt, to reconcile the differing views my father said that a distinction should be made between the Hungarian Jews who had been in Hungary for hundreds of years and the recent influx of Galician refugee Jews.

One day my father dragged me to the dentist - I always tried to avoid this white torture chamber - and I'll be happy to note that while Rosenberg the dentist and my father discussed the Jewish question I was almost forgotten. My father spoke of the Rosenberg family as part of the old Szeged his grandfather's 1848 Hungarian decorative picture still hung on the surgery wall. He urged Rosenberg as an assimilated Jew that they should make a stand against the newly arrived Galician Jews. And I can still hear Rosenberg plead: **"But Béla they too are Jews...like us."**

I then learnt about the Catholic-Protestant rivalry. Sityi Kaszó's family was Calvinist and suddenly he confronted me by reciting the sins of the Renaissance popes. I knew nothing about all this as we were still studying the catechism and doctrines and apologetics would only be studied in upper secondary school. My parents had to intervene in this matter and they explained to us that we were today's Catholics and not so promiscuous.

Kaszó family was in close contact with the acting profession. Aunt Böske (Betty) was a Békefy girl. Her father was a renowned journalist in Szeged, while her brother István (Stephen) was a famous lyricist and husband of Ida Turay and Clare Tabódy was a sister-in-law. László Békefy a famous cabaret announcer was also a cousin of Sityi's mother. My father gave me a good interest in the history of Hungary and national poetry while Sityi from an early age showed interest in the theater. In our apartment, we often arranged performances. There were pieces which included magic, singing and due to my influence historical dramas. The audience consisted of our parents and their friends and the entrance fees were strictly collected by us. But while Sityi appeared in hilarious musical scenes I wanted to play Dugovits Titus in heroic self-sacrifice scenes.



Dugovits Titus

During the summer months the Tisza (River) was our playground. My father quickly taught us children how to swim and the "test" at the age of six was that we had to swim across the river Tisza. The punt carried us a couple of hundred meters from the Rowing Association Headquarters and there the candidate had to jump into the river. The finish was the bridge where they fished us out.

Both Sityi and I soon became good swimmers and we were soon diving off the jumping board of the Rowing Association. My father's young friend who was an organizer of the Tisza-Maros District Swimming Association arranged a completion for us and we both came away with medals and a certificate.

The certificate said "To the noblest Sityi Kaszó and Béla Török junior "he said, and they ended with the words "I welcome you in the spirit of sportsmanship and friendship." Text of these kind words were signed by him. The letter is still in my possession, yellowed with over 60 years of memories. Unfortunately, all I know is that we called him brother Feri and his signature was illegible. Unfortunately, I cannot ask my father now.

Then we became big boys and I was selected to attend the Piarista (Pius) Fathers High School or as it officially called: Andrew Dugonics Roman Catholic High School of the City of Szeged under the leadership of Pious Fathers order.

At that time József (Joseph) Prelogg was the director of the institute. He was an outstanding educator and had a great musical literacy and managed to get to know the students, but he decided that football was a "rough" sport and therefore was banned at the school. We, the students were afraid of him and became quiet when we met him in the corridors. We were aware that because of the loss of the First World War the school had to provide space for the state capital high school for a couple years. Classes were held some times in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon. Joseph Prelogg died suddenly in 1927. His replacement was István (Stephen) Kiss who was the master in my first year. We really liked him because he was nice, peaceful and yet a decisive man. Amongst my teachers I have sincere regard for Jenő (Eugene) Csaba who was my history teacher and scout master and who led us on many field trips. We toured with him Zircet and Pannonhalma and he fanned my interest in the study of history. Lőrincz (Lawrence) Hantos wanted to teach us the German language. Here, I was not a great success, even though after my parents separated and my father contracted a German lady with the goal was to teach us German in addition to running the household. The rule was that at dinner we could only speak German. As a

result, my sister and I usually remained silent. After all of this parental effort in my old age I still say "Mahlzeit" (German word for meal, 'enjoy' is implied) after (or before) each meal. My father insisted that I should be further educated in German and spend the summer holidays in Austria at a resort called Vöslau in Ferienheim and my sister was sent to Neulengbach. It was then I began to speak German and professor Hantos was pleased with me.

My Latin teacher at the time was Sándor (Alexander) Szalay. He was a tough, strong minded man who did not shy away from the physical threats. Even if we made mistakes while serving as 'alter servers' we were terrified of his response so we became afraid of him.

I also remember that the rabbi told him that one of the boys skipped the Jewish religion classes. The boy was caught in the hallway and was the recipient of corporal punishment. I don't think he missed any more religious instructions.

I think I could have been a second-year high school student when the drawing teacher, Bertalan (Bartholomew) Novak celebrated the jubilee of 50 years of teaching. I can still see him repairing our dubious efforts with his fine pencil strokes. My father liked him and always spoke of about his kinship to our family. Ipoly Fekete was another Piarist (Pious) Teaching Father who was mentioned and talked about a lot. Uncle Ipoly had already retired in 1920 but I did meet him occasionally, in the company of my father.

I only remember some of my classmates. I was good friends with Pali (Paul) Szandtner. His father was a university professor who was transferred to Budapest and so we lost contact. The same thing happened to Bottka boys. Their father was chief of police and they too moved to Budapest. I was also close to Elemér Buócz. I kept in touch with him later. He was trained by the fencing master Eduardo Armentano and we were also university colleagues. In fact we met later in Berlin.

Two years above me was István (Stephen) Bíbó and János (John) Csíky. I came into contact with them when I applied for a job at the journal „Zászlónk” (Our Flag). I was required to write a paper on Prince St. Imre. I tried very hard and was fortunate to have my father to edit it before submitting the thesis, to my surprise I won three 3 awards.

Pista (Steve) and Jancsi (Jack) were in classes two years older than mine, the age difference between us was big, but they noted my tendering success and we became friends. We did not know that in the course of our lives fate would bring us together. All three of us ended up working in the early 40s at the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Justice.

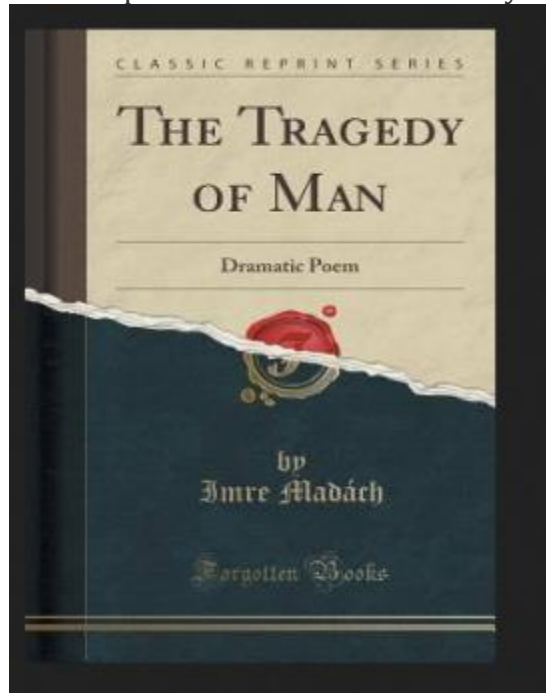
In our family life the major change was that my mother remarried. She met Béla Hensch at a social gathering in Budapest he was then serving at the ministry of Agriculture as Chief of Staff and who was known from the Mezőhegyesi times at which time they also saw each other. This renewed friendship between them, (they were both free) led to their marriage. My father was also glad that my mother was able to resume her life.

Our first home in Budapest was in Mester (Master) Street and later at Pacsirta Street (**at Óbuda which was a historical city in Hungary. United with Buda and Pest in 1873**) we acquired a beautiful, modern apartment. This gave my mother opportunity to have her children with her from time to time. My father had no objection to this but maybe it particularly helped during the school holidays and outings. My father met my mother's new husband Béla and they took a liking to each other. It turned out to our benefit as it became possible for my mother and her husband to come down to Szeged at Christmas. Both parents were able to be present on Christmas Eve when the children rejoiced with the coming of Baby Jesus. (The custom was at that time that Baby Jesus brought the presents and Santa Clause only had a role on St Nicholas Day) The holidays spent with my mother was amongst my favorite memories and they include uncle Béla who loved nature and we often went hiking and we got to know the surroundings of Budapest. We visited the Hármashatár-hegy (Three Borders Mountain), Jánoshegy (John Hill), Normafa and Schmidt castle and these became lasting impressions of our youth. Often we visited the famous English park, which was every child's dream. The joys of the English park included roller coasters and the enchanted castle and we had a lot of fun. There was one episode that caught my attention and stayed in my memory. In the evening we went to dinner at an English park restaurant, and a Russian balalaika orchestra provided the music. Then Uncle Béla drew our attention to the fact that the musicians were not professional musicians, but were military officers, civil servants who fled the Bolshevik Revolution now lived in exile and the music was to earn a living. This story impressed me very much. I viewed with respect the difficulty and bitterness they had to endure in their exile but did not think that I too would have to shoulder similar fate in the future. We lived with our father's household during the weekdays of the school year. My father's law office was in the apartment where he lived and so he spent almost the whole day at home and we lived under his constant supervision. Occasionally he had to attend the court, but generally when we came home from school we had lunch with my father and he continued work in the afternoon after a short afternoon nap, working up to 5pm or 6pm. He helped us with homework and dealt

with me separately in literature and history and this was despite his own very active part in the city's administration of public affairs. Not only was he a member of the City Council, but as a member of a small group that was part of the effective leadership of the city. He was also a Committee member of the Arts Affairs. Many times, he was invited in oratory roles. He said, on behalf of the city the eulogy to Albert Apponyi. At about this time, John Hamsworth son of Lord Rothermere visited Szeged amid great crowds of almost royal pomp. In retrospect it is clear that the British government involvement in the Justice for Hungary slogan and the formation of the Hungarian-friendly committee in the House of Commons was a diplomatic move intended to offset Frances move with its plans of European hegemony. The gullible Hungarian masses as many times throughout history, had misunderstood the situation. In those years Hungarian society was saturated with the revisionist spirit, which ultimately determined our position in European politics. My father also attended the reception of this English statesman in his Hungarian State Robes and I looked at his photo many times and I began to dream of the rebuilding of the Greater Hungary. My father decorated in his Hungarian Robes very often represented the town at the procession of the Holy Right (hand) of St. István (on Stephen's) Day on the 20 August. Later, in exile in Australia, I saw an old Hungarian newsreel and saw my young father on the screen in his Hungarian uniform. When I finished the year IV of high school, my father told me that next year I will attend the Gábor Klauzál high school, because he thought that it makes no sense to learn Greek when it is more important for me to start learning French. I didn't rebel against this parental decision until later, when I began to regret that I cannot read Plato and Aristotle in its original language. The following September I was enrolled in the new school in Deák Ferenc Street. Breaking away from accustomed environment was not pain-free and I was reminded by my dear friend, Imre Juray who recalled these days: ***"In autumn 1929 the playtime bell rang at the Gabor Klauzál high school. In the courtyard during the break amongst the hundreds of students I saw a student who was very upset. He was in the year below me, in fifth class, on enquiry of my fellow students they told me that he was called Béla Török. I walked up to him and consoled him with the help of my friends"*** Slowly I found my place in the new class. Józsi (Joe) Aigner, whom we called Szepi, became one of my dearest friends. When I was sick, he brought home the material necessary for the missed lessons so I would not be left behind. All too soon we parted ways, because at the time he appeared to "dislike" female companionship; he did not want to attend the school dance and turned from his regular friends. He also had

troubles with his studies and only showed interest in nature studies. But when it came to the college years he changed and became a doctor and he found great success in this chosen career. His case was proof to me that the school's academic results do not necessarily determine a man's future. The class had two outstanding students József (Joseph) Ladvánszky and Andor Csaplak. József became a doctor. He came from a very poor family, but he was hard-working and kind-mannered boy who wore his role of class dux with modesty. Andor/Bandi Csaplak also learned life's difficulties early in life. His mother was widowed and had to earn a living as a seamstress. Bandi's contribution to alleviating the problems of his family was that he was a very hard-working and disciplined student. The teaching staff probably drew attention to Bandi's talents when Sándor (Alexander) Tonelli, Secretary General of the Chamber of Commerce sought an eminent student to learn together with his son, Sanyi (Alex) a classmate. He was a very talented guy, but his interests were so diverse that he was unable to focus on his studies. So the solution was that Csaplak family was given a small apartment near the Chamber of Commerce so that Bandi and Sándor (Alex) could study together. Alex was not happy at first, but later the two boys grew to work together and the solution worked. Bandi Csaplak became a physicist and had success in other areas of interest. Sanyi (Alex) became a chemist and I think lives in Toronto, Canada. Today, when I read through the list of class mates, which my dear friend, Gyszi Veszely Palffy sent me on the occasion of the high school's 50-year reunion lots of memories flashed before me. Unfortunately, the amateur photo sent me did not allow easy identification of the old faces with the nice young guys who were my friends. Life then brutally dispersed us. Of the graduation class of 61 students the number of dead and missing was estimated to be 26. In addition to the victims of World War II nine boys left the country permanently. But at the same time as I pondered sadly the resurrected memories, I will always think fondly of Jung the chief doctor, who tolerated our mischief making during the afternoon lesson on health sciences. Andor néhai Majoros (Marcsinkó) is still alive, when I think of the following scene: István (Stephen) Bucsy our Hungarian literature teacher was trying to expand our understanding of literature he brought to our attention the fact that Sándor (Alexander) Petöfi wrote not only poetry, but he also wrote a play. After nobody could tell him the title of the piece, to help, our teacher said that the title had two wild animals. This is when Marcsinkó happily jumped up and announced 'Rome and Juliet'. The class burst out laughing especially when told that the piece Petöfi wrote had the title 'The tiger and a hyena'. Amongst the teachers Stephen Bucsy was closest to me he

loved the beautiful Hungarian language whose quiet but decisive actions in class provided discipline and interest. When our class under the leadership of Stephen Bucsy formed the usual self-training peer group I became the secretary and worked diligently. '**The Tragedy of Man**' by Imre Madách was the theme and I gave a presentation to the class. My teacher rewarded me because the same topic was chosen for our final year.



The play (Published 1861) is considered to be one of the major works of Hungarian literature

I also remember great poetry competitions organized for us and Gyuszi Pálffy recited so beautifully Ady's '**The Autumn invaded Paris**' that sometime later while walking in Paris by St. Michael's I wrote him a small postcard. Our German teacher was István (Stephen) Schwerer. The Students gave him the nickname Stumpax. He was a literary man and his discipline was not his strong side. Often he became angry and he scolded us. I myself had to face him. He noted that I had not been writing the new German words into my book and he asked why this was so. I declared that I know of all the new words. Well he really interrogated me extensively, but thanks to the summer vacations my German language was not really hard for me. The humanities subjects never caused me problems. The reverend Virágh once organized a competition between Géza Havas and I. One after the other we had to talk about the various subjects that had arisen during the year. I had the advantage of being extremely fast and when I read the material a couple of times, I was able to recite it

almost word-for-word. However I soon forgot it. In contrast, Géza Havas learnt globally not word for word and would answer intelligently I lost because Mr. Virágh stopped questioning me by asking me to sit down as I was only answering in verbatim. I loved history and Imre Bakonyi was our teacher. Peidl was his family name, but he Hungarianized, it when he was admitted to the Knightly Order. He was an excellent historian and a good Hungarian. He played an active role in the Catholic Church and he saw the restoration of the Habsburg Hungarian system as a hope for the reconstruction of truncated Hungary. This put him in conflict with my views. From my early childhood I grew up with the Arad martyrs and Rákóczi and Kossuth were my leading torches. Imre Bakonyi regarded me as one of his best students and was friendly to me and gave me the topic of Lajos Kossuth for my graduation assignment. I began: 'Lajos Kossuth was greatest statesman of Hungary', and he interjected, "one of the" great statesmen.



Lajos Kossuth

From then on, my testing was successful. I was not very interested in science and I wasn't outstanding in botany, chemistry, and physics, and I was glad to get a B for these subjects. Similarly, I thought that I didn't have a talent for math's either. Thanks to Sándor (Alex) Molnar who was able to present this vast subject matter in an easy to understandable manner I survived this hurdle too. The languages were easier for me because by then I had a good knowledge of German and my father also made sure that I had extra lessons in French from lady Paukert. The only problem was that she had a couple of pretty and flirtatious daughters and I was very disturbed by their presence, when lady Paukert noticed my discomfort, she ordered the girls out of the room. Lajos Bölcskey was my French teacher. He was a nice, kind-hearted gentleman who tried to encourage us to be

thorough. Once when I didn't do so well, he raised his curved finger and just said "Boy, boy, you'll regret it," Much later, after the loss of World War II, when the refugees in the German camps were looking for a job and where to start looking for a new life, I began to learn English and brush up my French, verily, I remembered Lajos and his warning ... And indeed, it is ironic that at a later stage of my life I worked as an accountant in a foreign language. In addition to school life there was sport and I went regularly to learn how to fence. Firstly, master Armentano and then Kálmán Koós tried to teach me the sport which was regarded at that time to be a Hungarian specialty sport. My father also believed that this was necessary because in his social circles dueling was a way to settle defamation cases.. I knew that my father was often a dueling assistant and he had 7-8 silver cigarette cases as mementoes in his room. The fashion was that duelist assistants were thanked for their support in this way. I also learned that my father had a duel with Kálmán Shvoy which resulted in a head wound victory to him by striking the opponent over his fencing visor. I practiced diligently, I loved this sport, but I never had to fight a duel. By the time I was growing up, most of the cases were settled using a chivalrous register. My friendship with Imre Juray (Trischler) was strong these years. We went to dance school at Ili Kurbos's and got to know many girls there. Kata my sister went with us at the same time and my friend Imre began courting her. A high school love developed between them that lasted for years. However, Kata left Szeged after graduation and this romance only left precious memories. I was not a great dancer, but was more often forced to participate in the dances but it aroused an interest towards the opposite sex. Of course, there were lots of girls who showed interest in me because of my sister Kata. They were Csöpi Rác, Judka Geley and Dundi Borbola and I still remember them with pleasure. I was interested in Évi Kovacs, but since she was my age and was very pretty, she was more interested in the leather jacket pilot volunteers and was not aware of my budding love for her. We went to the skating rink for ice skating that the mild winters of Szeged allowed. I did not like to skate, I was clumsy, had significant falls. It was more interesting to help the girls with their skating equipment. At this time, I tried to woo a girl named Lonci with some success... In the summer Tisza was the center of our life. We went to the Soldiers swimming pool on a regular basis. I learned from my father that in the late '20s there was a palace revolution in the Szeged Rowing Association's board and many left the club including my father and instead went to the Soldiers swimming pool. We had a summer pass for the pool. Imre had a small boat and we paddled along the river shore. Sometimes even we got to use a speedboat. Kálmán Shvoy

had a speed boat with a powerful engine, this was probably one of a kind in Szeged and my sister and I were given rides. Later, we swam a lot in the SzUE pool and later with my Ica. Through Imre I got to know Dodo Aigner and Miki Tompa and the four of us became really good friends. But Miki soon left and went to Budapest and our group was transformed into a triumvirate. Then we started to walk along the promenade, took bike trips and we became interested in football. Later, we became fans of KEAC football club... In my family life the change was that Uncle Bela Hensch asked to be transferred to Kisbér. He took a role as cashier of the stud and then manager of the Nádas property. So, we no longer had our vacation in Budapest, but at Kisbér.



Home of the Kisbér Félvér (Half Blood) breed of horse

I could have had every opportunity to ride, but I had turned into a book-worm and spent my time in the Kisbér Library reading Jókai volumes all day long. But I had access to a Flaubert-gun and went hunting in a small pond at Nádas. Kisbér attempted to establish a swimming pool at the time. It was not paved, but a natural pond and it certainly was not a hygienic. But for us, young people it was great and we diligently practiced over the summer for the season-ending swimming competition. I performed well, but my competitive swimming career came to an end. I learnt some financial management skills with the help my mother by buying some pigs, fattening and then selling them. Of course, this was possible only because my mother diligently encouraged "my endeavors," I thought it was all due to my efforts and I was able to buy myself a good camera. During the Kisbér years I got to know my great aunt, Aunt Clemmy and her husband, who was the commander of the Kisbér stud. We used to be with them in the castle, much of which consisted of a park and the statue of Kincsem, whose trophies were in aunt Ilona's (Helen) house in Budapest.



Kincsem – undefeated in 54 races

Uncle Sándor (Alexander) Józsi went into retirement at that time and my mother and husband moved to Nádás. They built themselves a small family house with a little land around the house at Bakonybánk. There was also a cart with two horses in the yard and a driver who saw to the house duties and responsibilities of the carriage. I remember their most the adorable Puli dog.



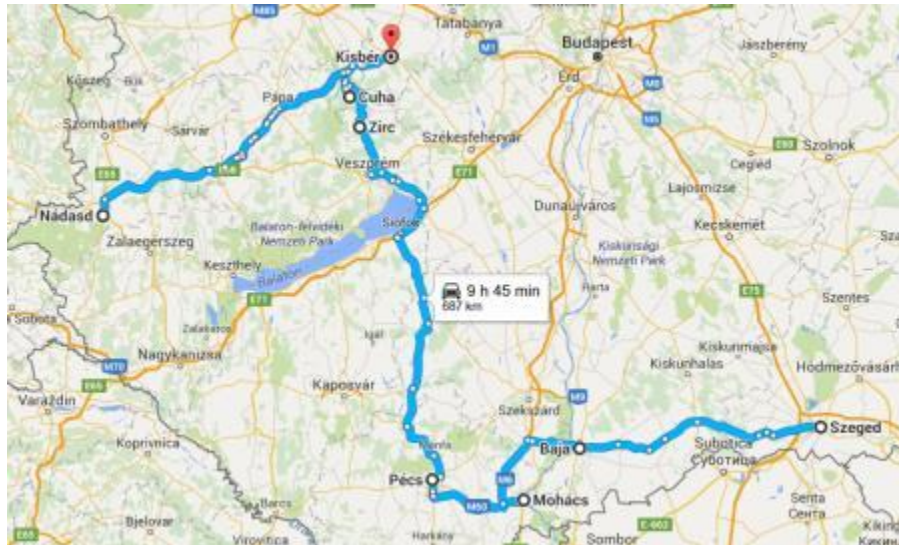
Puli a clever sheep dog

This very smart dog became attached to us. With regard to their health, they later had to move to Buda, and lived in a nice little flat at the Italian Alley district, but they often recalled their Kisbér Bakonybánk years. My father had a growing law practice from 1922 to 1929. Our apartment acquired one Persian carpet after another. He was a great supporter of artists and our apartment was full of beautiful images. It was at this time the later famous Margit (Margaret) Balogh (1898–1965) painted my grandparents and my mother's image and made pictures of us, children as well. In 1926 he took a trip to Italy and told many stories about his experiences. Our household these years was headed by Olga Grillwitzer. Tante Olga was an Austrian officer's widow she an elegant lady and was the one who looked after us children. She should have been the one who would teach us German but she was not very successful. We improved a lot in German but in fact we taught her more Hungarian and, in a few years, she became a frequent member of the Szeged Casino

lending library. My father never married for the second time. He appeared to be interested in women and it became clear to me later that he maintained a friendly relationship with a number of female artists from the Szeged Theater. However at that time we had no idea about this. My friend Imre Juray knew the joys of radio. With his help - I've never been one with manual dexterity - we built a crystal radio. Antenna was drawn through opposite attics across the street. It was an exciting experience when we first heard from afar sounds and when we could hear the distant Budapest radio. Later I managed to convince my father to buy a major appliance with which we could pick up European broadcasts. The German station at this time had exciting material. The Weimar Republic faced fateful choices for the future and this produced a new political party, the National Socialists with their leader, Adolf Hitler... Tante Olga, the former officer's widow favored Hindenburg. However, I, if only to tease Tante Olga, was a Hitler fan. My father of course tried to explain the situation to me and said that he believed him to be a demagogue, but was of the opinion that this party would help the German public accept militarization. Our fathers could clearly see that the Hungarians would not be able to achieve the revision of the Trianon Treaty through the League of Nations (pre-United Nations) and that the German strengthening in the European balance of power would help us. The German's aided the Pan German concept whereas my father's age group could still see the relevance of the Austrian Habsburg connection. The memory of the king, Rákóczi and Kossuth still lived in the older generation. Indeed, in those centuries the Hapsburg family and the Austrian representatives promoted the southeast advancing 'drive eastward' policy (Drang nach Osten). As a result of my upbringing the hated color was yellow and black (German Flag) and only the name of Kossuth was approved in the hamlets of Szeged. My father told me that once, when a pro-government program was canvassed, the old Hungarian, who had been listening, twirled his mustache and questioned him, "What would Lajos Kossuth say?" We, the young people wore a mourning armband and a Trianon T badge on June 4 as a sign that we will never forget. (The Injustices of Trianon) At the athletics tournaments our group spelt out the words 'Down with Trianon!' So, it is understandable that Germany offered us hope, especially also because the temporary recovery of Transylvania and the role of the Mackensen Hussars in the First World War was still very fresh in people's memory and subject of many heroic stories in the press. My father read the 'Pest Magazine' and I became a diligent reader, it represented strongly and enthusiastically Hungarian revisionist thought. Hitler's anti-Semitism at this stage was of a beer hall standard and the Hungarian

Jews were wholeheartedly in favor of the fight against the injustices of Trianon suffered by the Hungarians. The Hungarian Jews in the occupied territories called themselves Hungarians and the press magnates welcomed the idea of national redistribution of territories. I was also influenced by the perception of events in Germany by my father encouraging me to write a study of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. For weeks I continued my studies and I was a frequent visitor to the Somogyi library. From my source work I learnt all the horrors of this revolution, my father also drew my attention to the competing forces of this revolution which included the Slavic countries advance towards the Balkan Peninsula in World War I. I was particularly influenced by the revolution's opposition against the Church and its atheism. I talked a lot about this issue with my father, who was of the opinion that the red leadership would be replaced by the white leadership in the Russian army. In addition to political research my favorite pastime was literature. In preparation for my final exam in year VIII I went to school in the afternoons to lectures of university professor Sándor (Alexander) Sik in the humanities auditorium. I liked Sik's educated and refined style. Graduation came and I was happy because I felt that the three A's and three B's reflected my abilities and I was looking for the longer holiday breaks of university life. We walked proudly on the promenade with a walking stick in hand, in the company of our good friends who were also students and now proudly wearing the black Turul (Hungarian Falcon) Association's hat. A completed secondary education, of course, raised the problem of career choice. I turned to the humanist courses and there must also have been an inherited component in this as my great-grandfather was a panel judge, both my father and grandfather were lawyers so the legal profession. To this add the fact that most of my friends chose a legal path so that I took it for granted that I would join my father in the legal profession. My career choice was however under scrutiny due to my father's financial problems. The great economic crisis of these years ruined the agricultural industry and lawyers similarly felt the economic stagnation. My father was looking for a low-cost diploma for me so he gave me a great surprise one day when we were walking on the promenade, he waved to brigadier Kálmán Shvoy who congratulated me for my graduation and told me that they would provide a place for me from the Szeged quota an invitation to apply for the entrance exams of the military Academy of Ludovika. It caused a big disappointment for my father when I said I did not want to be a soldier and would like to be a lawyer. Naturally he did not force me to change my mind, but he still wanted me to avoid becoming a lawyer - the economic crisis disillusioned him enough to recommend that

I enroll in the medical faculty. But I was stubborn and ultimately my father accepted my decision. I didn't ponder this decision instead I organized a bike tour with my friend Imre which became one of my fondest memories. Szeged-Baja, Mohacs, Pécs, around the lake, Zirc, Cuha Valley, and finally got home to Nádasd at Kisbér where we were expected by my mother.



My father was obviously disappointed about my plans, but this year there was one satisfaction in that he was appointed chief government counselor. About this my father wrote in his memoirs:

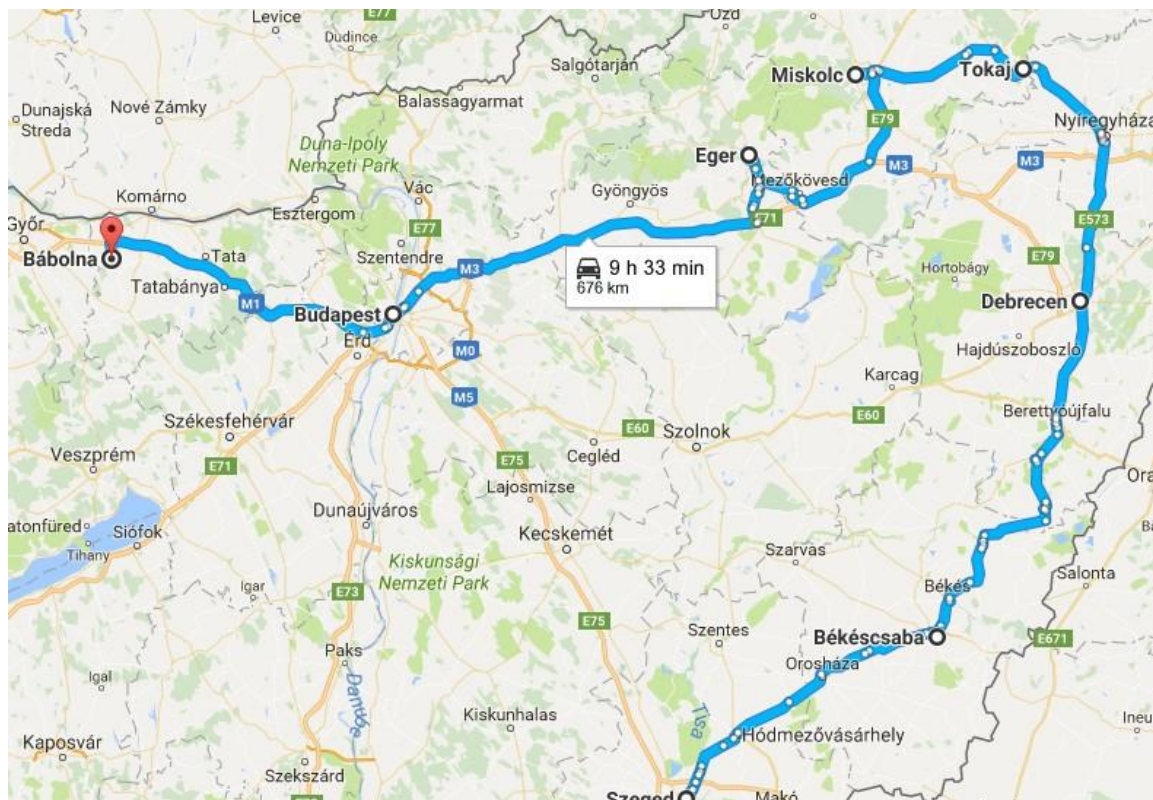
"In 1932 Károly (Karl) Aigner was Lord Lieutenant (Sheriff) he along with the Bethlen government failed at the elections. He wanted to acknowledge my services but knowing that I would avoid public acknowledgement and without consulting me he wrote down my story and put me up for the chief government counselor appointment. This appointment was made "in public acknowledgment of my merits" in the month of August 1932. Of course it would have been rude to refuse"

University Years 1932-1936

My father, in light of the financial crisis decided to wind down his household expenses by giving up his housekeeper. The fact that my sister Kata was getting to be a "big girl" contributed to this decision. Because we lacked a mother it became increasingly more difficult in Szeged to have an appropriate mix of social life which included arranging home parties for us young people. Therefore, Kata was placed in a boarding school in Szeged and the plan was to stay there for two years until graduation. In the school holidays we could visit our mother at Kisbér and later at Bábolna. I was placed in the Horthy College as a law student to start my career. I was assigned a beautiful two-bed room and I enjoyed the company of boys with the same age and interests. I became too distracted with the freedom of university life, and I often came in late to get back to the dorm, so that the supervising teacher's interest was aroused. Géza Deák was one of the supervising teachers, who later told me that he was amazed that a well-known lawyer had sent his son to a Szeged dormitory school. . The director also knew my father and he must have also reported that his son is enjoying his independence. My father decided that after the first semester I would leave the college and instead lease a small apartment in 2 Deák Ferenc Street and from then on we ate together in the casino restaurant in Szeged so as to keep an eye on me and make sure I didn't take things too far. My father struggled frugally with the then very sluggish economy. We had breakfast and dinner at home, and so we usually bought assorted cold cuts, lunch was our more costly eating style. My allowance was very little and I certainly had to think if I wanted to go to a football match or go to a movie or show. My father was a very conservative-minded person who was reluctant to get into debt in these hard times. Later I came to the conclusion that my father was not cut out to be in business because in difficult times instead of hiding this he let people know how tough his financial condition was including wearing refurbished suits. My father despite this always dressed elegantly impressing his acquaintances. His entertainment was also governed by the economic conditions. After work he usually took long walks. His friends could not keep up to him because of his habit of walking with great power. Thank God he was in good health these years, there was a period in 1927 when he was suffering from recurrent rheumatoid arthritis and was almost bedridden for a few years. Of course, his health also contributed to

the decline in his legal practice. He had half an hour walks and then we had dinner. I studied after dinner, while he usually dropped into the theater, where the members of the city's Theatrical Committee had a box reserved for him and he viewed a scene or two in the ongoing show. Then maybe he drank a glass or two of wine at the casino, but even so was home before midnight. After the first month of freedom, I studied diligently and attended the lectures. The professor of Roman law, Albert Kiss, was a good friend of my father and he personally attended to me and he stressed the importance of rereading every day the material covered that day because he thought that was the only way to be really prepared for the exams. I was interested in public law since the Hungarian view of history has always been in a constitutional way and I was really keen on Hungarian history. Ödön Polner was our teacher who was a man of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but he was independent-minded and so was sympathetic to me. Béla Iványi taught history of law in the spirit of the Catholic Church and thus gave us a more complete picture of the subject. Barna Horváth gave the introduction to legal philosophy and at that point I felt that this subject area was made for me. Naturally I became involved in student life. My friends, Imre Juray, Dodo Aigner and Mickey Tompa were involved in the Turul Alliance. Mickey Tompa was a son of a Transylvanian nobleman from a Protestant family and of course did not join the Catholic Emericánás Society. So, Dodo and Imre both decided to join Turul Alliance and the Budapest lawyers Verbőczy Fraternal Association. This meant a non-contest decision and I joined my friends. My father did not oppose this. He himself was a religious Catholic, regularly went to confession (reconciliation) and holy communion, but his best friend was Lexi Kaszó a member of the Reformed Church and my father was willing to condemn both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches if need be and was an advocate of Christian unity. In addition, he was a very proud man but never thought that he should seek help from the churches. The Turul Association was later under political attacks but in our first years it taught us a national identity and discipline and enabled access to entertainment including dances organized for the community. The association was under the watchful eye of Albert Kiss a conservative professor with a national outlook. I took part in a few dance evenings and got to know the other students of the faculty as well. There were also 'Wet' camps where we had a few drinks with friends, arguing about, what interested us. But at midnight we became serious because it was time for the "memento". In a darkened room the voice of a designated speaker over the radio talked to us by candlelight. The subject was about the lost homeland territories including Erdély (Transylvania), Felvidék (the Highlands) and

Délvidék (the Southern Region) vowing that once the time came, we would be prepared to die for the Greater Magyarország (Hungary). The first year sped quickly and so soon after the oral exams the first major obstacle was the basic written test. Fortunately, I had success at the exams in May and so I could look forward to a worry-free yearend vacation. There were changes in my mother's household because her husband Béla moved to Bábolna and took over the leadership of the Central District. So, this year the bike tour took in Bábolna, we had planned this for months with my friend Imre. The road map in the tour was Békéscsaba, Debrecen, Tokaj, Miskolc, Eger, Budapest and Bábolna.



Planned bike tour

My father was very worried about us in our first journey into the world. He had a good friend in the police headquarters and they issued us with a certificate/request to the head of the Csendőr (Gendarme/police) to support us if needed. We first used this "safe conduct" letter when arriving at the Békéscsaba's main square where we stopped to rest and the square was full of unemployed laborers and we became involved in a conversation with them. Suddenly there appeared two strangers in civilian suits who called for identification. We produced the certification from the Szeged brigade headquarters. For this they

apologized and we tried to explain to no avail that we are simple hiker students, they did not believe us and they were convinced that we were counter-intelligence agents. Later we used this certification often and we asked the local police chiefs' permission to pitch our tents. Sometimes we even received the honor of free beds for the night when we reached our destinations. When we reached Miskolc, I remember there was a flood of school girls on the roadway, so that we had to get off our bikes while the children crossed the road. Later, I thought that maybe my future faithful life-partner, my dear Icuka could have been one of these girls because she was still in high school at the time. She was probably unaware of the two dusty cyclists ... We were looking forward to stop at Budapest. In our program we had the English Park and the Beketow circus and other sites. We planned other adventures as well, we happened to be near the English Park and inadvertently entered a "museum", and there we saw the results of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases in horrific images, and on exiting we promptly forgot our plans. Unexpectedly our tour of Budapest also ended. My friend received a telegram from home to come home immediately. As it turned out his father, Uncle Toni's plans suddenly came into fruition and Imre had to go to Stuttgart in Germany for a few months with some friends to brush up his German. Uncle Tony was a man of German descent from Bácska (Bačka), who married a Hungarian girl from Szondy and who felt that he was Hungarian. In their home they spoke only Hungarian. But in researching his family Uncle Tony found the family roots near Stuttgart and it became possible for Imre's study trip. His German language skills grew. So, I arrived home at Bábolna on my own and started a very nice summer vacation. Imre Kelemen at the time was director of the stud while the commander of the stud was Tibor Szandtner. . They were both sociable people and who gave much to the officers and stud estate owners and were on good terms. Tibor Szandtner was a horse breeding expert who largely at his own expense renovated the Bábolna "castle" so that we would never have reason to be ashamed in front of foreign visitors. He took part in the Bábolnai social set and though he never drank a drop of alcohol he danced for hours in the szupécsárdás (Csárdás Dance) holding a large towel used to occasionally wipe away his sweat ... Imre Kelemen together with his brother the president of OTT also built a small swimming pool. Of course, the small swimming pool could not be completely open to the public and so the board wrote at the entrance a sign that said that the swimming pool is open only to people who came from or appeared to come from the "middle class". Both the younger set and I found this to be socially offending and the board decided to remove this sign....in the

afternoons activities also picked up on the tennis court and I too had a go there learning this beautiful sport. The mixed doubles games of course only served as an opportunity for the young to get to know the opposite sex. I met Edith Kelemen who was the daughter of Kornél Kelemen the OTT President. She just graduated from high school and later I realized that she became a guest of Imre Kelemen to enable her to look around for marriageable young men there. I really liked. Edith, she was a nice, delicate, blond haired, blue eyed girl who was well-mannered and a good dancer. But she only looked at me as someone of the same age and my courting was not reciprocated and soon a great love affair evolved between her and Tony Kovács and I missed out.

My first memories of Bábolnai go back to Christmas of 1932. This Christmas, the situation was reversed and was no longer celebrated in Szeged but we celebrated in Bábolna. In previous years, my father's household was visited by my mother and now my father traveled to Bábolna for a few days to be with the children and both parents on Christmas Eve. On January 30 1933 we set off to return to Szeged, I remember well that before the train came on the Western Railway Station, I read the Pest Newsletter bill board on the Kaiser Wilhelm road. One of the main news items announced was the appointment of Hitler. The Chancellor of Germany became a popular leader and the caricature of a man with the small mustache and hair hanging into his face came to rule our destiny.

Amongst these political memories was the conclusion of the summer holidays and my return to Szeged in September. My mother accompanied us to Budapest in Kelenföld. From there we tried to catch a tram to the city center. In that area we got swept up into a big crowd. Some of the industrial workers organized mass demonstrations demanding wage increases. In their button holes they wore red carnations and waved red flags and the atmosphere was very dangerous. The police were called out in large numbers and there were more severe disturbances. We were very shocked by the images and the threat of an imminent Bolshevist uprising. We arrived in Szeged and in the warm lowland city we soon forgot our fears. In the evenings we strolled down the Korzó (Park) with my friends, we courted one girl then the next, but our leisure time was mainly taken up by football. The university team KEAC was then very successful we were there at almost every game, cheering for our team. The opposition teams included Kiskunfél-church team, Makó and Hódmezővásárhely they all knew us for our big-letter 'E' flags and our encouraging chant of **"Bring It on KEAC"**. If we won we sang that **"... you cannot make fun of the University."** Sometimes we missed going home to be due to car troubles or too many drinks. I still see

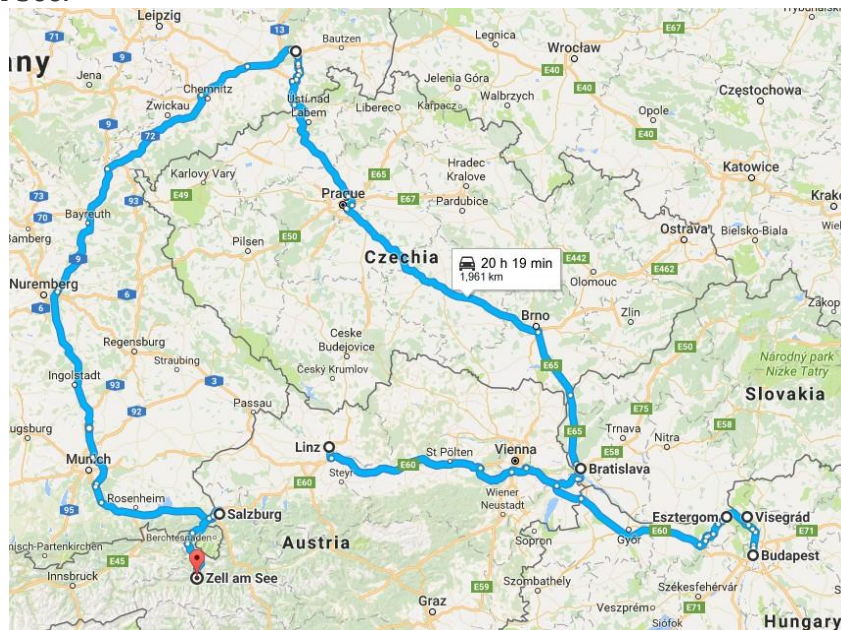
our trainer Nagy dancing on the table. We surely caused many unnecessary concerns to our parents. We also spent many months and years in Szatymaz where my friend Imre's father had a vineyard. Here we lived in our world of riding horses and kicking a football. Sometimes we had many sips of Uncle Toni's. '**Sand wine**' (wine produced from grapes grown vineyards built on sandy soil) and occasionally we got in such a condition that we were not brave enough to cycle back and so we slept outside. At that time there was no telephone communication at the vineyard and our parents certainly waited anxiously for us at home.



The club was founded in 1921 as 'Kitartás Egyetemi Atlétikai Klub (KEAC)'

In addition, we drifted from the undergraduate student life. As an old member of the Turul club I was assigned the job of training the first-year students into the club spirit. I got to know Laci Regdon the district chief of the society. He was already a clerk in the district court and his main objective was to promote the Turul Association in the Szeged society. The Emericana society was in an easier position, because of the help given to it by the Catholic Church. Thus, Laci Regdon sought out the descendants of the old families of Szeged to get serious about the recognition of our Turul alliance socially with our help. First and foremost, we created the Turul Club. We rented a room and there during the weekends the students were able to have fun cheaply with some supervision. For the prom season we won the right to organize the University Ball which later became an important event in Szeged society. Despite this I began to be seriously immersed in my legal studies. I attended various seminars on Roman private law and criminal law and wrote papers on these subjects. Later I wrote essays on constitutional law and international law. I was awarded

diplomas by the University and received small money prizes for these modest works... but in 1932 the fun turned into sorrow for me. On March 4 my mother's second husband died from a heart attack, we really liked Béla. He was 49 years old. My mother was only 40 years old and so the loss of her husband was a tragedy for the whole family. Exams were coming again and I hid in the books my second-term basic exam were coming. This test was held on June 1, 1932 and I received unanimous honors. My father was happy with me and allowed Imre Juray and I to take an Austrian trip. We took a ship in Budapest and we travelled the Danube to Linz and were delighted with the scenery. After Visegrád and Esztergom and at Pozsony (Bratislava) castle we saw a major part of the old Hungary. Then the natural beauty of the Wachau (Austria) caught our attention. After Salzburg we spent a couple of days in Zell am See.



Austrian Trip

To the big shock of the locals, we dived into the icy lake as we used to in Szeged but to the amusement of the spectators we quickly climbed out of the water with red skins. Our stay was somewhat disrupted by political events. It was at this time that the infamous Nazi coup in that country occurred and you could also hear the guns crackling between opposing paramilitary forces. Then the guns fell silent and the depth of the crisis was clearly shown in that one morning it was apparent that most of the population showed German sympathies. As a result of a Berlin radio call a great mass of men wore white stockings and

the women wore edelweiss insignia's.... Our holiday was over and after Semmering we reached Vienna where we caught our ship heading for home. I said goodbye to my friend Imre somewhere around Győr and joined my mother and my sister Kata. My mother moved from the central stewardship spacious house to a small apartment until she was able to plan for her changed circumstances. These months at Bábolna were not as cheerful as in previous years. I especially grieved the loss of my small cat. The cat was so fond of the house and did not want to leave her home and soon it perished because of the changes. This summer however at Bábolna brought happiness because my sister Kata, who had just graduated from high school, she was a nice, sweet girl, found her perfect match in the person of Dr. Béla Csabai a local doctor. Béla was really good friends with Uncle Hensch and he maintained his connection with the family after the death of Uncle Béla. The Courtship turned serious, but after my mother had to leave Bábolna and her living conditions were unsettled, Kata accepted Falcione family's invitation to live with them for a year. In the fall of 1932 university lectures started, but Croatian patriots on October 9 murdered the Serbian king and the French foreign minister and the subsequent crisis effected Hungary as well.



King Alexander's Assassination (1934)

It appeared that the many Croatian refugees lived at Jankapuszta and repressive measures were taken against the Hungarian minority in the Bánát and Bácska by Yugoslavia. They were thrown on masse across the border near Szeged and the city became responsible for the care of these refugees. In this work, of course, the university students also took part. Our circle of friends worked diligently to establish sleeping quarters for the exiles in a school near the Rókusi Church. We took part in a variety of collection actions, and we went

out to the streets on masse demanding that the government take action against Serbia in retaliation. The government was of course in a very difficult situation. The Hungarian position was defended by Tibor Eckhardt in Geneva and mass demonstrations and riots would only have worsened the situation. However, we in our youthful vigor had not contemplated all the issues. As I later learned, Gömbös ordered Béla Buócz the police commander in Szeged, by telephone that street protests and riots be eliminated. The police units on horseback with sword eventually herded us into the City Hall courtyard. Bela Buócz then explained the situation to us and told us to keep calm and not provoke the authorities who were obliged to preserve the tranquility for international reasons. The youths' exasperation was squeezed into an organized framework. The humanities faculty announced a rally of all the clubs in the auditorium and after the speaker from Budapest I spoken on behalf of the university students in Szeged. My oratory skills were in germination and reaped acclaim as shown by the fact that for the next two months, I was speaker at two further the occasions on behalf of the university students. At the country's flag raising ceremony I spoke of our commitment for the restoration of Greater Hungary, at the March 15th commemoration I stood in front of the statue of Kossuth and expressed the youths' desire for social renewal of the country. It was understood that in the circumstances of the time and as the celebration was the official commemoration, the organizers would be provided with the text of the speech to be presented. As my speech encompassed the then erupting reform mood criticizing the past and calling for a social transformation that even my father feared that it would be censored.... To my surprise (although the censor was the chief of police) there were no amendments and I successfully delivered my brave words. At that time my interest increasingly focused on legal and constitutional politics, and the philosophy of law. The lectures of István (Stephen). Csekey interested me greatly. At this time our professor published the results of his visit to Estonia and described to the Hungarian society the Estonian view of the legal aspects of 'cultural autonomy'. Recently achieving independence, the Estonian nation had to face a Russian minority and they saw the solution in cultural autonomy which ensured that the local Russians could maintain their linguistic and religious freedom hoping that this price will win from the Russians acknowledgement of the Estonian leadership in this Baltic area. From my studies I began to develop the components which eventually determined my political view the world. In communism we saw bloody revolution and atheistic worldview; we saw that the revolutionary movement was used to control production, distribution and

consumption and ultimately public ownership. We viewed the elimination of private property as unnatural and firmly rejected it. Social democracy at that time insisted on the Leninist Marxist principles and the difference between social democracy and communism was only that they are not achieved by revolution but by constitutional consultation. Our laws said that revolutionary organizations aiming to change the existing state and social order was against the law and our youth organization had to act in a constitutional way within the existing social order. I was an avid reader of the researchers works and Imre Kovács whose **'A Silent Revolution'** had made a big impression on me. I was keen to improve the fate of three million beggar Hungarians. The agrarian question became important to me especially as I became aware in those years at Kisbér and Bábolna of the local farmers and hired workers. My mother often visited the families struggling with financial troubles and I saw the fate of many who barley had enough to eat. The young economics students often pointed out these difficulties and in particular the conditions in the nearby large church estates were in such a state that the Bábolna parish priest was known to be strongly criticized in friendly conversations. There developed in me the belief that radical land reform was needed and without this the rebirth of the nation was not possible and the root of the problem was the lack of land for smallholder class. This was one of our goals. I stated these views to my father repeatedly, and I remember that once I became so excited that he accused me of being a communist. I continued to read and studied this issue and did not conceal my view. Strangely at this time it happened that an art student who I only knew superficially and a colleague invited me for a friendly chat, because, as they said, we have a guest from Budapest, and we can discuss these Hungarian issues. I went to a meeting somewhere in the Boldogasszony Avenue in a small family rented flat and we spent a few hours together. We agreed on many issues, but somehow there seemed to be a gap between us. Eventually it became clear to me that he wanted to recruit me as a member of a left-wing socialist group in Szeged. I was also noticed by the right wing too. My father belonged to the liberal wing of the Unity Party, but became noticed from my oratory and my membership of the Verbóczy Fraternal Association (Turul club) that I was fighting for a national and social renewal. Captain István Mészáros was a hardened Székely soldier was a friend of my father and knew him from earlier years was aware of my ideas. To my surprise he un-expectantly invited me to attend a meeting at the chief of police offices where I was also able to meet politicians from Budapest. I took part in this reunion and it was suggested that I join them in the renewal of Hungary. Love of the

country was the name of the association and soon discovered that Árpád Taby renowned master of the Order of Maria Theresa was the leader. I had to take an oath to never leave my desire for national renewal. Moreover, they emphasized that the association was secret and were not allowed to publicly discuss the secret oath under penalty. I observed this but no one approached me again and I finished my political activities. I kept the national question as my priority and that is why Francis Szálasi's: **'The Road and the Goal'** and his ideas of Hungarians took my attention. I was already aware that Greater Hungary restoration implies that it would be difficult to rule over large masses. It was because of this that I was interested in Professor Csekey's wishes to promote the Estonian autonomy-culture plan. The old St. Stephan's state idea followed this line, but the nineteenth century nationalism, which stressed the linguistic basis made this view impossible. I saw an opportunity to introduce the idea of Hungarianism as a means to live in a federal system with all the nationalities of the Carpathian-Danube Greater Hungarian Homeland while ensuring that it involved Hungarian Government control. However, the then leaders of the Hungary did not see this as a solution and a plan including separate territories was regarded as treasonous. My father saw the situation similarly to his generation and strongly criticized any such federal experimentation. I did not argue with my dad then, but sadly I finished the conversation and suggested that if this was correct then Ferenc Szálasi could become the last dreamer of greater Hungary. The German rebirth was spectacular and had an effect on people. Increasingly there developed a variety of national socialist parties. They slavishly imitated the German party in appearance. I did not like the fact that although for tactical reasons demanded the right to vote in secret, though - apparently following the German example - they wanted to achieve a one-party system. I did not agree with it. I was not a supporter of parliamentary democracy either following the example of Germany and France as they were unable to form a unified leadership. During my studies I preferred the old Hungarian parliamentary and county system. My idea was that the counties and cities to choose their representatives for the National Assembly and they be allowed, to accommodate change in circumstances, to be recalled to serve the will of the electorate. It was my plan that after my years at university I would study this issue. Later this subject was dealt with in my Berlin scholarship years. Finally in June 1934 I finished the third-year exam, achieving honors. In the summer I went to Kisbér again, where my mother was given accommodation at the stud, she was still trying to recover from the tragic death of her husband. It was a quiet summer. I prepared for the final exam and read Barna

Horvath '**Legal Philosophy**' in the original German and made notes on each chapter. Then it was fall and I returned to Szeged to begin my exams to win a doctorate in law and political science. My friend Imre completed his doctorate in September and enlisted in the army as air defense officer and left Szeged. So, of the triumvirate only two of us remained Dodo Aigner and I. Together we frequented the Korzó and on the weekends we attended the KEAC football matches. However, these months were quiet because of the hard work necessary for the final exam preparation taking up most of my time. The Turul Alliance no longer took up my time. In the past year I was a candidate for election as a lieutenant but my friend Pista (Steve) Széchenyi proved more popular and so I was left free. At this time there was an unpleasant interlude for me in the Verbőczy Fraternal Association. My good childhood friend Elek (Sityi) who was one year younger than me returned to Szeged. He after graduation went to Budapest and with the Békefy family tried to find a job in the theater world. His father, uncle Lexi was a good friend of my father died in 1932 and Aunt Betty was unable on a widow's pension to support Sityi in his attempts to get work in the theatre. Therefore, they decided to return to Szeged and Sityi enrolled in the law faculty. Even though I was a member of Verbőczy Fraternal Association, Aunt Betty suggested that Sityi should join the Turul Alliance. Sityi got the candidate papers and asked me recommend his application for admission. For me, it was certainly a very unpleasant task. I knew that my friend was of Jewish origin and a declaration that the applicant is not Jewish being a condition of admittance. I also knew that his connection could not be hidden, because the family was well known in Szeged, and sooner or later it would have been very uncomfortable when he is exposed and excluded from the association. So, it was up to me and my father to tactfully explain to them the situation. Sityi understood the problem, but Aunt Betty, with the natural bias of a good mother did not want to understand. She cared nothing of the politics and even stated that she did not mind if Szálasi comes to power as long as nothing would hurt her son.... She calmed down and Sityi did not give in his application. During these months I studied with my cousin Lóránt (Roland) Falcione. At this time my sister Kata lived in his household and we became closer to the family. This fall's importance to me was the meeting with Ica my life companion to be. I well remember the date, because it lived in both our memories. October 20th 1935 after a football match we stopped off at the Kass Szálló dance hall where the Verbőczy Fraternal Association was holding a dance. Here again, I noticed a beautiful slender blond girl who I had noticed at the Turul club two weeks ago. I did not have the courage to ask her for a dance on that first

occasion as she appeared to have many prospective partners; she arrived in Szeged recently to attend the School Teacher College studying mathematics and physics as a first-year student. At the Kass Szálló I overcame my shyness and grabbed one of the directors and introduced myself in accordance with the strict rules of the day. Of course, the first sentences between us became a standing joke between us; Ica wanted to tease me and said that another girl then dancing, Kata Simon was her sister. This was a mistake because Kata Simon was my sister's best friend with whom we had been good friends since childhood and so the white lie was immediately unmasked. From then on, we often met, in the beginning by accident in public places and the dance afternoons, but soon we walked together almost every day in the Cathedral Square arcade or the Stefánia (Stephanie) Street and increasingly we grew closer to one another. Ica was soon surprised to receive a bouquet of flowers from me and as she told Kata Simon, with whom she shared a room at the Horthy College. Kata immediately declared: "**... if Bela sent you flowers, it means he is in love with you ...**" my dear friend Kata was right ... but this part of our courtship was very disciplined because Ica knew that I was studying hard and she did not want to stand in the way

The last law student semester was coming, and this time the law students were due for conscription, the rule was that if someone was conscripted in the army the second half of the fourth-year exams were deferred, but could apply for the final examinations at the completion of the service. I had mixed feelings as the day approached for enlistment. I was afraid that the draft board would find me unsuitable and I would be embarrassed. Among the young people in those days there was such strong nationalist sentiment that there had been a number of suicides by those who were declared unfit.... However, my fears were unfounded, and I was enlisted and I planned to apply for the armored division training as it was considered fashionable and modern. By chance I was helped by my father. At this time Szeged had the arrival of Vilmos (William) Kircsfalusy, valor rank, who was previously the commander of RUISK. This was the abbreviation for the 'police recruitment school'. Vilmos arranged to have my name registered in the 1936 as a volunteer and I knew that I would start my military year in Budapest. Then on 2nd of December 1935 I sat for the first jurisprudential exams and succeeded with unanimous honors and started my Christmas vacation. My Ica also went home to Miskolc, where her family lived. Her father was a teacher there at the Fráter (Brother) György (George) high school.



Ica's Mother and father

They were refugees from the Felvidék (Highlands) from Szepes County (North East Slovakia) to Miskolc, my future father-in-law refused to renounce his Hungarian citizenship and to take an oath to Czechoslovakia (following annexation after World War I). This was the last Christmas spent at my mother's home in Kisbér. This time she moved to Budapest on a modest widow's pension. We often went out with our cousins in Szeged. Eva Falcione was now a big girl and became a good friend of my sister Kata. Lolo diligently studied and he also prepared for military service. Aunt Eti was very busy during these months because there were often young people gathering at her place where we spent many hours of arguing while she often teased us. At this time, I was a fan of the poet Ady. The older generation was still quite skeptical about having such a revolutionary poet. Uncle Kálmán had arranged to have Lolo register as a member of the Emericana club and he himself tracked politically on the Catholic viewpoint. I wore the Turul black cap very proudly, so that once she mentioned Ady on the subject of Léda and asked how I could reconcile this love of Ady and my overall philosophical approach. Well, I remember that I said to her that Ady's private life was not important to the poet and referred her to Ady's poem line which said: "We are angry with both the arrogant Counts and the wealthy Jews." The two younger Falcione boys, Kálmán (pimpi) and Márió (Bábo) observed our fierce nationalism in our speeches and became brave soldiers seeking to rebuild Greater Hungary and ultimately to protect our independence in the Second World War. On March 16 1936 I completed all the exams required for the constitutional doctorate and received honors on March 20. I spent more and more time with Ica over the summer and we planned to spend a couple of weeks along the Balaton lake. Ica's aunt, our future 'Ilumama' undertook the role of the chaperone and the two of them managed to book a room in the 'Teacher's House'. We had planned that I would get a room in the village for myself and we would eat together in the Teachers hall. I had the problem of how to finance this trip. I did not want to burden my father as his legal practice didn't earn much so I decided to sell my bike. At that time, it had value and Louis Bába a comrade and friend from my father's old rowing club bought it for his son. Thus, the

financial problem was solved for the summer vacation. Another comprehensive examination was successfully completed and so I looked forward to a relaxing time at Lake Balaton. These two weeks become one of my most beautiful memories. In these weeks Ica, our love matured in the hot Hungarian summer, warm waves of the lake, the Badacsony wines and charming walks in the surrounding hills and this followed us through a long life.



Lake Balaton

Later we saw many beautiful and magnificent sights but the memories of this Hungarian summer could not be dimmed. Then I returned to Szeged and continued studying for the final exams which were due at the end of September. In the meantime, the future cast shadows in that I would serve in the army and would be separated from Szeged and more importantly from Ica. We were already discussing the possibility of applying for a scholarship after my military service as my professor; Stephen Csekey encouraged me to apply for a scholarship and promised his help... And what would happen then, no one knew, the job prospects at the time were uncertain. Ica still had three years of study and I felt that I had no right to tie her to me, I was very uncertain to my fate. But I had no strength to stand aside for now. These weeks – my last days at Szeged was very busy. The date of Kata's (my sister's) wedding was announced and I had to prepare for my final exams as well as my entrance into the army. Ica having also returned to Szeged started her second year studies and gave us the opportunity to meet daily. However, the impending separation's sad symbol was when I showed her my uniform through a single-story window, she felt it was a sign of impending parting.

On September 22nd, I passed the final comprehensive exam and a few days later, on the 26th received a doctorate 'summa cum laude' (with highest honor) from the University Council. But there was no time for celebration as my sister's wedding was coming. My mother came to Szeged and then met the choice of my heart; she accepted her as her own daughter and was very pleased for me. My father liked Ica very much, but he like I had concerns regarding our future.

Kata's wedding - after a civil marriage - was at the Fogadalmi (Votive) Church arriving with my father in a four white horse carriage at the steps of the church, and many friends, relatives and friends filled the church. After the ceremony, the guests had the wedding dinner at special hall of the Hotel Tisza. The mood was good all celebrated these young couple's wedding. They were naturally eager to head for Budapest, where they wanted to spend their honeymoon. Two days later, the moment had come for me to say goodbye too. I had to separate from Icuka, embrace my father with who I spent the last four years, I was very close to him and I had to leave Szeged, the city to which my youth's memories belonged. Then of course I thought that I might be home in one or two years from now but I felt that the links were now broken and maybe I will only go back home to visit.

On 5 October, 5 o'clock in the morning I loaded my green military chest on the carriage, as Szeged did not have many cars or taxis, hugged my father once again and the vehicle started. It chugged along the Boldogasszony Boulevard and the city slowly disappeared from me in the foggy autumn morning.



**Béla in Military
Service**

Portraits of Szeged

As the Pest fast train carried me my spirit said goodbye to my city of birth... Since then, more than half a century has passed and due to a twisted fate landed me on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The change in time and space has made it very difficult to remember the memories of my youth. It should also be noted that I basically lived as an adult in Szeged only 2-5 years and my judgment of people is limited as regards the drawing of people's characters. It should also be pointed out that I cannot write a monograph about Szeged, because the middle-class students would not have understood the city's artisan's, trader's and farmer's problems. Therefore, only very sketchy memories can be recorded on paper. On the other hand, a great help to me was that my father in his old age after the World War II while living in Székesfehérvár, at my request wrote his memories of Szeged, and so perhaps his remarks concerning peoples of public interest who were his friends and acquaintances and were well-known people of the then Szeged but whose memory might have since been buried by time.

Also, my father gave me a publication about Hungarian towns including Szeged published in Budapest, 1927 which brought me close again to the picture of Szeged my hometown. The nineteenth century Szeged of course could not have been known by me but the cited monograph also showed that my father's ancestors Zombori Rónay, the Blaskovich family and István (Stephen) Vedres played a significant role in the history of Szeged. During the great flood amongst the more senior persons, I had personal connection with Senator Antal (Anthony) Zombori, who was very proud of his vineyards. Few people loved their city so much. His whole working life was devoted to Szeged. Being a water person, he also handled the flood periods in an intense way.



Szeged 1879 Big Flood Monument only 265 of 5,723 houses remained.

The Zombori couple, both in their 90 years lived in the Milkó Palace at 22 Deák Ferenc Street, this was also where our apartment and that of my father's law firm was. Often, we saw lady Zombori who had always been an industrious housewife reprimand the servant-girls Uncle Tony was shuffled off to the casino and but

always kept a mental freshness. I remember that he once visited my father's law office and requested help in a minor rental case. It was not a major issue, but my father treated him with great reverence, and resolved the issue with satisfaction, my father often talked about him as one of the most revered citizens of old Szeged.



Author's Father's Notary Law Office -

Then they almost simultaneously left this world, and there was only an inscription on the headstone above the coffins. I knew, of course, Kószó, Aigner and Gál families and became friends with the younger generation.

I personally did not know Laszlo Szivessy a lawyer who was one of the most prominent figures in the Jewish community in Szeged. In my day, only his son Lehel Szivessy was mentioned by people as one of the most prominent members of the city's political life. My father once told me a joke from Szeged. According to the story the Szivessy grandmother, who had not had much Hungarian knowledge was asked, what the name of the new-born grandchild was, the future 'Lehel' (an old Hungarian name which translates to 'Breath') Szivessy, the answer was from the grandmother was: "I do not know, something puffing ..."

I remember Ferenc Kiss the Chief Forestry Councilor well, he devoted his whole life to the treeless, barren sand dunes and lowland forests to create and promote the natural growth for better agricultural management. I often met him at the Casino and we had many friendly discussions with my father about the problems of Szeged.

I can still see the figure of Gabor Papp, the eminent painter. My father was very fond of his images and was a loyal customer of his too. In his last years he was in very bad shape financially and lived in quite disturbing conditions. We often visited us at lunch time and of course he was invited by my father to join us. We as children often smiled at his

movements which were unsteady but we did not understand that they were as a result of serious health causes.

One of the outstanding personalities of the Szeged music world was Peter König, director of the municipal music school. Many times we saw the artist's figure in the town promenade in his gown and white beard. He was born in Styria, Austria, studied at the Graz Benedictines and came to Szeged in 1902. On the banks of the Tisza became very Hungarian like, but you could still detect the language of his German past. There was also a nice anecdote about him. Peter König was asked if he knew of another word in Hungarian starting with the combination of "ty" like the Hungarian word for chicken "tyuk". Peter König replied, according to the anecdote: "tyufa, tyertya ..." (both were wrong because he couldn't distinguish the difference in the pronunciation between 'ty' and 'gy'). But now I will give over to my late father and I will quote from his memoirs so that I can help preserve more of his thoughts about ancient Szeged.

"Lajos (Louis) Bába was a descendant of old Szeged. He worked for MÁV (Railways) and retired from there as Chief Executive Officer. He was a member of the famous Szeged Rowing Association's rowing fours and we had a warm friendship. When returning from the farm with fresh cherries or other fruits he never failed to take us a little basket for tasting. I was his son's confirmation sponsor. Tivadar (Theodore) Sümegi, another member of the quartet had great musical talent even though he never learned to play music, he did not read music, but after hearing a lighter operetta he was able to flawlessly play it on the piano, he was a natural. In 1925, he died. Feri (Frank) Milkó was from a very wealthy Jewish family. The family owned the Milkó Palace, where we also lived.

He was the rowing four's pilot. I have pleasant memories of him. Elek Kaszó was a Chief Cashier of Szeged and he was my best friend through thick and thin and we were always there for each other no matter the circumstance. Warm hearted honest from head to toe he was an unselfish man. Peaceful, joyful human being that ensured that if any controversy erupted at the regatta, he



Milkó Palace Apartments

was able to tip the situation by saying proverbial wise words: love one another ... he was Calvinistic and a faithful son of the Church. At the social level he was the tireless treasurer of the Skating Club, the Casino and the Regatta. In general, he was held in great esteem in the whole city. His money management was a real concept for those times. With inflation, when millions were exchanged in a day, incredible security was needed and complicated by the vicious pace of change. In 1935 he was diagnosed with kidney cancer and was operated August 1st. At 2 pm in my presence he died and I cried for my friend. At his coffin I bid him farewell on behalf of his friends.

Dr. Endre (Andrew) Taschler – my son Béla's godfather died in 1925 he was a city clerk of Szeged, highly paid and a wealthy man. He was extremely cultured, who was able to read scientific and literary works in the original German and French. . In addition to being a true bohemian he did the following: On the eve of a planned foreign trip at his farewell dinner and after, drinking much wine and singing which lasted till five o'clock in the morning, he went up the road and across the bridge and then he distributed all his travel money among the hemp factory workers as they were heading to work. When he came back he said laughing: I have just returned from my foreign trip... From then on he spent his holidays at home. He was not an argumentative spirit and he never wanted to hijack the standpoint of others. However, if at the town meeting they passed a resolution with which he disagreed, he scuttled the plan, did not pass it onto the interior minister and left the resolution in his desk drawer and when the council repented and sought to alter the original resolution he laughed pulling out the file from the desk drawer saying, "I was thinking this would happen so I did not submit it for approval ... So now it will be easier to correct the matter." .When a vacancy occurred in the mayor's job, the public trust turned to him but he declined this honor by saying: Look, I'm a bohemian man and can afford to do what a mayor could not do and I do not want to sacrifice that independence for any mayoral role.... In his obituary they called him "Master Elegantiarum" of Szeged. He was beautifully balanced, harmonious soul who, when challenged by heart disease due to his exaggerated convivial way of life. I was grieving for him he just smiled and said: 'Béla- I had fun and now I pay. This is natural'.

His brother, Dr. Joseph Taschler criminal district judge, who had died in the Great War, was also a very interesting personality. Despite his father coming to Szeged in the Bach era as a police officer the whole family became Hungarianized, but his sons could not

have been more Hungarian if Arpad was their father's ancestor ...he spoke the language of the people, like István (Stephen) Tömörkény, who himself also was called Steingasser. One of its characteristics was that very few of his judgments were appealed against such was the trust that people had in him. . As a former court clerk, I remember one of the events: A Szeged farmer was accused of theft and he put up a devious defense line. He listened and listened to the farmer's evidence and then said: "Not a single word of this is true because it was you who stole... And if I believed everything you said I would have to include maybe even a wheelbarrow. But you know what? I will sentence you for three days and the holy God in high heaven will accept this judgment. " The defendant said," No, no, you're right respected judge, it is indeed stolen, but can I be interned only after Pentecost because I have been asked to be a groomsman." He was a big prankster but was not hurtful to those who bore his joke. On one occasion when the chaplain(priest) was at our table he (Joseph) spoke about his experiences in Rome: of visiting the Vatican garden when suddenly he heard someone call: Joe! ... I look around but I do not see anyone, then again and then a third time to hear the cry. I look up to the second floor, so there I see Pius; the pope ... I knew him as he was chaplain in the Bácska, Pius asked me up, brought a bumzert (a liter of wine and soda) and we started drinking spritzers. Then Pius asks: Joe, can you still bowl? He took me to the garden, which was full of beautiful marble skittles where the Cardinals were in charge of picking up the skittles. He handed me the ball and I knock down five. Pius knocks down three. Then I get seven, Pius knocks down five and then nine. Pius has a zero. He throws a wild one and swears. I have even forgot to bowl while here at the Vatican... the chaplain, who seems to have believed everything, said he believed the Holy Father did not say such things its only that Joe was a wild Hungarian and he doesn't know one word in German. At all patriotic celebrations he took part with 'kuruc' (anti Habsburg rebels) gusto and beautifully recited patriotic poems. The Taschler brothers' nephew was my friend Gyula Wagner process engineer. From head to toe a correct Hungarian man who was friends with the whole family. When Béla my son won in 1937 a scholarship from the Berlin Collegium Hungarica, it meant that I had to dig deep in my purse because the scholarship covered only the most necessary expenses.



Author's Scholarship to College Hungaricum Berlin

Since at that time my law firm was still very much feeling the economic crisis, I went to the Szeged Csongrád Savings fund of which I was a shareholder and I wanted to raise the necessary funds from the sale of some shares. . At the bank I met my friend Gyula Wagner to whom I stated my business. Then, despite my protestations immediately offered the amount in question and insisted that I accept. He refuted my objections saying that he was the heir to Endre (Andrew) Taschler and "grandfather" as he was known in Szeged was my son Béla's godfather and so it was to fulfil a natural obligation. He did this in such a gentlemanly way that I could not refuse.

Amongst our friends in the post-war years was Dr. József (Joseph) Boros who was without property but earned his living from his engineering knowledge. He was a brilliant and famous surgeon, a genius surgeon who the Jewish doctors called one of their own. In addition he was a good-natured man who joked that the best results came when he was in a good mood ... He had knowledge of a wide range of literature and his favorite reading was Cyrano de Bergerac from a Hungarian translation. He was a rowing fanatic and we rowed a lot together. Sadly, it was tragic that at Endre (Andrew) Taschler's funeral, when I gave the eulogy speech, Josef Boros came to me and squeezing my hand, perhaps jokingly, asked that if he dies, can I give the eulogy for him too.

Just two weeks after Taschler Andrew's funeral, to my greatest astonishment Josef Boros died on Whit (Pentecost) Monday 1925. He was a victim of a plane crash. And I indeed gave him his eulogy but my heart was broken.

Almost the entire city accompanied his body to the cemetery, and grateful patients outside the hospital erected a memorial portrait of him.

Dr. Josef (Joseph) Szakáts was a lawyer and a friend from younger days. In these early days we had fun together and fought hard financial times together. But all that was lost between us when through his marriage he achieved good financial circumstances by becoming co-counsel to the Pallavicini family.

The material wealth seemed to have caused him to forget his friends and instead of becoming serious, his extravagant lifestyle almost knew no bounds. Amongst friends we described the position of his material wealth as if they almost pushed a wheelbarrow of gold, which he spent on women, cards, drink and truly shoved the money out of the window. He lost his wife early and had two daughters Magda and Kata who were much neglected. It was common knowledge in the town that he had a relationship with the maid and let her be the mother of his children.

Margrave Pallavicini eventually found his lifestyle inappropriate and he lost his lucrative job. He was a Member of Parliament for a period of time but was financially now ruined and he spent his last years in a small room in an apartment house. He was probably an alcoholic and left me and everyone in general with bad memories.

Dr. Péter (Peter) Polgar was also a lawyer and old pal. We were in first elementary school together with Lajos (Louis) Bába. I graduated with Péter.

He had an extraordinary brain whose comprehension and memory was amazing. What he read once he never forgot. Despite these extraordinary abilities he had no self-confidence. He kept deferring the examinations but he still graduated with honors and only belatedly was awarded doctorate in law.

When he graduated, he came home to Szeged with his doctorate and given his abilities he was hired by a local newspaper to write the editorial page. But he had difficulties to overcome including his procrastination. He spent hours chewing his quill, writing very little and then dropping everything and going the cafe or a bar. The editors who were desperately waiting for the editorial then sent a journalist with dictation skills to the café. His circle of friends would raise a topic to Peter, who immediately began a huge

speech about the subject and the reporter wrote down everything. The next day a valuable and meaningful editorial appeared in the journal as dictated by Peter Polgar. At the Casino we were always together with university professors who when in the company of Peter, a passionate debater, would not dare to open their mouths. But his opinion was very much appreciated and was invited to the Friends of the University to hold lectures on given topics. Peter accepted this offer and without having made any preparations gave impromptu premier treatises.

Then he was invited by the University Council to choose whichever academic department he preferred so they could name him as a lecturer. A condition that was imposed was that he writes a one-hundred-page study by fall. This study was abandoned even though he was very needy to have some regular income. His companion in the same law practice was Dr. Pál (Paul) Bokor but he too produced little income. Peter Bokor only had the practice for show only as he was a wealthy man. Peter basically lived in a pensioner sister's apartment for free. Spent the whole day in the cafe and his consumption was usually paid by his circle of friends. Searched the newspapers and wrote political articles and smoked 70 cigarettes a day. In the end it was lung cancer and death...

Peter's partner Dr. Paul Bokor was a good warm-hearted friend. I stayed in touch with him even after the loss of the Second World War. He died in exile. He went abroad because he was a very active leader in the ABC, the anti-Bolshevik organization in Szeged. In the First World War he was a private but after being awarded valiant medals he was appointed as a lieutenant and was discharged as an officer.

Dániel (Daniel) Palfy, a good friend of mine, was the son of an iron foundry craftsman didn't study and he went to work as a laborer in his father's workshop and then went for three years military service. In comparison his brother Dr. Joseph Pálffy later became mayor of our great city. He was a very clever man, who was self-taught and later formed a small iron foundry and machine shop. Later he established a large factory from which he earned a nice income. He had a passion for having 8-10 guests at his table which eventually caused him financial pressures. He himself was a gourmet cooking perfectly and was famous for serving halpaprikás (fish stew) for 20-30 guests. He not only ensured his guests were filled but he could eat an incredible amount. For example, one time he ate a pack of 100 carp fillets, about which it is known that during cooking it absorbs a lot of fat and I clapped my hands expressing my surprise asking

how he can do this he bought out another hundred pieces saying that he would now be satisfied. Coupled with the appetite he had tremendous muscular power. At one time to carry out a bet while sitting at the Kass cafe round marble table he broke off a marble piece with his bare hands. At another time, when two ruffians attacked him at night behind the town hall he grabbed their heads and beat them together until they passed out and then took them to the police station.

He was the president of the industry body and took a lively part in public life which resulted in him in taking turns to be our town Member of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Trade. This is the career he fashioned from simple blue color worker to being the secretary of state.

He had a beautiful díszmagyar (traditional Hungarian) costume. All his furniture consisted of massive pieces. They symbolized his individuality. From the first moment of our acquaintance, I became friends with him. He was my best man at my wedding. All the time he was my friend until gastric cancer took him in 1926, I also gave his eulogy at his funeral....

I have fond memories of Gyurka (George) Sirchich. He was my son Béla's confirmation sponsor. In appearance he was like the Trenčín (now Slovakia) rock of the region he came from. In his soul he had immense treasures, yet on sight he gave the impression of austerity but in his heart, he was really friendly and understanding.

He came from a very well-respected Highland family and his family tree could be traced to Árpád. His ancestors included many national public dignitaries. He came to Szeged as royal Attorney General and married Emilia Fabiny, daughter of the then Court of Appeal president. He was later appointed as a notary, first in Bácska and then he returned to Szeged.

Their marriage was tragic and they divorced - I was the lawyer in a very difficult and problematic process - and later his ex-wife was sent to a mental institution. However, my friend Gyurka (George) although this was not required agreed to cover the cost. On his deathbed, from all his friends he wanted to see me only and again I had another good friend to farewell and weep over his coffin.

My friend Elemér Harsányi was a strapping of a man. He was a man of character and individuality. He found it hard to become friends, but if he knew someone, he appreciated him. He worked as Royal Deputy Attorney General in Szeged and retired at

the age of 53. The history of his retirement was very interesting and very typical of him:

During World War I in Szeged there began a mass of lawsuits and criminal trials against the army transports. When the war ended, the government eased the incidents of the lawsuits reduced and then the Minister of Justice summoned the documents, which then was stalled.

We called my friend Elmer 'Harsusz' he was extremely annoyed because he considered this procedure unjust. The Minister of Justice in a pending prosecution was summoned to provide information but he flatly denied knowledge.

As a result a conflict arose between him and the minister. The Minister wanted him removed from service so he called upon him to lodge an application to the judicial appointments board to continue in his current position. Our friend however refused this request and he was asked to put in a request for retirement. This was fulfilled. At our request, Pál (Paul) Teleki's became involved requesting the justice minister to desist from Harsányi's retirement. This the minister promised. Still when justice minister lost his position in the parliament his last activity was to sign Elemér Harsányi's retirement papers.

From then on for the next twenty years until he died, he lived in a financially balanced way on a monthly pension of 8-900 pengő (Hungarian dollars). He was an unassuming bachelor who lived in a furnished room and was unable to spend his monthly income and he lived on the principle that he did not want to take any surplus to the next month. On the last day of the month, he would spend the residue on champagne with friends.

From top to bottom he was a gallant man and I have often enjoyed his hospitality. A lot of times I wanted to reciprocate his kindness and on the occasion of my daughter Kata's graduation from high school I invited him for a family dinner. The Casino's restaurant served a good meal and we enjoyed ourselves but when I wanted to pay, it turned out that Harsusz had again beat me to it and as the maître d' said, Mr. Attorney General has paid for the entire bill. After the Second World War he fell upon lean times. The pension he received was not enough for a bite of food let alone wood for heating and I understand that he caught an awful cold in the winter of 1946 which resulted in pneumonia and he died aged 75. I will never forget his memory and I still think of him with the greatest affection.

My friend Béla Olasz came from Nagyvárad (Oradea Romania) and I know that he came to Szeged in 1928. In Oradea he had a house and vineyard and his law firm had two associates and a large auxiliary staff. After the Romanian occupation his practice was ruined and he left his hometown and assets and moved to Szeged at the age of 50 or so. Of course, due to a lack of familiarity in the district the practice only just produced enough income to live on.

He and his wife lived an unhappy married life. I conducted the divorce. Of course, I did not ask for fees for my work and he surprised us with a gift of a radio, which made my children Béla and Kata happy.

My brother-in-law Falcione Kálmán also loved Béla Olasz and he was often a guest at their home.

When Hungary got back Nagyvárad (Oradea) in 1920 I asked Eugene Lutitszky presidential chief of the Department of Justice to help Béla Olasz. The Justice Minister appointed him as council president of Nagyvárad. It was the happiest moment of his life. Unfortunately, this happy time only lasted for two years as when Oradea was handed back to Romania and they kicked him out of his job penniless in retirement and did not even give him the opportunity to return to Szeged.

He spent his last years as destitute and he did some office work with the Reformed Church and a niece in America sometimes sent a little help...

My friend Elemér Korpássy was I think known by the whole city as "Stork". From the first-year as a law student he was known by that name. He was an old descendant of Bácska (Bačka Serbia) and in his youth was an elegant, very well-mannered, talented boy who was great pianist completing a university degree at the music conservatory. But as he joked, he was not fond of "the Fingerübung (repetitive exercises)" and therefore his talent was not really developed.

He was very popular and was asked to attend many social events because of his nice manners and piano skills. His attendance at many gatherings resulted in him being used to many a drink and this eventually led him to become addicted to alcohol. At first, he worked as a clerk at the courts and it became evident that qualifying for judicial exams was for him a hopeless task, we did manage to appoint him as the city's orphan's assessor.

He always conscientiously attended to his law practice but his indulgence began with a daily "snack-of-wine" and his office became rustic and the exterior neglected. After

then he became uncomfortable to all because of his bad manners.

He accompanied me to Italy once. He also wanted to sight-see but his passion for the drink often prevented it.

In Italy I remember that one day after swimming in the sea I hurried back to the hotel for lunch and I saw a large crowd in front of a restaurant and the people were laughing. There I saw Stork downing his twelfth glass of beer. In Milan he did not want to accompany me to the top of the Duomo di Milano to see the views, but said that he will wait for me. By the time I reached the bottom, he was nowhere to be seen.



Duomo di Milano

Finally, I found him in a restaurant where they sold beer from Munich. I encouraged him to take a trip to Lake Como but he dodged the invitation. When I got home, I could not find him at the lodge, however, I did find him in a tavern close by drinking his third liter of wine.

The older he became, the more he became addicted to drink. All his friends turned away from him because they were uncomfortable in his company...

Apart from anything else he was a warm-hearted, good-natured man, to whose eternal shame he got lost. He died around 1927.

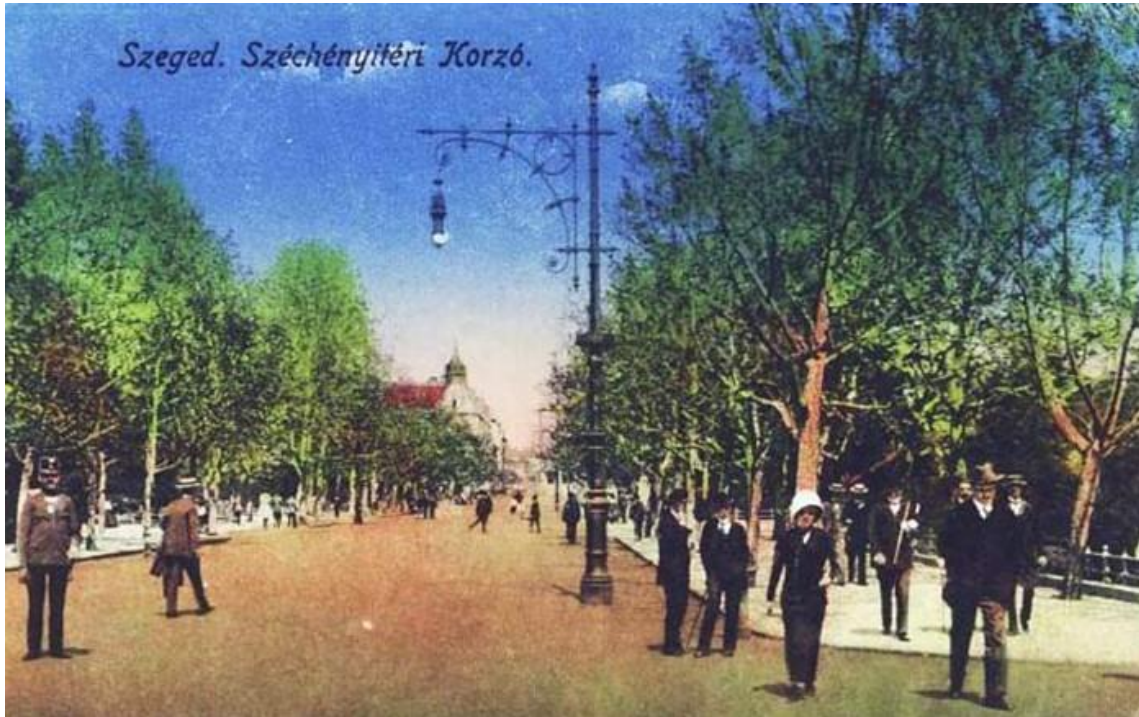
My brother-in-law, Captain Eugene Faragó in 1902 introduced Kálmán Shvoy to our group the "golden boys". We did not accept him straight away but with his really nice suave manners soon won over the group however he took on a Caesar like attitude.

This came between us as I could not always agree with him; at times the conflict subsided but at other times was tense. At this time the First World War broke out and he sent me some military items and also frequently wrote to me from the front, reported the battles progress and illustrated them with drawings of his speculations. Thus, our relationship turned warmer again. Then I could not understand why when his brother, Stephen Shvoy became my commanding officer (chief of staff) he was so unfriendly to me. I had an inkling that Kálmán was behind his conduct.

At the end of the war I wanted to retire but when he returned from the front he took over the position of Chief of Defense from his brother and he asked me to stay in my position temporarily. This I did, but when payment of remuneration was due he denied it to me saying "you were not officially working." I complained of this outrage to the military chief Protection Supervisor, who, with the exclamation, "This person is responsible for 53 million and this amount is not material", he then paid me the amount due to me. I was then discharged.

Then for a long time we had a strained relationship and in 1923 we had a duel and I nicked his scalp, but then we became friends again. The next one and a half decade, we had a relatively good and friendly relationship. His political appearances I saw from a distance as I had moved away from Szeged in 1939 after my notary appointment. However, after the Second World War when I was in Székesfehérvár living with my daughter's household, we met several times when Kálmán was visiting his brother the bishop. We sat together in the city park, and at this time he reported the issues of the day in Szeged, which unfortunately at this time was only been filled with sadness. A very good friend of mine was Professor Albert Kiss with whom I spent time weapon practice (Fencing). Our friendship was revived in Szeged when the University started to function here.

I highly prized Sz. Vilmos (William) Szigethy, the famous journalist of Szeged, who was known to his friends as only "Bob". We often walked together on the Szeged Korzó (Promenade).



Szeged Széchenyi Korzó

I also remember Pali (Paul) Lehel attorney, General Vilmos (William) Kircsfalussy, Bandi (Andy) Rácz, Chairman of the Bar and Pista (Steve) Magyar doctor, who was our family dentist. "

In these lines the older generation of Szeged came to life with the people who walked the streets of Szeged during the first half of the century and who were truly characteristic of the life at that time.

I want somehow to be young again and meet them again or at least try to relive the times as I lived it as a small child, youth, adult, university student and then as graduate. This period of course was only a short decade, and therefore can only be remembered in a sketchy way. Much has been written by politicians and others about the ideas of Szeged, maybe there is a place where perhaps I can contribute to the development of an open-minded attitude to the political scene of those days.

So now I will try to outline the then political structures on my canvas.

A lot has been written of Szeged ideals in editorials by contemporaries and there has also been drafted an indictment against some and the verdict was often brutal after the war in 1945. But politically, the spirit that was born from the counter revolution was not biased and basically was moderate. This policy was the center of national feeling of the day. It

could not have been otherwise. Hungary had lost two-thirds of its area and three and a half million Hungarians came under foreign rule. The boundaries were not drawn up on the basis of where people lived but only wanted to serve the new successor states' economic and transportation interests.

If they had drawn the new boundaries on an ethnic basis of the new boundaries, if Pozsony, Komárom, Kassa (Kosice), Nagyvárad (Oradea) and Arad remained Magyar (Hungarian) and if the border of Szeged was not drawn at Rösztke and the Hungarian territories of Subotica and Bácska (Bačka) were not placed under Serbian rule then the formation of the revisionist policy would never have taken place and this ultimately defined the political situation in future events ... it is to be noted that the revisionist policy was not different between the political parties either. The Hungarian Jews were hard-warriors for the revision of policies and even under the communist rule of Béla Kun they mobilized the remaining Hungarian forces against the Czechs and Romanians. Radical elements of the counter-revolution in Szeged were also advocates of a social transformation. They proclaimed the need for land reform and to raise the standing of the industrial working class and introduce social insurance which was ahead of some Western States. The demand for religious revival was not without cause since the public morality during the war was so corrupted there was a need for a revival in the spirit of Prohászka.



Ottokár Prohászka Roman Catholic theologian, Bishop of Székesfehérvár 1905

Most of the subsequent debate criticized the steps taken to solve the Jewish question. Basically, it was accepted by all that the uncontrolled Jewish immigration caused by the Hungarian liberal spirit was a problem, because the country was unable to assimilate the ever-increasing number of migrants. During the XIX century, the Jews proved to be hardworking and talented and as a result the workforce was virtually dominated by the Jews in the professions and retail trade areas to the point that the Hungarians felt that they were forced to defend themselves. 'Numerus clausus' (closed numbers) laws could not

solve the problem. The era of revolutions was in the past and the country had to establish a parliamentary democracy to fight the Trianon enforced peace. In this democracy much influence was placed on respect of members for each other as a brake like in the non-secret ballot and the wide nature of the authority and powers of the head of state meant that democracy prevailed in only a limited way. This is why they said that despite the formalities the "system" prevailed. And this system's political form was in these times the ruling party. The party's name changed several times over many years defining themselves the 'united party'. But it was anything but united. This party was a group who in all circumstances wanted to maintain the dominance of high capital and large landowners. The representatives of these forces were the aristocracy, the clergy and big business and included Jewish representatives who worked together in consolidating their positions. Strong anti-Semitic forces were present but often just behind the scenes and they were not only against Jewish big business but also against the aristocracies and privileged land ownership. There were a fair number of the forces who felt that the country needed peaceful development and achieve these high goals gradually to raise the conditions of the industrial working class and it was considered important that the size of the middle class be increased. The church line was also active within the system, but in addition to the religious revival their hope was that as soon as possible to end the current established governorship because they saw the House of Habsburg and its restoration best for the security of the country and the churches themselves. During these times these political nuances were also evident in Szeged and each direction had supporters in the ruling party in Szeged as well. Szeged of course was not involved in high politics and was present at the occasional mixed parliamentary elections for a few weeks at a time. But there was no doubt that there was a conservative wing in the city politics. Károly (Charles) Aigner the sheriff and József (Joseph) Pálffy mayor could be characterized as devotees to the gradual but slow-rebuilding theory. The church also made its presence felt. Bishop Gyula Glattfelder worked very much with his priests to ensure that the Church's influence was strong in the affairs of the city. . The Emericana (Student Association of Catholic and Monarchist leaning.) in an effort to grow their influence created and developed women's branches. Within the ruling forces was another characteristic Szeged group these being from the "rural south". The Bánát and Bácska were always the country cousins of Szeged and these families travelled to Szeged for both work and fun. The Trianon treaty mutilated the country and many Hungarians were forced to leave their homes and many army officers and public officials

found refuge in Szeged. These were warmly welcomed by the city as adopted sons and soon these refugees were assimilated into city life of Szeged. Naturally they held together, helped each other and gained serious influence in urban politics. The grassroots of Szeged certainly noticed this development and so there was a certain antipathy between the old and the new. This group had a good relationship with the merchant, industrialist and civic elements and was proponents of social development. But there was another layer and these were the very grassroots of Szeged, who entered the political arena to preserve the old world, the old homestead lifestyle and were essentially conservative. My father called them the "sandy belly buttons". Outside the government there was a strong and outspoken opposition since Szeged had secret voting and they had a better effective democracy. The Jews in Szeged naturally followed the direction of political events and always assured Károly (Charles) Rassay had the mandate for the parliamentary seat. The industrial working class was behind social democracy and around the mid-thirties left the old working-class party and joined the larger emerging national-socialist forces. My father was an active participant in the city's domestic struggles for more than a decade and I trust that it is not immodest for me to try to draw a portrait of his political life as well. As a loving son, of course, it is likely that I be biased, but I tried to separate the loving father from the figure I will profile. My father started in politics in 1919. Later he became acquainted with some of the leading men during the revolution, and he befriended Pál (Paul) Teleki. They were on good terms until the tragic death of this Hungarian prime minister. There was a deeper than political connection between them; I have seen letters to my father which aired the full confidence he had in my father. I think that the basis of their friendship was that they were similar in their thinking. Pál (Paul) Teleki was regarded as a moderate politician, but he stood firmly on the line he represented. Different political views tried to woo him but he never fitted in anywhere.

Such was my father. He was very proud of his family origin, but he never saw the nobility of our family as a matter of class but as a sign of the family's connection with the ancient Hungarian land. The martyr spirit of his ancestors reminded one of the Kuruc connections yet the Deák Ferenc's temperament was recognizable in his politicizing. He was also an advocate of land reform; he accepted and very much appreciated fact that the Hungarian peasantry was the most valuable section of the nation and that its biological effect provides the nation's survival. He was well aware that without adequate compensation how difficult it is to implement reform and this problem was not new to him because, as a lawyer he was

actively involved in some land disputes around Szeged. He was not biased on the Jewish question. He had many Jewish friends and therefore was regarded as a liberal by the right-wing. However, he bravely did not conceal his opinion and spoke with courage against the overweight position of the Jews in society. He never participated in national politics and serviced the development of his beloved city. He labored to raise the standard of the theatre of Szeged and even helped organize the Skating Club for the city. In the early thirties he was regarded as a member of the prestigious list of elders who, however, did not belong to either group and therefore can be described as "gray eminence". He was not a pushy person. He never spoke in his interest and it is understandable that the public often thought that he should be the Lord Lieutenant of the city shortly. This did not come about because he never sought favours from anyone. He retired from active political life in 1936 for financial reasons and later turned to his longtime friend of Paul Teleki to support his application for a notary appointment. Teleki's influence prevailed and on 22 December 1938 was appointed to Balassagyarmat. . It was painful for him to leave his hometown, but he had to take this solution. There was an opportunity in 1940 to return to Szeged. Pál Teleki then invited him to take up the position of sheriff of Szeged. It was difficult to refuse this lucrative offer, but he decided not to give up his notary position. As noted in his memoirs, Paul Teleki had a great understanding of his decision. His friends from Szeged naturally gave him a warm farewell when moving to Balassagyarmat and Vilmos (William) Sz. Szigethy wrote a farewell poem which he read at his farewell dinner in the Szeged Casino.

In memory of my father, I now attach this poem.

To Béla Török

• January 13th 1939 –

No loud odes, after all he was quiet among us

We never start with a loud voice,

But he cannot let our good old friend

Go swiftly without a word.

We cherish the rose tree

The sun rays open its flowers

And after the years he has already served,

The old soldier also gets his discharge.

*You're not retired but are starting again
Across the front to break the fallow ground,
On your home ground you did not have a plot.
Here the Hungarians will slowly be a minority.*

For deep plowing

Use your elbow and not the plow.

Your untouched pure virgin elbow

Never appeared in the thick skinned list.

This is how you saved your ancestral heritage.

We are thinning out. They went in a long line,

To whom warm spirituality is attached,

You had treasures like hundreds of thousands

Fate wasted with prodigal hand .

You knew better, You kept open

Everything that is just and noble,

And if you are not judging us

After this dying is not worth it.

Externally every city is built of stone,

Over time all will turn to sand,

But some things live past the times

You inspired your offspring

With indestructible intellectual marks. -

We have crumbly brick, but too much

Much of our clothes are tattered,

But you are winning against all,

Individuality, character and thinking ,

The durable yarn and the rock .

We are losing and replacement is difficult.

The hourglass is running near the end of day,

But no matter how your new world enfolds,

Something of your youth will stay,

Many mills in May draw the dew in twilight,

Childlike wonder at smiling summer .

*If in the present much was desiccated,
And the dreams are killed by reality,
In this find your peace,
Because there is no better way for your journey.
Walk in the sun, in winter and spring,
But if the shadow of dimness threatens
You turn on the souls light switch,
The rainbow memory wins over the mist .*

Sz Vilmos (William) Szigethy

I am an Armored Car driver – My volunteer years

I arrived at the Budapest Western (Nyugati) Railway Station on 5th October 1936 and the 'Váci út (Street)' Tram came and took me on the Hungária circuit to the artillery and armored cavalry barracks. The large barrack yard was already full of green soldier uniforms of the rookies and I soon found the gathering place of the group of recruits for the 'reconnaissance battalion'. Then after a two-hour wait they directed us nearby but we had to wait again. Later I learned that waiting was one of the most important military occupations. Meanwhile our future officers began arriving and we were informed that we were going to face difficult times. We started to get to know each other and meet our future comrades and the first day passed.

The next day it turned out that the volunteers battalion organization process would be postponed for a few days and we were allowed to leave the barracks in civilian clothes. This, of course, delighted us. The local Pest residents suddenly disappeared and I myself did not know what to do with my free time.

Then I read and heard that Gyula Gömbös Hungary's prime minister died in a nursing home near Munich and as half a soldier and half a civilian I could also attend the funeral of the deceased leader. I sincerely mourned Gyula Gömbös because in him we lost a good Hungarian who was a great military man and who well understood the lessons of Hungarian history. When in parliament he stated that the Hungarian political basis was the Berlin-Rome axis, this the big press derisively branded as ridiculous as it was known that Rome had adopted a very careful conduct against the German forces. The fascist "revolution" was basically very restrained and the corporation involvement centered on constitutional and formal settings to address the doctrine of class struggle and was not a complete acceptance of the socialist principles. In Hungary the Duce was very greatly respected at this time since he was the first statesman who raised his voice against the injustices of Trianon. He received honor-also because of the Lateran Treaty satisfactorily solved the problem of the relationship between the state and the Church in Italy and which was appreciated in the Hungarian ecclesiastical circles.

In contrast Berlin was directed by the Protestant Prussian intellectual circles which saw with distrust the old struggles of the Pope and the Emperor.

I, however, based on my historical studies regarded this imaginary axis as representing a Central European unity and I always felt that in Hungarian history only when there was a

strong, unified Central Europe was it possible in Hungary to have the opportunity to enjoy peaceful times to develop. I was hoping that maybe in my age this force is reborn and so we will also have the opportunity to see the Hungarian nation renew both territorially and in social terms.

I did not foresee the tragedy that occurred during the Second World War and so I sincerely mourned Gyula Gömbös, the person, the politician and the good Hungarian.



Gyula Gömbös Prime Minister of Hungary from 1932

Then these interim days of half civil and half military ended and our volunteer battalion was formed.

The armored weapons in these years were still evolving and had at least on paper three arms. Those in the armored cars who later joined the reconnaissance battalion were in the moving front line and the fighting corps. Tank personnel who were scheduled to add weight and strength against the opponent's positions, aiming for a breakthrough. There was also a separate group of armored train corps. This corps was responsible for protecting the supply lines and occasionally the unexpected advance of reconnaissance missions...

Our volunteer battalion already belonged to one of these three groups and after completion of officers' school they dispersed us accordingly. I was assigned to the tank division and eventually the Reconnaissance Battalion.

But for now, the basic training had just begun and after six weeks expertise training did, we left our civilian life and became soldiers.

Soon we met our officers and we became aware of them in particular Imre Szabo our section leader who exercised the most power over us. We survived the first weeks of "jokes" as well. They asked who had a university degree and those who were "Doctors" were ordered to keep the toilets clean. Later, this work was carried out by two privates regularly, but we learned that we had to start from the bottom up. We also had to keep our

boots in parade order, the platoon leader was never satisfied with us and he always found dust or a dull shine on our boots. The majority of us did not take this to heart but I remember well that my friend Thomas Simák, who was the son of a landowner and who polished his gear through many hours, eventually burst into tears when he received no praise. Seeing the tears, the sergeant then changed the way he dealt with him and Thomas began to forget these first hard lessons.

The sergeant major a Mr. Péntzes was the one who with hard methods tried to break the still rebellious citizens into soldiers.

One day, tired and cheerfully singing while enduring the "alert" command, which meant we had to jump into the roadside mud, we retreated to our barracks. We were looking forward to lying down on our beds. But when we entered our room, housing approximately 30 soldiers, to our amazement, we saw that the entire room's furnishings, beds, contents, straw bags and blankets and emptied footlockers were piled together in the middle of the room.

We did not know what to do, whether to laugh or cry. But then what else could we do, we started on our beds, straw bags and started sorting our tangible personal property.

Our platoon commanders became aware of this incident. Zoltán Damien and Zoltán Muhoray were two young lieutenants who took over the leadership of our regiment. We also learned that the two lieutenants were unhappy about how sergeant major Péntzes treated us and they thought that he had gone beyond his power when disciplining us this way.

This sort of thing occurred in other forms. Imre Szabó was particularly fond of this form of discipline; while dressed in marching fatigues we were ordered to practice gun drills in a heated room. The water poured off us. I myself was once on the point of throwing my gun at him. However, he noticed my flashing eye and he proved to be a good psychologist as he suddenly declared that I was the only one doing the practice well and he exempted me from the next round ... I could not help but laugh.

This is how the tough weeks passed and the regular soldiers were threatened by the service sergeant that the sloppy soldiers would be sent to us volunteers.

I gradually understood that this tough basic training had justified reasons for now and in the future. Later I saw that the American forces employed more drastic means and eventually the idea was formed in me that what we experienced during training was a necessary evil. This is the only way for a soldier to reach the state of mind that the

command should be carried out without thinking. When an army is in a state where soldiers begin to consider whether it is meaningful in the circumstance to sacrifice one's life the army ceases to be a military unit and the battle would be lost.

I still remember those who were then close comrades in arms. They included Fric Heuthaler who was known in sports as Helmeczi and was a famous member of the hockey team. Strong, athletic man who carried himself well in public but he was the sort of person who - if no one saw him - did not extend himself. He was a good comrade and had a great reputation among the boys. After curfew, some began to complain in the dark about how much they miss the company of women, Fric rudely waved them away saying that as they are barely able to recover, they would be incapable to start anything with a woman. We all had a good laugh.

Ernö Bartok a boxer became a good friend of mine. He himself claimed that women liked him and looked down on us who did not run after the girls. Jóska (Joseph) Keszezy and I were on good terms and later I repeatedly visited him and his family in their famous restaurants.

I also remember Gyula Pálhidi fondly. I remained in contact with him for some time. Zoli Török the parliamentary stenographer was my friend and I competed with him in the officers' school. I remember Zoltán Neumann. Somewhere in the vicinity of Museum was their business and after many years I met him in Sydney.

I handled the difficulties of the training well. I was not athletic or a strong man but my will power helped me to overcome my physical weaknesses. In the cross-country race the lead was always Ernő Bartók and Fric Heuthaler and in the company of one or two "champions" and I lagged 2-5 meters far behind. In all reality the others fell away from the leaders and tried to fulfill their goal in a group...

I got to love military life. I did not have friends in Budapest and I was basically alone. Frankly I did not have money for going out and was limited to the odd theater performance and of course my mother often hosted an afternoon snack.

Later my cousin Laci tried to support me and he got me a ticket to the MAC dance, he bought the ticket and encouraged me to get acquainted. I was shy at this time and was afraid that my advances would be rejected and this I did not want to endure.

My relationship with Ica disturbed me in my Budapest life. We loved each other and our relationship was getting so deep that only the request for her hand was the next step. However this was not based on well-judged grounds when viewed through realistic glasses.

In the meantime I received the official papers regarding my request for a scholarship in Berlin Collegium Hungaricum which was warmly supported by Professor Stephen Csekey. It was to be expected that after my volunteering year I would go to Berlin for a year. Ica had commenced her second year of college. Diligently we wrote letters to each other and it was clear that she too was attached to me and was loyal towards me. But I felt that this had to be considered as it would have been irresponsible for me to tie her down when our paths were so uncertain and as she still had three more years of college.

Therefore, one night, when I completed my service in the barracks, I wrote a "breaking-up" letter and I recommended that she should feel free.

Not much later, less than a year and a half later we again met and became close to each other, and after more than half a century of happy marriage she often reminded me of my transgression by reading my letter to me despite my mea culpas. (Latin phrase that means "through my fault").

After the hard weeks of basic training the months of officers' school was easier. At this stage I was no longer lagging behind in the physical area but rather among the first. Not only was this time for learning theory but we were trained to drive the armored cars as well. A one and a half-ton truck was the vehicle in which we had to learn the basics of driving. This was conducted through the streets of nearby towns which were not too busy on stony streets that were snowy and slippery. Sergeant Major Péntzes was sitting next to the drivers and whose commands were certainly very loud and stirred the student driver's state of mind with a lot of nagging and it was a miracle we learned the secrets of changing gears. But this strict authoritarian become friendly with us, because after each lesson when it came to a new student to sit next to Péntzes we had a short rest which we spent in a pub around the corner. Here, of course we entertained the arrival of the Sergeant Major which made him contented and those not driving were provided warmth in the pub until another one of us took our turn...

We also had guard duty protecting various metropolitan sites and in our heavy boots we were often exposed to heavy snow and numbing frost.

The officer's examination day had arrived and our two lieutenants could not decide who should be acknowledged as first Zoli Török or me. Zoltan Muhoray arranged a run off between the two candidates. But it was very difficult to separate us because we answered all questions well. Zoltan Muhoray finally gave us a question: *how can you determine what size army a country is able to set up*, and Zoltán Török somehow was unable to answer the

question. I knew that it was proposed by many that a country's population usually can support 10 per cent in its army, I read about this so many times and so I took the first position in the ranking.

We finished our driving exams and we volunteers were separated and joined our own troops. I reported to the First Reconnaissance armored car squadron.

Of course at that time we did not actually have armored vehicles. Operating under the alias of the police freshman's school we had two Armstrong armored vehicles. This was only allowed officially to be used to maintain internal order. (Rules set since First World War) However we had ATRAP's, they were built on a truck frame, light steel plates covered the outside and they looked as if they were actually armored cars. A tower was built in the middle and a machine gun symbolized the cannon... our training was performed in these wagons. As volunteers and who passed the officer's examinations, we had phase-command duties. This meant that there were three cars allotted to each officer candidates.

There was no shortage of military spirit in our group and this was evidenced by the fact that one of the volunteers after the Kiev encirclement in World War II captured more than a thousand Russian troops and was appropriately decorated for his deeds; László Merész migrated to Australia and died here in Australia.

In the summer period we were moved to Lajosmizse which was near a military training ground. Here we were introduced to the grenade. In my time there occurred a serious accident when a grenade throwing instructor officer, Lieutenant Béla Hadházi had a grenade exploding in his hand taking his right hand. I remember that when he was brought in on a stretcher, he, with a sad smile said to his fellow officers: Guys, I can no longer go and fight in a war ... But I know that after healing he continued to serve and was able to use his wooden hand on a modified gearstick and continue to drive armored vehicles.

We had two three weeks holidays in a year and I spent this at Bábolna with my sister Kata's household. I got along very well with my brother-in-law Béla. I often went with him on his municipal medical tour and he let me drive their DKW and later Fiat cars, so I was able to increase my car-driving skills. I remember it was strange to drive a small passenger car after the military trucks

Otherwise, I was quite busy at Lajosmizse because in my free time I was asked by lieutenants Zoltan Damián and Zoltan Muhoray to work on a translation as they prepared for the General Staff course entrance exam. My job was to translate the German "Wehrmacht" military journal on armored forces into Hungarian.

By then my military training reached the theoretical basics for the deployment of German armored forces. It was interesting to read about the air and armored forces training problems, these principles were still being debated by the world's literature on a case-by-case basis as raised by some writers.

Then came the so-called 1937 Tisza military exercise in which our troops also took part. Not with the ATRAP's but the real thing, by then they had acquired the Fiat Ansaldo small two person tanks.



Ansaldo-Fiat L35/Lf

Unexpectedly I was sent with a group from Lajosmizsér along the coast road leading to the Tisza. The journey went well, technically the tanks travelled well. It was not comfortable in these vehicles. The dust and noise were almost unbearable but typical of young people we handled this and I myself as second in charge on the long road had no problems and I managed to sleep for two hours.

The essence of the exercises was that the attacking enemies from beyond the Tisza River had to be kept at the Tisza bend and later organize a counter-attack. They moved me from the armored car and assigned me next to Zoltán Muhoray who was an umpire.

There were two episodes in this war exercise that I want to capture.

One is that according to the umpires the attacking Ansaldo Fiat tank unit broke through the opponent's positions but it was not easy to put an end to the "battle". The opponent was tough, and their infantry corps finding pumpkin, fruit and variety of clods in the field used them against the tanks and did not want to hear of surrendering.

Zoltán Muhoray designated a small group of soldiers as prisoners of war, but a good-blooded Hungarian soldier confronted him and beside himself shouted that he is not a prisoner and wants to continue to "fight". Zoltán Muhoray clearly felt that his conduct was an outstanding manifestation of his fighting spirit and did everything to calm him down

which included almost pleading while threatening him to carry out his orders. I then knew that the Hungarian troops would if well lead be capable of high performance.

The military exercise was over and then we returned to Budapest. The time was approaching for the disarmament of the cadets and we received the title and rank of sergeant. Most of the boys were joyfully waiting for the date of decommissioning. I was unsure of the future. I met my father, who has made no secret that he wanted me to stand on my own feet now, because his law firm was still performing very poorly and he suggested that I choose between the army legal administration and a career in the gendarmes. A law degree would help in both and ensure rapid progress. Whichever career I choose would result in a short few months to a really nice starting salary and I would be able to stand on my own feet. My father was informed that my request for fellowship in Berlin was not progressing favorably as there were quite a lot of candidates and it was not impossible that my application will only be dealt with in the next year.

As much as I loved the military life, I wanted to be a civilian and then had the idea that by signing for an additional period the decision of my career would be postponed. In my situation it seemed beneficial. All other subsequent military service obligation would take into account the additional service and it was expected that after a few months I would receive a warrant officer appointment. If the Berlin scholarship came through it would not be an obstacle to resign and follow my original goals.

They accepted my application and instead of disarmament I continued my service as a cadet-sergeant.

Our troops were already in the Arena Train Barracks and I was under the armored reconnaissance battalion and became a deputy commander.

Similarly, my friend Gyuszi Pálhidi decided likewise and we decided to join forces to organize our new military life. Together we rented a furnished double room, not far from the barracks. This room was not too costly and did not take a large part of our sergeant's wage. The solution was not seen to be final, it was uncomfortable, because private life was limited, but at the time we are not well-off young people and this is how we all started.

I was very pleased with my scheduled barracks. The new recruits started and I was now an officer candidate who was responsible for carving these citizens into soldiers. My direct commander was Lt. Paul Topay with whom I formed a very warm friendship. During training when the immediate work was in the officers' hands we would usually walk together and discuss the situation of the country. During these years the reform ideas

began to be implemented and the highly qualified Pali (Paul) Topay also really wanted and hoped for the rebuilding of the country. At this time the revisionist views of the coming years cast their shadows and he too waited for the day of restitution in sincere faith ... he fulfilled his duty later and I sadly mourned when he died on the shores of the river Don. Several times I was in the barracks duty officer and I "tortured" the new volunteers with a smile on the inside when I examined their dorm and despite all their efforts, I found errors...

However, barely six weeks had passed and I received a telegram from the Minister of Culture awarding me a fellowship in Berlin and asked me to go to Berlin as soon as possible and present myself to the board of directors of the Collegium Hungaricum.

A separate letter then also said that Béla Udvarhelyi secretary of the college resides in Budapest and will organize the departure of the New Year's group of students. Of course, I welcomed this help and I got in touch with him and arranged my planned travel in early November.

I bid farewell to my superiors who were not happy about the sudden and to them unexpected resignation, but they understood the situation and did not roll obstacles in front of me.

For me this last year was very enjoyable. I definitely liked the military life. Many times, it happened that I often returned early from my free time to the barracks and at nine o'clock in the evening at the windowsill sat listening to the curfew...

I was very proud of my weapon. The armored forces were in those years - in addition to the Air Force - the units that most attracted the interest of young people and their reputation improved the team spirit. Previously this was true of the hussar cavalry knights and characteristically the Germans called them "black hussars" based on the dark uniforms of these units.

Enthusiastically we sang the armored forces marching song:

***I'm an Armored Car soldier my good humor
accompanies me in every storm,
Enemies I do not know...***



Botond Truck, 1940 Transylvania

Berlin 1937-1938

Early November 1937 we began our journey. The Berlin fast train started from the Eastern Railway Platform and this year's Collegium Hungaricum scholarship students and their relatives gathered there. My mother accompanied me to the station. On the platform I met István (Stephen) Arató who was also to study legal subjects in Berlin and as I can recall, was not accompanied by anyone, my mother and I were his company. We both listened to her maternal cautions and good wishes for our trip and we waved from the train window as the train pulled out of the station.

We soon reached the Hungarian border and we got new train personnel at the Czech border. As we traveled direct to Berlin there was no customs inspections... Then the train raced through old Hungarian Upper parts and Pista and I talked about the past. I also learned from him that he intends to study private international law in Berlin and his focus would be the International Law (Völkerrecht) Library located in the old imperial Schloss building. I was unaware of the conditions in Berlin and I listened to him with interest about Berlin.

Then we reached the German border. The customs inspection was only formal and the German train operator politely checked our tickets.

After two German stations when there were German passengers in our cabin, suddenly the door opened in the hallway and two men in black SS uniforms greeted us personally, with their hands raised the famous "Heil Hitler" cry. In our cabin there was a not-loud but lively conversation and suddenly there was silence. The SS requested our supporting documents and we wordlessly handed over all our documents including passports. There was no problem and we got our papers back, no questions were put, but the silence of the occupants of the cabin made it noticeable that we had arrived in a totalitarian state.

Later, of course, we became used to what was a new experience, but soon also realized that behind the uniform there were people who were often were very helpful and it turned out that the Germans were aware of their rights and I witnessed on a number of occasions citizens challenging officials on their legitimacy and I have also seen a scene where the party official was explaining his rights to the objecting citizen.

In Berlin what we got out of the train at the Friedrich Strasse train station. Our luggage was taken by porters, as organized by Béla Udvarhelyi, while we walked in groups towards the college under No 2 Building, Dorotheen Strasse. After 2-3 minutes we arrived.

The college sometime before the Hungarian state bought it was a German banker's palace. An imposing two-story neo-classical building, which also had a third floor added to it because they needed space for the scholarship students.

On the ground floor were the offices and at the entrance the doorman's booth. Herr Schaeffer was the porter, an old Berlin resident; it was from him we first heard the Berlin dialect. From the entrance hall was a wide showy marble staircase leading to the first floor. This floor had a ballroom, dining room and living room with comfortable leather armchairs and a casino-like nature with large and spacious rooms.

The place was first-rate for the scholarship students. Everyone had their own room, not too spacious, but it was sufficient for the storage of personal items. Each floor had a sufficient number of restrooms and the bathrooms with showers were modern. There was enough that there was no queue even in the mornings.

The dining room was managed by a German lady who also cleaned our rooms. The food was adequate, although the German kitchen did not impress us spoiled Hungarians. The cleaning women often complained about the heavy young cigarette smokers who regularly scattered their ashes...

The director of the college was Kisbarnaki Gyula (George) Farkas. In the vicinity of the college on the banks of the Spree River as viewed from the Museum Insel was the University of Berlin's Institute of Hungary and its head was Professor Gyula Farkas.



Museum Island

He was a German citizen; his wife was German and he was on the college board of directors. He lived in a nice private apartment on the ground floor of the palace.

Gyula Farkas had a joint mandate from both the Hungarians and the Germans; this needed a certain diplomacy and delicacy without prejudicing either the Hungarian or German sensitivity. Gyula Farkas was a party member and in official occasions wore his party badge. We knew that as a linguist he was far from politics and was not a supporter of the German system. But in these years party membership was an honor and which he did not request but was granted it for his achievements and major service in the culture of the University of Berlin.

The Hungarian Institute in Berlin also employed Lothar Zach, a Prussian-German young man who deepened his knowledge of the Hungarian language. He also had a room in the hostel and his job was partly to help the scholarship students in improving their German language skills and support them in learning about life in Berlin ... It was questionable whether his work was effective, because unfortunately we were too prone to talk to each other in Hungarian and Lothar was more inclined to improve his Hungarian language skills. He visited Hungary several times to improve his Hungarian language, but he complained that every time he tried to say something to someone in the streets of Budapest, the respondents recognized his accent and usually reverted to German... But it is certain that we learned a lot from him about German culture and social customs. Later we learned that as a very young university student he was a supporter of the Catholic Centre Party and then after the Nazi seizure of power there was no hope of significant progress and, therefore, chose the Hungarian Institute for linguistic research.

We quickly become familiar with the Berlin public transport. The S-Bahn and U-Bahn system was indeed ahead of its age and today, more than fifty years later, as I write, I must point out that having experienced the American, British, French, and Japanese rail systems, these networks are only striving to catch up to Berlin's railway network which existed before the second world war.



1930 Railways and S-Bahn map

We only used the railways on the weekends, for us lawyers; we had all those institutions which could help us in our work approachable on foot.

I, who had scholarship in the area of politics, first wanted to get to know the new German geopolitical entity. This field of study was available at the Hochschule for Politics, almost opposite the Unter den Linden Ehrenmahllal and I could reach it by a 5-minute walk. It had a spacious and busy reading library and to get to know it I started browsing the catalogs. I wrote out the books which aroused my interest. When I had eight names, I asked one of the officers to bring them to me. The librarian on reading the titles, almost rudely responded that he did not believe that these books were available and then he disappeared into the large library. I was unsure of what would happen. These were my first days as an alien in this world and not knowing the conditions, I did not know what to do, as the officer had gone for 8-10 minutes.

Then he appeared weighed down by the books he brought and he dropped them on counter, saying, "These are the books you asked for.

This is what happened, all the books that I had asked for were there. Later, I was thinking a lot about this scene and I decided that it was a very typical case, because it actually described the Prussian mentality. Rigid, almost rude, little diplomacy, but dutiful and does all that is required by the assignment. He does not wait for thanks at least outwardly and not friendly. But you can count on them.

I visited this library for a few weeks, but soon found that basically they kept very biased material and thus on the proposal of my friend Pista Arató went on to the Friedrich Wilhelm Institute Völkerrecht library. This library was the most appropriate for my research work and so I was a regular visitor at the Schloss.

**The Humboldt
University of *Berlin*
previously known as
Friedrich Wilhelm
Institute**



I wanted to study in detail the subject of monarchy and republic. This topic was classified in the German

Allgemeine Staatslehre framework, and this was all encompassing storing works of the French and English.

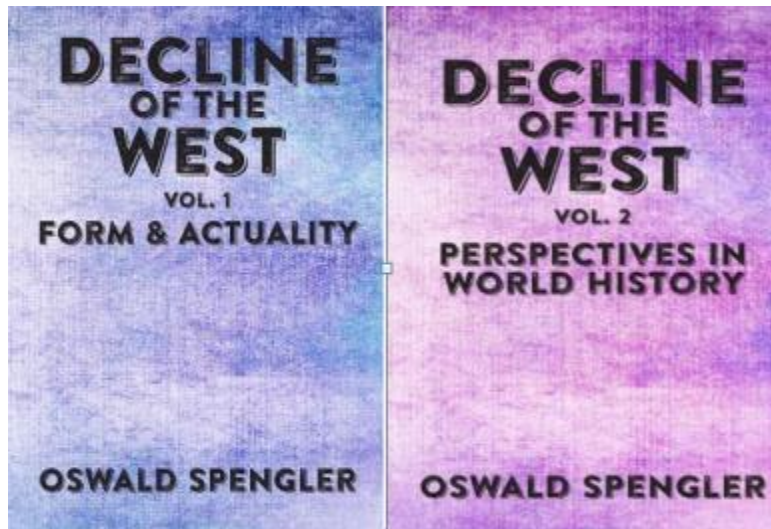
Visitors asked for the books in a central hall and the librarians put them at the researchers' disposal in a 2–3-person room. After working in this room we could leave the material and records overnight to continue the work the next day. I found this system very satisfactory and so my working life in Berlin centered on the Schloss (German for palace or chateau). The guiding principle of my planned work was that basically the monarchy and republic forms lose content over the years, that is the quality of the constitution. In ancient times the monarch was truly hegemonic (one ruler) and ruled with the grace of God from which came the concept of constitutional monarchy for example in Italy the monarchical form coexisted at the same time as the fascist party system.

On the other hand, the republic did not always present itself as a government by the people, and democracy as presented by the Soviet Union is a clear example of this. I still saw an element of security in the continuity of the monarchy. Particularly in the Hungarian context I understood that we Hungarians who fought so often against the royal high handedness still insisted on the national symbol of the Holy Crown. The end of the Second World War demonstrated this transitional force when we see the reign of the Duce (Mussolini) being ended by the King under the guidance of constitutional framework and similarly the Japanese peoples' revival occurred drawing on several thousand years of imperial guidance.

I started my first few months of scholarship work; after morning work I went back to the dorm with Pista for lunch at about noon. Then we went back to work and we finished for the day about 2PM. We really enjoyed the fact that we could work with relatively freedom in our chosen field of work.

I took the opportunity to occasionally visit the Humboldt University for my own orientation. Almost opposite our college was the university's large reading room and later it became a habit that I could scan the newspapers that were stretched over frames before starting the day's work.

I had another large project. During my university years I read Spengler's great work: ***Untergang des Abendlandes***. I knew about it from different critical interpretations, but I was not able to read his work in its original form.



Untergang des Abendlandes probes the origin and "fate" of our civilization

Almost the first books I requested at the university library was this book. The idea was that each evening I would read for a couple of hours and so gradually digest this great work.

To my surprise, the library officer told me that this work was subject to indexes (**List of Prohibited Books**) and only be available if my application is approved after review.

I ended up with a head librarian, apparently a party member, who interviewed me and asked why I wanted to read the work. I pointed out to him that I am a Hungarian scholar, studying the theory of the state and the work is very important for my studies.

Without argument he noted our discussion and gave permission that I could take the book comprising two heavy volumes to our college... I completed my plans by reading 20-30, pages a night; this was not so easy because his writing style was quite difficult.

However, I soon understood why this work was on the index. Later, I read comments in the press and also the National Socialist literature that Spengler's pessimism was not compatible with the national socialist worldview of a dynamic society. The party was seen as an organizing force in the German people's rebirth. In contrast, Spengler, who published his work in 1917 wrote about the decline of the western Christian civilization and stated before the appearance of Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler that we were on the eve of the age of Caesar-ism. At the time when I was reading this work, it was almost fully developed and I could see with my own eyes the new Caesars. The more I read the details the more engrossed I became in Spengler's political philosophy falling under its influence. I just could not imagine how it would be possible to eventually topple our civilization, which

already embraced the whole world and the 'fall of the Roman Empire' analogy with the attacking barbarians did in no way fit into the world picture.

Eight years later, when as an American prisoner of war I read the "Stars and Stripes" military newspaper which for the first time reported the deployment of the atomic bomb then for a moment I thought of Spengler. And in the decades that followed, I began to appreciate that we mortals watched the events of development or decline in our own life time in mere centuries and now (late 1990's) I believe that the Spengler process is still in motion and more and more I feel that there is nothing that can stop the fate outlined in his book.

The college management also took care to build relationships for us in the Berlin academic circles and in this respect the German academic world was a great help. From time to time, we received invitations from Berlin professors who usually invited us to their homes in the evening or afternoons for coffee or tea and they also had famous German and foreign academics providing an opportunity to establish contacts. To some extent they also took into account what areas of interest the Hungarian students were involved in bringing together people with similar interests if possible.

Our friend Lothar Zach reminded us that we are not in Budapest, so if the invitation is for 8 o'clock we had to ring the doorbell at exactly 8 and it was not polite to be delayed by at least half an hour like at home.

The get-togethers were pleasant. I danced with a Chinese woman doctor and also talked at length with a Japanese professor who was already an older person. He recounted that as a young man he was in Budapest when we celebrated our one thousand years of existence and when we opened the first phase of our underground railway in Budapest. He said he can imagine how the underground railway network has since evolved. I became embarrassed and somehow I managed to sidestep the question.

I visited Döme (Dimitri) Sztójay who was already in Berlin as the Hungarian ambassador. I also brought him a message from my uncle Kálmán Falcione who before the First World War was his regimental partner. He warmly inquired about the Falcione family returned my uncle's greetings and gave me as a member of the Collegium Hungaricum a little advice. He stressed that all Hungarian scholars in Berlin were Hungarian diplomats and should strive to paint a good picture of Hungary before German hierarchy. He stressed that Germany's influence is growing in European politics. He also pointed out that whatever our

opinion of the German system we should not be interfering in their affairs, because that would be an insult against the hosts.



Sztójay became Prime Minister March – August 1944

I also got to know the other members of the embassy. I often talked to the military attaché and the Hungarian journalists in Berlin and was often they were guests at our hostel. Bandi (Andi) Gellért who at that time I think was the "Új Magyarság (New Hungarians)" correspondent became a good friend of mine and we often had extensive discussions about politics. But I will report this in detail later on.

Meanwhile we followed the German political developments and also had the opportunity to participate in one or two Nationalist Socialist (NAZI) party gatherings which were indeed large-scale mass movements.

In 1937, the German National Socialism had been in power for four years and the character of these mass rallies had greatly changed if we compare them to those of prior times. This time we had to have connections to get tickets to attend one of these meetings. Generally, the larger institutions received a number of tickets for distribution. We lawyers worked as independent researchers but there were fellow scholars who worked on occasion in various institutions and so they were offered tickets by their bosses. This is how we had access to tickets courtesy of our colleagues. It may have happened in November that we were able to participate in a planned rally at the Sports Palace.



Sports Palace Berlin 1937

Our friend Lothar warned us to get there at least an hour before the official start because what happens usually is that the entrance gates are opened twenty minutes before the start and then the crowd that had been waiting on the street poured in to claim the remaining free places. We took our places one hour before the start and we became part of the crowd of 25 thousand people. During the waiting time a party band played marches and several local leaders also spoke to the crowd on topical issues. The crowd was attentive and politely applauded the speakers, but you could feel that everyone was waiting for the Chief to arrive. We knew that the main speaker would be Hitler himself and waited tensely for his appearance. I was particularly interested as a student of political science and having studied mass psychology and having heard a lot about his impressive strength as a leader. Then suddenly as if an electric shock had roared through those waiting and the roar of the people's excitement almost drowned out the sound of the marches... It was later explained to us by insiders that when you hear the Badenweiler March this meant the arrival of the Chief and it would only be a matter of moments before he would appear in the room. This is what happened and we saw Hitler enter the hall. The celebrating crowd held up their hands in greeting. Behind him many leading politicians came. I recognized Goebbels, the propaganda minister, who dragged one of his legs because he had some physical defect. Then the president of the congress with a few words welcomed the chief and Goebbels led the program. He was an insignificant-looking man but spoke beautiful north German dialect and this was his source of political power. His last words meant the beginning for the crowd, because he said: ***Der Fuhrer spricht (The Fuhrer speaks).***

Undoubtedly I felt that the speaker had a big impact on the crowd. However when you later studied the text of the speech you could not quite understand what triggered the great compassion and enthusiasm of the crowd. His appearance was not outstanding.



Adolf Hitler's speech at the *Berlin Sports Palace*

I've been thinking a lot about what it was that undoubtedly contributed such great effect. Eventually I came to the conclusion that the great majority of the German people saw in Hitler one of the lower middle class like themselves. The proletarian workers did not accept the land owner (squire) class and saw through Hitler themselves. The German lower middle class citizen was the real victim of the First World War they lost everything and became fully supportive of the ascent of nationalism.

We also heard a lot about how Hitler dominated his immediate surroundings and that even his opponents have often been under his influence.

I soon had the opportunity to observe the leader from closer vantage point than as a small grey point when I saw him amongst thousands of people. The University of Berlin had a new wing-building and our colleagues enthusiastically reported that Hitler will inaugurate the new building. This event was not published in the press and the date fell on a weekday. Some of us headed towards the university and entered the university district by a group of buildings just at the right place and the right time. We noticed that just then an SS group lined up and it became clear that their task was to receive the leader. The area had only just a few hundred people and so we immediately found a place only a few steps away from where the military lined up.

Suddenly, without any ceremony a black Mercedes and subsequent bodyguard cars arrived and in company of the drumbeat of a small SS band we saw Hitler in his party uniform, walking slowly and begin his inspection of the ranks of honor. Sometimes his arm swung

up and he greeted the soldiers and his hard, stinging eyes met mine. Then I felt that I knew what the mass understood by the leader's charisma. Much has been written about Hitler's stinging look and I now knew what they were talking about. He projected a great will power and his gaze was probably one of his secrets of success.

The academic year meant a certain break as Christmas season approached. Universities and libraries were closed and we also celebrated Christmas in the dormitory. Christmas Eve came and the Christmas tree candles were lit and Gyula Farkas wished us all a merry Christmas according to our old traditions. A gift of a book was given to us on behalf of the college board of directors. There was a festive dinner and we enjoyed ourselves but missed our families.

Our youthful good humor did not leave us and on New Year's Eve we also tried to take part in the traditional Berlin way even though it was a little alien to us. It was fashionable at that time in Berlin to greet the New Year 1938 in the streets amongst dancing clowns.

I would like to recall some of my scholarship friends. Unfortunately, more than fifty years have now passed since these young "researchers" - to use the modern form of expression - lived together over these months, and it is understandable that for most not only their faces but also their names are now blurred to me. But there were also those whose memory and friendship is still alive in my soul.

István (Stephen) Arató who was in Berlin was the closest to me. He was by then a legal reporter and we understood each other well. Much of our free time was spent walking together discovering the interesting details of the big square in Berlin and almost without a break discussing the challenging problems of Hungary.

I also made friends with Peter Kemény who was a Lutheran pastor and who was studying theology. He was my age and joined our company on weekends and on day trips. I often met him in Budapest and as fate would have it, he immigrated to Australia too (Perth Western Australia).

Similar I met Ákos Oláh, who was on a German Wirtschaftstag scholarship and a resident of the college for three months he was picked as one of the future leaders of the Hangya (Ant) Cooperative society. I maintained my relationship with him in Budapest and fate brought him also to Australia (Cooma, Snowy Mountains Scheme). We maintained our warm friendship in Australia.

Feri (Frank) Csík belonged to our group; he received a scholarship for further medical training. He returned to the scene of his memorable victory in the Olympics.

Csik Feri won gold in 100 m freestyle in 1936 Olympics and bronze in 4×200 m relay.



I saw in him as a humble great man who was a really good friend. On occasions we went with him to the Olympic pool where his name was immortalized. When he jumped in for a fifty-meter swim, the Germans usually noticed him and when they discovered who they saw swimming we all basked in his glory.

Sadly I mourned him when I learned that he was killed while performing his medical duties, during the last major American air attacks against Szombathely.

I talked a lot with Irma Eckert who studied folk art. Her subject in Berlin, if I remember correctly was the comparative landscape of the peoples of the Duna area and the influence of the German folk art on them. She was educated in Szeged and acquired her qualifications at the Eötvös College and we spoke of our Szeged experiences as expected of old Alma Mater students. She knew my Ica and I knew that she was courted by someone who later became a famous researcher.

I remember two other Protestant clergymen as well. László Révész was one who carried out theological research within the framework of the Reformed Church. The other was a Protestant minister Bálint (Valentine) Tóth who being born in Sibon insisted that we call his native village as "Zsibó (Jibou)" because he thought it was the right pronunciation. He was a smart Transylvanian man and I owe it to him that with a journalist certificate in possession a great deal of opportunity presented itself to get to know the people of Germany, its institutions and lifestyles. Indeed, once you are registered at the propaganda ministry you receive regular invitations for a variety of functions and free tickets from the German railways and get to know the most important landmarks in the German Empire. József (Joseph) Kovács was a teacher of German and French. I was on friendly terms with him too. Unfortunately, in my last years in Hungary he was in the countryside teaching and I have not heard from him since.

Gusztai (Gustav) Bodó stood out for me amongst the Dahlem physicists and mathematicians, a withdrawn scientist yet in his spare time was always available to a friendly exchange of views and a variety of excursions, if it meant that he could get acquainted with the various entertainment venues of Berlin.

I also remember Zoltán Szabó. He was a physicist and worked in one of the Dahlem institutions. When I arrived in Berlin, he was in his second year at the college and had enjoined the German life. He had a German girlfriend, and Zoltan was embarrassed but asked us for advice because his girlfriend asked that if he left Germany and Zoltan broke up with her, she wanted to have Zoltan's child. I think we managed to get Zoltán to talk his girlfriend out of this plan. I understand that Zoltan had a nice career and was awarded the Kossuth Prize.

The Collegium Hungaricum's life was disrupted when the embassy turned to us with an unexpected request. The authorities decided that for the benefit of Hungarian-German relations they would organize an embassy ball. They planned to commence the ball by introducing a Hungarian Palotás Dance.



Formal Hungarian Palotás Dance.

They thought that in the college there should be at least 12 young men who would volunteer to introduce to the Germans this beautiful and ancient Hungarian dance dressed in decorated Hungarian costumes. The embassy would take care of getting lady partners by getting the cultural attaché to request the company of the daughters of the leading German statesmen to undertake to partner the Hungarian boys wearing Hungarian outfits. When the college youth volunteered for the task, the embassy made arrangements and invited the selected ladies. The requests were accepted and the dance group started practicing. One of the dancing masters of the Budapest Opera House, who also had a contract with the UFA, accepted the task of teaching us and the Embassy ordered the deployment of appropriate costumes from the Opera House.

For weeks in the evening hours the Mercedes rolled up to the college and the German girls participated in the lessons with great enthusiasm.

Today I don't even remember the name of the girls, because after a few weeks of lessons and the ball itself we could no longer have the opportunity to maintaining contact with the ladies. This was probably because the embassy stressed that we had to behave properly. It was stressed that the girls were daughters of leading statesmen and they did not want to have any diplomatic affairs should the young men exceed the limits of good manners.

My partner was Helga Lammers. Her father was the chief of Hitler's Chancellery. I remember that the partner of Feri Csík was the daughter of captain Wiedeman who later was the German consul in San Francisco.

We handled the ladies politely holding on to the embassy warning and tried not to woo them. Helga was very pretty, with dark hair and eyes, a vivacious creature, who did not like our reserved manners and after walking her down the wide marble steps of the college to her car said: 'Aber wo ihr habt Ungarn Eure Pepper?' But where are your Hungarian peppers?

To this I could not answer.....

The ball was organized by the Embassy at the Esplanade Hotel and the famous Barnabas Géczy dance band played. Both German and Hungarian sides were elegant and the influential guests gathered together along with a large representation from the diplomatic corps.

The evening began with the entrance of the dance team and the band played the national anthems of Hungary and Germany. We Hungarian boys were standing at attention but the German girls had their hands up. I remember that we chuckled because they simplified the salute by resting their hands on the girls in front of them during long period of the music. No one noticed this and all went well. Even the Palotás Dance brought no shame even though amongst the many scientific researchers there were some who found the dance movements difficult.

The German leadership had ensured that those studying in Berlin become acquainted with professors and the older generation but there was a flaw in this because we were young and we wanted to be acquainted with our own generation.

Berlin was a large world city. The families lived in suburbs they mixed in their own niche social communities and we could only get to know girls in the entertainment areas of Kurfürstendamm and Budapester streets.

However, at this time this region was frequented by the promiscuous and therefore made it difficult to have meaningful relationships. On the other hand, in the interest of mastering the German language and getting to know the forms of everyday social life all obstacles had to be defeated.

One of the better solutions to meet a partner was recommended by the younger leaders of the college was to attend a larger coffee house where a band played. At these locations' phones were at each table enabling the guests to meet each other and arrange partners for a dance.

This is how I got to know a good-looking German girl. Ilse Rosenstrauch was her name; her family was of Huguenot descent. I learned later that her father was an official of the Siemens Company and lived in the district of Spandau. Despite courting her for months I was never asked to the family home. During our conversations I learned that her parents did not like that she was with an "auslaender (foreigner)" and were not thrilled that we got to know one another through a "coffee house". Ilse also explained later that the Germans are generally quite conservative and such relationships were regarded with disdain.

Despite this a pleasant relationship developed between us. She gladly accepted my Hungarian gallantry taking her dancing on weekends. We went on picnics together. I took her to a prom in one of the famous Berlin Kunst Akademie dance's parties, which was for the Berlin youth an annually recurring lively and noisy gathering. For the next few months, we shared our lunch-breaks eating sandwiches and walking in the Tiergarten. My knowledge of the German language improved greatly. Of course, while dating neither of us wanted to build a serious relationship. It was expected that at the end of the Berlin scholarship I would go home and our paths would be separated.



Tiergarten Berlin

We also tasted the musical soul of Berlin. We publicized our culture in the German capital and when we were visited by Hungarian musicians we attended Hungarian concerts of Bartók and Kodály. We were captured by the Wagner fever; the Berlin Opera House was famous for its Wagner cycles and the college was only a few hundred meters from the Opera House. However, to obtain tickets for these evenings was not an easy thing as Berliners were great

friends of music. So, we had to organize ourselves so that we could at least enjoy one evening of the first-rate performances. About thirty of us arranged to stand in line relieving each other to obtain tickets this being considered acceptable at that time. We stood in line for two hours each taking turns. At noon we launched the "relay" and the line stood all night and the next day the ticket window opened. This is how I got myself a ticket and took part in a Siegfried evening.



Berlin Opera House

We also observed the German political life after all German national-socialism was the subject of constant debate not only at home, but here in Berlin as well. The National Socialist dictatorship was not as hard as the Russian system, but was more restrictive than Italian fascism. At the time the cabarets cheerfully made fun of the party's mission and was only shut down in 1939.

In our company people joked about the system. Interestingly the most fun was of Göring who was said to love fancy uniforms and was thoroughly mocked. Still, I found that despite ridiculing this human weakness he was basically spoken of highly. With Göbbels this was not quite so. His interest in women was well known. They recognized his intellectual strength, but did not like him like Göring. Maybe this was so in Berlin only because Göring was from Prussia while Göbbels came from the Rhineland and these lingering differences meant conflicts. However, everyone only spoke in respect about the Bavarian Rudolf Hess, whose idealism



Berlin played host to a vibrant and vivid night life

had never been doubted. I had a most sympathetic opinion of this leading figure in the German establishment. He was always in the party shirt and wore the Iron Cross medal. With the one-party system one could feel the cautious atmosphere in Berlin. If you walked down the street and came into contact with a group of national-socialists it was fitting that the passers-by greet their flag with a raised arm. As a foreigner we did not comply but our German partners always drew our attention to this custom and it was smarter to swing our arms because there were a few stories where someone was challenged by an over-zealous believer.

The Hungarian colony in Berlin also had problems. We heard that on one of our national holidays the Chairman of the Hungarian colony, a Hungarian social democrat and master tailor in his speech criticized the system and as a result was summoned by the infamous Gestapo. He was warned to stay away from politics otherwise he could be deprived of his residency permit in Germany. I understand that he resigned the association's presidency but was not willing to give up his lucrative business.

I think that after this incident William Szigethy an artist and painter became the association's president. As such he often visited us in the college and he became friends with the collegians. As a result I also became acquainted with him. He was living in good circumstances was very hospitable and he often saw us with his pretty German wife in the suburb of Wilmersdorf. He would draw a small keg of beer and we poor young people certainly enjoyed the hospitality. Commercial art and poster design was his specialty and was proving to be a lucrative profession. He was 35-40 years old and also had a Budapest artistic past. Despite the fact that he was not anti-Semitic and had a lot of old Jewish colleagues in Budapest he was not against the German political system and even welcomed the idea of German national rebirth and the boosting of the economy. His well-being was due to this German economic rally. Thus, he was a suitable person to lead the colony's association.

The Jewish Question at that time in Berlin was not a topic of conversation. By 1937-38 the Berlin Jewish journalists, artists and bankers had been set aside and the doctors and lawyers were also on their way to emigration. The stores had also been taken over by Germans and the first-generation Jews from the east preferred to live in the very eastern district of the capital, the Alexander Platz neighborhood and so we rarely made contact with them. The people usually believed that the Jewish question was solved and were in

favor of their immigration applications. The only difficulty was that it appears that the receiving countries were not keen to enhance the process.

I was aware of the National Socialist movement's problems and dealt with it thoroughly, after all political science was my profession.

After breakfast I usually spent an hour reading the German newspapers and slowly got to know that each paper represented a different group of readers. This way there was a paper for the party, the army, the banking world and one representing the workers interests. The internal changes of the system could thus be monitored.

I studied the legal and constitution literature and I formed an image of the system.

The one-party system was foreign to me. Obviously, I carried in my blood the politicizing and arguing of the lawyers of our ancestors and always kept in my mind that the nation's sovereignty was borne in the National Assembly. The Hungarian nation's five hundred years of struggle for freedom was guaranteed by the Constitution and could not accept the rule of a leader with unlimited power. The most that I could acknowledge was that Germany's current great national effort was entrusted to the destiny of one man.

The sovereignty of the people was of course the cornerstone of national-socialism, but this was only applied occasionally by holding referendums.

The 12th July 1933 law on the referendum said that the imperial government could ask the people if they agreed to a specific plan or one carried out by the imperial government. But it was clear that it dependent on whether the government in that particular case asked the people to vote. The people could ask for a referendum. It is also true that the laws or regulations would be ineffective if the poll rejected the proposal, however the law was silent on the consequences if this happened.

In the meantime I took steps to obtain a certificate in journalism, which would provide many opportunities to get to know the country better. So, I contacted the main editor of the "Szeged New Generation" and offered my services free of charge to attend to the role of Staff in Residence in Berlin, should I get a certificate to this effect. The editor understood the problem and obligingly sent the certificate requested along with a kind letter, but he noted that there is not much point in me reporting because their panel was under the control of church advisors and they would not take kindly to the possibility of a favorable article about the Third Empire (NAZI Rule).

This I did not mind because I did not want to get involved in politics anyway. However, I visited the Ministry of Propaganda's department in dealing with journalists and had my

name and address registered so I regularly received invitations to the various meetings and trips.

On an occasion I had the opportunity to participate in a bus tour to view a national socialist Ordensburg.



NAZI Ordensburg

There were - maybe 2-5 such institutions – they were regarded as a sort of party colleges. They wanted to resurrect the knightly spirit and traditions of the past and invited the talented young to train as party functionaries. The students had comfortable working and sleeping conditions and they had available to them the most modern scientific and sporting training tools. One leader pointed out to us journalists that the curriculum included flying in a glider and be trained to complete at least one parachute jump. Someone asked the question why was this necessary? The answer was that a leader must be ready to execute any command.

Then it was spring and the college commemorated our March 15th National Day (Outbreak of the 1848 Revolution against the Austrian Rule). This year I was asked to present the ceremonial speech. The Embassy was represented by the Minister Jenő Ghiczy. He warmly congratulated me for my talk in which I expressed on behalf of the new generation the desire of a new March 15th spirit of reform and he assured me that he understands these desires and his affinity to them.

However, March shook Europe because the German Empire finally annexed Austria (Anschluss). Mussolini did not resist and we Hungarians had mixed feelings about this news. The Third Reich became a direct neighbor. There was no doubt that the majority of Austrians jubilantly welcomed the change and the Germans felt that the entire German empire was reborn. A significant layer of Germans resented National Socialism but a majority only passively watched critically the one-party rule. On this occasion I saw no difference between them. They warmly welcomed the returning Ostmark (Austria).



German soldier welcomed in "Anschluss"

From a Hungarian point of view this event raised serious questions. It was widely known that the Stuttgart German Institute kept a track of the German minority in Hungary and this raised the fear that after the Anschluss that the empire was trying to affect a power push in the direction of the south-east. Since the German National Socialist seizure of power, the behavior of the German minority in Hungary had changed. Until now the Magyarization was gradual, with the absorption of the Germans into the surrounding Hungarian culture. But the recent revival of Germany had a strong influence on the Germans in Hungary and naturally aroused resentment in both the German and Hungarian quarters and this was fanned by the foreign (Allied) propaganda.

Many of us contacted the institutions dealing with the fate of Germans living abroad and once met a leading politician and had an honest discussion about the problem, not hiding our own Hungarian fears.

This meeting and the talks were interesting. The Stuttgart institute's officer stressed that the Danube Germans were only of interest because of the cultural ties and pointed out that as in the South Tyrol they always emphasized that the German Empire had no territorial claims. He also explained on a friendly basis that politically the annexation of South East Europe could not be achieved as the Germans lived scattered amongst a considerable number of other ethnic groups and also drew attention to the fact that the new German policy wants not to expand into South-East Europe but into the Polish corridor area and only if requested by the Germans living there. He also mentioned that it could be discussed at a future time by the German people there if they wished to and could be relocated in another area. He also referred to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* which expressed interest in an eastern orientation as the Germans real task.

This was not an entirely satisfactory explanation, but it seemed that the immediate fear was unfounded and for the time being only an expansion in the Polish Baltic area was considered to be the German policy.

These exploratory discussions then led me to start to seriously deal with the problems of German foreign policy. I reviewed the relevant literature in German and I understood that the Germans have been considering since the last century whether to pursue orientation to the east or the west.

The turning against the traditional Western foreign policy was based on the emotional Franco-German conflict. Bismarck based his policy on ensuring that Russian front was secure as an insurance policy and saw the future in German colonialism as coming into conflict with the British Empire at a time when the German fleet program was becoming a reality.

Today this now history in that France recognized that the Russian Empire wanted to expand. The purpose was to have Germany as an ally and to break up the Habsburg Empire and thus bring the Balkans under its influence. Indeed, the French diplomacy had been successful in preparing for the alliance which eventually brought Germany into war on two fronts and facing the coalition forces which eventually forced Germany to its knees.

However, the situation changed with the triumph of Bolshevism in Russia and England was no longer an unconditional supporter of the French dream, which included the Little Entente Eastern European alliance. The German school of thought was to basically be willing to permanently give up competition with England in the Sea and was ready to turn against the Soviet Union. To this aim Hitler wanted to obtain an English guarantee of neutrality. He greatly valued the British Empire and worked to have these ideas accepted by the English people.

However, this was only recorded in newspaper articles in intellectual arguments and even hid behind careful language of diplomacy.

Berlin was by then overcome by a fever of enthusiasm for the return from Austria of the Head of State. They decorated the famous boulevard 'Unter den Linde (Lime trees) with white colonnades and the anti-aircraft search lights formed a tent over the head of the Leader who solemnly laid a wreath at the heroic monument. Goebbels solemnly proclaimed the day of the Greater German Reich on the radio and this speech was broadcast on the loudspeakers on every street corner.



Unter den Linde after Anschluss.

On this occasion it was not necessary to create a crowd because the offices, factories and institutions marched in separate groups under the guidance of trusted leaders. The public's enthusiasm was real. We strolled out into the Unter den Linden and the crowd literally ran over us, and sections were so crowded that my feet did not touch the ground. In front of the Chancellery area the crowd did not want to dissipate for hours and the Chief was forced to appear in the window to the cry of... Wir wollen unseren Führer sehen. (We want to see our Fuhrer) ...

The leadership sought to include the annexation of Austria and the launch of the Greater German Reich in the constitutional law and therefore ordered a referendum.

The question was essentially this: Do you approve of the measures which led to the accession of Austria?

Our college German friend Lothar replied cynically that it was only natural that anyone who considers themselves a German would approve this. But I was interested in the technique adopted for the referendum. To observe the process, it was handy that I had a journalistic license and registration because it opened up before me all polling stations and was able to observe how the vote was happening and how they were tallied and aggregated. I did not see violations and it seemed to be very well-organized and processed. After the polls opened, a three-member committee separated the yes and no votes. Lothar friend was right, because the yes votes were the overwhelming majority. I'm not sure that the advertised result of 99 percent was correct. I could not establish that 90 or 95 percent of voters participated in the vote, but it was clear that indeed the vast majority of eligible voters expressed agreement to the incidents.

These interesting political events did not affect our daily work program. My activities produced a serious amount of work papers and I needed to think about the coming to an end of the academic year.

With the help my father I applied for a court appointed legal traineeship and by now I was closer in deciding my career choice. I thought that eventually I would still strive for a judicial appointment, but I also wanted to continue my researcher work hoping to be able to release one or two works. I wanted to achieve an academic tutorial position and eventually I would try to gain a university professorship.... But this still was only a dream for the future.

I wished to extend my stay in Berlin by a year because there was still a lot of detail needing to be developed as I did not have the opportunity to study it to date. As a trainee there still was a possibility that my stay in Berlin could be extended for another year.

My brother-in-law Béla wanted me to buy him a good German camera before returning home, preferably a cheap one, as I lived in Berlin and must know all the German conditions. While researching this I got to know a little of the East German Jewish way of life. I was advised that I could buy the cheapest cameras if I travelled to the Alexander Platz, Berlin, where the Jews remained, if not in the ghetto, but a little bit separately from the local Germans. They lived as retailers but did not have stores and they usually worked from home and their prices were therefore very moderate. I managed to buy a camera 'Voigtlaender' which Béla was happy with and it served the family for a long time.



Voigtlaender 1938

It was the end of June 1938 and I went home. I stopped in Vienna and once again took the opportunity to look around the old imperial city. I received free accommodation as a member of the college of Berlin and Vienna Collegium Hungaricum...

The Duna steam train finally brought me home. I got off at Győr, my sister and my brother-in-law was waiting for me and my father also came up from Szeged. Thus the Berlin year was topped off with a nice Bábolna holiday.

Home – 1938

I had to talk a lot about my experiences in Berlin at Bábolna. The family found me to be very thin and they did not find this surprising because they noted that the newspapers were full of the news that in Germany there was a scarcity of food as all the money was spent on defense. I explained that the German population was remarkably well looked after and my thinness was a testimony to a shortage of my spending money and I had to tighten my belt a little and I preferred to spend my money on entertainment and viewing the city attractions.

They also worried that I may want to marry my girlfriend in Berlin, because the family naturally wanted to welcome a Hungarian girl into the family. I emphasized that I did not intend to commit myself in Berlin, but I could not accept the fact that if I did find myself a partner for-life, then why I could not bring home my choice. I explained that the women brought home became Hungarianized in a home environment and their children would grow up as Hungarians and for this there were numerous examples in Szeged.

During these days we learned the news from Budapest newspapers that my application as a legal trainee was successful and according to the Minister of Justice announcement it was necessary to present myself to the president of the district court in Szeged by the 30th June, 1938 and take the oath and begin my service.

Early July my father and I headed towards Szeged. We stopped in Budapest and I visited my mother who welcomed me with great joy after the long months in Berlin. My father suggested that we visit Jenő (Eugene) Lutitszky at the Department of Justice and to thank him for my appointment. This was not really necessary because I had achieved a “juris utriusque doctorate” (double degree both civil and canon law) “summa cum laude” (With highest Honor) and then had a year at Berlin Collegium Hungaricum on a scholarship and



Diploma Dr. Political Science summa cum laude



Diploma Dr. Juris Universi summa cum laude

was therefore among the first on the waiting list.

My father however felt that it would be fitting to thank him for my appointment and so it wasn't long before Eugene Lutiszky made an appointment for us. He was very friendly and said to my father: "*Béla, Thank you very much for your visit. People usually come here to ask for something but very few say thank you for anything*".

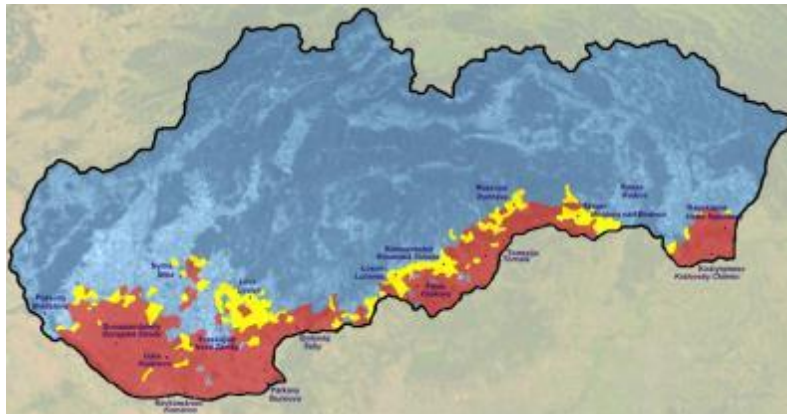
Szeged obviously meant a lot to me. By this time, it was now two years that I left my hometown, which I loved, every stone, tree and park and all the Széchenyi square statues, were part of my youth and my memories. The majority of my old friends were scattered by this time, but as an old resident of Szeged I had friends almost everywhere including the business owners who were old acquaintances. People along the promenade stopped me and I had to recount my experiences in Berlin and they listened to my story with great interest.

On 15 July 1938 I took the oath before the President of the District Court of Szeged and I became civil service employee. The President of the District Court was Andor Rácz I just called him Uncle Bandi since his family was in a warm friendly relationship with us. His wife was a Jedlicska lady whose father worked for a number of decades as a public notary in Szeged. They were also related to the family of lawyer Joseph Nagy Csikós. Amongst the Csikós boys Joe was my classmate while Béla who was a year younger than me also studied law and specialized in commercial law. About him I will discuss later after all we kept in contact for the next 2-5 years. Kata their sister was friends with my sister Kata and we had quite a lot of fun at the Kurbos dance school.

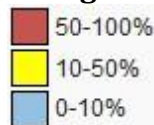
I visited Uncle Bandi Rácz (President of the District Court) who received me as in a friendship basis and decided that although I had quite a high degree of legal education and research behind me it was his opinion that getting to know the agency's work as an assistant was to be my the first job. He pointed out that later if I got a leading position in court, then I will appreciate the fact that I got to know how the administration of the court works from the beginning. I understood this very well and later I was grateful to him, because it really made me better acquainted with all of the problems in handling cases. Anyway I felt that to date I was only involved in law on a theoretical and philosophical level and I desperately needed to understand the affairs of everyday life.

So I commenced my work in the assistants' office. I spent a day or two in each section and learned the structure of the current administrative work of the Registrar.

This job was designated by the president to last six weeks, but the military intervened and called me up unexpectedly for military exercise. I couldn't have really anticipated this as it was only a year ago that I finished my volunteer year and had served for an additional six weeks as well. Under normal conditions you would only have serve every 2-3 years. Later the shadow of the Felvidék (Upper Hungarians living in Slovakia) crisis became evident as well as some troop movements. According to the draft we had to register for service at the Esztergom camp on August 2, to join the emerging First Brigade of Mechanized Armored Division.



Percentage of Hungarians residing in Slovakia



So after a few weeks of stay in Szeged I again donned my uniform and reported for duty at Esztergom.

Here I met again my fellow conscripted volunteers. Among them the closest to me was Jóska Keszezy with whom I was in a strong friendship even during my previous years of volunteering. Csocso Láng was also with us. This was his nickname and 50 years later I still cannot remember his official first name. His father was a manager of the Láng machine factory so I remember him as one of the wealthier boys and his small Opel car. On weekends about 5 people crammed into the car and headed for Budapest. In this group amongst the older ones was Frici Heuthaler. Joining us was Gyuszi Toronyi, who was then already an ensign. He had started to gain weight and thus it was certainly very difficult to cram into a small car, but we could not leave him at the camp by himself.

Our dormitory accommodation was also for reserve officers. It was quite a spacious room and contained 10-12 beds. In our room there were also four volunteer corporals of the

armored car division. Among them I can mention only two names. One was Louis Tardy. I do not remember how he looked but after a long time after the war he wrote a book in which he stated that he was a fellow soldier with me. However I do remember Count Alexander Festetich because he was a famous sports car driver and he was allowed to store his red BMW car at the camp and he gave us a ride. On the local (Tát) concrete road he drove at high speed and we as easy-going young men enjoyed the overtaking of the fruit-laden horse-drawn vehicles.

We did not have serious tanks at this time, but the Fiat Ansaldo armored cars had arrived and we had regular training in these vehicles. These vehicles created a lot of dust in the Esztergom dunes and occasionally we turned them over.

We had lunch and dinner in the officers' garden dining room. The food was simple but portions were generous. Uncle Deák was the dining room manager with the rank of master sergeant who I had met in the volunteering years. Later we spent months together while in captivity. I will write more about him later.

But I sharply remember the many 'Hosszúlépés' drinks ('long step' 1 part wine 2 parts water) which were so welcome when we arrived back tired after practice.

After the evening meals things were usually quite lively. The officers were also involved in political discussions. I was very surprised at the great change that had occurred in my year absence. For example, I almost forgot the problems of the Jewish question because this was not encountered in Berlin; on the other hand, I only had a rough picture of the events in Hungary during this time.

It was striking that the younger officers had already been attracted by the national socialist Francis Szálasi. They were not interested in their economic proposals but rather criticized the current political leaders not preparing the country to take on a fighting spirit to achieve the country's revisionist goals as they were influenced by the strongly influenced Jewish press who had taken to anti-German attacks. They (the officers) had a couple of glasses of wine and there were people who began to sing the Szálasi song ... As a reserve officer candidate I knew my place in the rankings and spoke neither for or against but only watched the events. I was honestly very sorry for Colonel Henrik (Henry) Riomfalvy who was the senior in the group. I understood that his wife was Jewish and I could imagine how the behavior of the volatile young officers affected him. He acted as if heard nothing but if they were too boisterous, he usually left the company of the group.

This atmosphere was increased by the news of the Governor's visit to Kiel Germany. The officers had inside information about partial mobilization and saw that we could also be preparing to resolve the issue in the highlands (Slovakia) but in alliance with Germany. The Regent was received with a large military pomp and I was very sorry that I could not be a witness to this event. However news of the Hungarian-German encounter soon revealed that Hungary ultimately did not accept Hitler's offer to a military alliance in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. The Arrow Cross Party sharply disagreed with the Government distributing pamphlets to this effect and one of these documents charged Béla Imrédy (Hungarian Prime Minister) as a British spy and some of these tracts also found their way into the camp. I was given a copy to read... This caused great discontent amongst the officers because perhaps naively and not fearing the risks they wanted to march back to the ancient boundaries of the homeland.

Germany naturally continued their preparations to implement their plans. According to my Berlin information, because of the cold Hungarian behavior their plans focused primarily on the return of the Sudeten Germans and their military action plans were built for this military operation. Obviously the Hungarian leadership had expected that England and France would not agree with the German moves and anticipated that a European war would break out. Hungary did not want to participate in this as an ally of the German Empire.

Hungarian government circles were surprised that eventually the Munich agreement (September 30, 1938, between Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy that permitted German annexation of the Sudetenland in western Czechoslovakia).came into being and so peace had been secured - at least for now. However the needs of Hungary and Poland were not affected by this agreement. The government was thus brought into a serious situation. The population expected moves in the direction of regaining the Felvidék (Highlands). This was the reason that the Governor flew and asked Göring to activate the Hungarian claims. This the German leaders promised, but this time it was not that what was promised by the German Reich at the time of the Kiel meeting supporting the entire Hungarian historical demands. Now it was only possible to get back the highland border zone based on linguistic areas. Negotiations were started with the Czechoslovak government.

I was transferred early September to the Budapest Train Barracks and we waited for developments. The officer corps was disillusioned. They expected Horthy to launch the Honvéd (Defense) Forces towards the north. In hindsight, we now know that the Army was

not fitted out and was only just at the beginning of its development and would not even have been able to fight the well-trained and equipped forces of the Czech Republic but in the current mood common sense was overshadowed. I remember well that in a period of crisis a well-armed train unit went swiftly to the Czech border but suddenly it was ordered to return. The train commander, when he came back, desperately threw his 'Bocskai' hat into the corner and castigated Horthy in front of stunned silent attendees.



Bocskai hat

The weeks before the First Vienna Award the tensions were great amongst the Hungarian society and the government was under strong social pressure. The opposition, of course, took advantage of this situation and increasingly the nationalist rhetoric and editorials could be heard.



First Vienna Award

(The First Vienna Award separated largely Magyar-populated territories in southern Slovakia and southern Carpathian Rus from Czechoslovakia and awarded them to Hungary. Hungary thus regained some of the territories in present-day Slovakia and Ukraine lost in the Treaty of Trianon in the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I. The Arbitration took place at Vienna's Belvedere Palace. The Arbitration and Award were

direct consequences of the Munich Agreement the previous month and decided the partitioning of Czechoslovakia.).

At this time the Arrow Cross Party announced a rally and called on the people to gather together in front of the party headquarters at 60 Andrásy Street to protest in mass demanding the government to act decisively to regain the Felvidék (Highlands). The ruling party was in a very difficult situation. Domestically they did their best to keep the national socialist radicals under control. After all Francis Szálasi their leader was serving his sentence in the Stars Szeged Prison. The radical forces were unified in calling for vigorous government action and they were not alone in this. The government also had a problem that they did not want to stand up against the Anglo-French view too strongly and drift towards the German line, but they could not have simply prohibited and prevented such an obviously non-party political rally either. The rally was allowed, but the government also stood ready to intervene forcefully and if necessary deploy armed forces in the event of the protest degenerating.

The inaugural armored forces disguised as Police rookie school personnel was available to respond in two Armstrong armored cars which were approved under the Treaty of Trianon for the maintenance of internal order. It was not surprising that the command came to be ready to intervene if the rally of the masses threatened order and security.

I was there in the courtyard of the barracks when the troops were inspected by Colonel Henrik (Henry) Riomfalvy the commander.

I also remember that when they started to march forward to their appointed standby positions then Lieutenant Pál (Paul) Topay shouted to those departing: "If you have to shoot boys, you must shoot into the air, because you must not forget, you are facing Hungarians!"

This scene was given new life to me almost half a century later, in 1988 when I came across a book by Lajos Tardy: "Szaggatott krónika" (Broken Chronicles) and was dumbfounded to read in page 31 a thoroughly distorted version of these events. The writer claims that this scene happened ***"when Szálasi Francis was confined to the Stars Szeged Prison or escaped from there the Interior Ministry requested reinforcements from the army to control the mob action of the Arrow Cross."*** Tardy also puts words in Pál (Paul) Topay's mouth that he suggested that the machine gunners shoot into the first floor windows. He continues: ***"machine guns stared menacingly at the street waiting for Szálasi group's arrival. But the gathering did not have even low-end party officials... "***

I have to reveal this pathetic forgery for what it is because of the memory of my friend who died next to the Don River.

The Hungarian atmosphere at this time was characterized by mass protests. We officer candidates who were called in for military exercise did not have a set of regular assignments and so I too could take on civilian clothes and take part in the planned demonstrations. A large crowd gathered on Andrassy Avenue. Today I am hesitant to say how many thousands of people were present but there were many tens of thousands. The real leader of the Arrow Cross Party was Kálmán Hubay and he was the keynote speaker at the meeting. His speech was not concerned with domestic issues but he stirred the people by calling on the government to launch the Defense Forces towards the Carpathian Mountains...

The crowd's enthusiasm was moving. The people wept when they sang the national anthem and then the Kossuth song sounded:

***“If he calls us again, we all must go,
Long live Hungarian freedom, long live our homeland”***

The protesters dispersed peacefully but a few thousand people wanted to continue the protest and the news that the people would march towards Buda to the Castle spread like wildfire.

However, the police who were standing by prevented them from doing this. I saw this from the Körönd (Circle) and the police forces positioned in the side streets intervened and dispersed the crowd. The deployment of armored cars did not take place.

In the wake of the ongoing negotiations and evaluations of the Munich agreement the government clearly saw that military action would not take place and thus the practical military conscription and the limited partial mobilization was suspended. I was discharged on October 10th. I could again return to Szeged and resume my interrupted legal service. I got my first real legal position with George Kószó a district judge as a notary. My boss was a descendant of the old family Kószó of Szeged. His grandfather was a pre-World War I prominent public figure in Szeged. The close-knit family's life was tied to the history of Szeged and Gyurka also knew the people of Szeged, landscapes, and as district judge, was very greatly respected by the farm population. The following little story reveals Gyurka's characteristics and behavior:

It looked like we were facing very difficult days because of a very corrosive defamation lawsuit tearing the farm community into two. There were twenty witnesses summoned and the shadow of an appeal also threatened.

Everything was ready for the trial to begin. First the complainant and then the defense fronted Gyurka Kószó. Of course, he knew the whole group and perhaps it would have been more appropriate if the matter was referred to the President for another judge to handle the case ... but it would have been a tangled mess. Gyurka counterattacked. ***“Uncle Steve, Uncle Feri”*** he cried ***“aren’t you ashamed that such matters are before the court. It is not appropriate for a Hungarian man”*** ...he urged them in colloquial Hungarian language to be reconciled with each other. At first both appeared reluctant but Gyurka refused to let up and let them relax their conscience and then eventually and reluctantly they reached out to each other ... Gyurka threw the thick bundle of papers to me and instructed me to construct a conclusion referring to contemplate an order that the prosecution case came to an end ... I confess frankly that I was relieved because it seemed such a pointless case. Of course there were also difficult affairs, but Gyurka always showed how moderation and justice can make some judgments more palatable.

Meanwhile I received a document from the Minister of Education in which my service in the Collegium Hungaricum was extended from 1 December 1938 for a year and was also notified that the Minister of Justice authorized my study leave for that period. I was however requested that I integrate into my studies in Berlin the new German government’s laws on organizations and operations of corporations. This task occupied a significant part of my extended stay in Berlin.

Next to my official work I again joined in the social life. The Promenade and Casino were the daily opportunities to meet people. I had Lunch with my father in the small restaurant of the casino and we had the company at our table Elemér Harsányi chief lawyer and Dennis Göltner also a lawyer. I appreciated Dénes very much. He was a thoroughly educated man and he worked seriously on legal philosophical lines.

Just a few weeks after my start at my office Rácz family invited me to an afternoon family gathering. Csöpi Rácz was a college student and her circle of friends, boys and girls were invited to the gathering. Csöpi was also a classmate of my sister Kata and was part of the group who went to dance school together. She was regarded as “eligible” and I knew that she was courted by a Lieutenant Judge in the military. For me what was significant was that Csöpi was friends with my Ica and I hoped that that afternoon I could meet Ica again. This is

what happened and suddenly we were face-to-face with each other again. She did not bring up my "breaking-up" letter and she did not appear to hold grudges because we chatted and danced together again. My feelings toward her strengthened once again and I believed I had found in this girl a deep understanding and I felt that my life had arrived at a decisive turn. In the following weeks we met several times. I joined her on the Korzó and on a Sunday afternoon we went with a smaller group to the Kass café. I was also getting jealous without justice as I gave her a free hand when we had parted previously but I did not look kindly to the attention she received from a young officer in our group...

I was thinking about my future and increasingly the thought that after two years after we broke up much has changed so that it was now unreasonable to wait any longer... For my part my love for her was not in doubt. The career problems also seemed to have disappeared. I was appointed a trainee and was looking for rapid advancement in the future due to the country's rebirth. Ica was finishing her last year of college and so it seemed possible that in two years we could start our lives together.

My optimism had increased as a result of the First Vienna Award. The territory gains affected all young people because the dire economic crisis of these years would be followed by prosperity.

I just had one uncertainty that Ica would refuse my suit. She was nice and proper with me in these weeks but at the same time stayed somewhat guarded. So one afternoon, when I accompanied her on a stroll home from college, I gathered all my courage and asked her for her hand in marriage.

I had the feeling that Ica did not anticipate this and I was afraid that the answer would be negative. But then the nice memories of our love were resurrected in her and eventually gave her consent with tears in her eyes.

The weeks that followed were filled with joy and gladness planning our future. We decided amongst ourselves that we would announce our official engagement at the end of 1939 and would hold the wedding near the end of 1940. We hoped that as a middle school teacher she could get a position and I with a judicial clerk salary would be enough to substantiate our shared life together.

I announced our engagement to my good father and later to my mother. My father had concerns. He feared that as shown to him in many examples young people will have children and this prevents the husband from laying the groundwork necessary for his judicial examination. The judicial career depended on this. I assured my father that both Ica

and I are aware of the situation and that a joint effort will be made to overcome this last hurdle.

The last weeks in Szeged gave us many pleasures. I knew then that my father applied for a vacant position as a notary in Balassagyarmat with the support of Pál Teleki (*Count Pál János Ede Teleki de Szék was prime minister of the Kingdom of Hungary from 19 July 1920 to 14 April 1921 and from 16 February 1939 to 3 April 1941*). He also had strong hopes of success. I said goodbye to my hometown. I also endeavored to continue my judicial service in Budapest after Berlin. It certainly never occurred to me that not only would I be torn from the banks of the Tisza River but eventually I had to leave my country as well. Thus, almost gleefully, full of ideas I started my trip to Berlin at the end of November 1938...



Grandfather appointed Notary in Balassagyarmat

Berlin 1939

When I first arrived in Berlin in the autumn of 1937 we were for many days and weeks unfamiliar with the city until we became finally comfortable with the environment. Now however we came back as old Berliners. The college management also knew me well and I was familiar with the university library and was known at the Schloss so that I could resume my research work which for us lawyers was the source for our legal case studies and reading.

There was however big changes in regards my social life. This was because I was, if not officially, engaged and I felt that it would not be acceptable if I maintain my relationship with my girlfriend Ilse. I thought that it would not be fair to continue to "court" in Berlin while having a fiancée. Thus during a break while walking at Tiergarten I said to Ilse that as I'll only be a resident in Berlin for a couple more months it would be wrong of me to tie her to me as I was returning to Hungary which would result in a final break from each other. I did not have enough courage to reveal the whole truth but this probably was not necessary. Not fully understanding my behavior, but when she saw that I was firmly decided she was visibly sad and took note of my announcement. I never met her again and I do not know what happened to her...

I started going to our embassy. I presented my credentials to the Justice Ministers to study the German Corporations Act. We agreed with the advisor of the Cultural Affairs that a thorough understanding of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (*National Socialist trade union organization which replaced the various trade unions*) would be the best way to solve this task. Subsequently, the embassy wrote a memorandum, probably through the State Department asking for the support of the German authorities for my planned work.

My life was now starting to get very busy. I had

breakfast at the university canteen before walking over to the Schloss; I read the German press so I stayed permanently in connection with the world events. In the afternoon I worked at the Schloss between 2-5 hours with only one hour for lunch break. I ate at the canteen, usually an Eintopfgerichte (stew). This one dish menu was popular in taverns in Berlin at this time and was quite well-known as the Winter Emergency action fundraiser



German Trade Union Organization

which still collected weekly and this dish symbolized a national cohesion. Although at this time there was no unemployment in Germany and many people were already living in prosperity.

In Berlin there was a recognizable tension in the press concerning the situation which was later called Kristallnacht. A Jewish emigrant shot Otto Rath the German embassy counselor. The German National Socialist Party then organised a "mass outrage" in almost every city dressed in civilian clothes basically the SA groups attacked and destroyed the remaining Jewish institutions and businesses.



Kristallnacht - Passers by a Jewish owned shop

We saw nothing of this, but we learned all this from the press with a government slant. In Berlin, the metropolis and the western suburbs centers where we lived there were no Jewish institutions. In the Kurfürstendamm quarter however there was a Hungarian inn whose manager and owner was Uncle Weiss, a Hungarian Jew, but as a Hungarian citizen, his business was successful and the German party people also went there because they were Hungarian romantics. Nothing happened in Weiss's shop.

Klári Tabódy was at that time one of the Hungarian theatrical stars and occasionally Marika Röck also appeared on the stage. The atmosphere in Berlin was generally pro-Hungarian. But my friends reported that there was a large disappointment in party circles that the Hungarian government did not accept the offer of the German leadership for a Hungarian-German military alliance which Hitler made to Horthy in Kiel (*near Denmark*).

The plan to extend northwards to recover the historic Hungarian areas from Pozsony (Bratislava) to Transcarpathia was naturally very tempting, but the Hungarian government wanted to avoid being exposed in a European war.

However after the Munich Agreement the Hungarian government was forced to revise its position and after the partial revision of the highlands (upper Hungary) which was agreed to by England and France the government was ready to build relations with the German Empire. This new direction was destined to be sealed by the Berlin trip of Darányi Kálmán the then prime minister.



Hungarians in the now Slovakia

The Prime Minister's program was limited, there were no celebrations and today we would call it a working visit.

In addition, quite a number of journalists arrived accompanying the Prime Minister and amongst them was Gyurka (George) Oláh, one of the outstanding personalities of the reforming generation. I remember that he had boarded at the college and I got to know him.

After a busy day he spent a couple of hours at the college dormitory he rested and enjoyed our company. Of course, we talked and our central issues covered foreign policy and Hungarian domestic policy issues. We largely agreed with each other.

When we talked about the problems of land reform, we were joined by Béla Csikós my old friend from Szeged who came to Berlin as a student of Professor Theodor Surányi Unger. He came to Berlin on a Wirtschaftstag German scholarship and wanted to get to know the ideas behind the German economy.

Gyurka (George) Oláh and I may have taken a too heavy a position on implementing as soon as possible radical land reform in Hungary. We were both of the opinion, as expressed by the work of Matthias Matolcsy that we need to build a healthy peasant small holding system in Hungary and eliminate the latifundium (*a very extensive parcel of privately owned land granted to the noble or ecclesiastical hands*).

Béla Csikós then to my surprise opposed this view and stressed the usual arguments brought forward by the opponents of reform at that time.

The debate was fierce and Béla could not convince Gyurka Oláh and me.

I was aware of the background of Béla's thinking. At the time the conservative religious circles were under the influence of the leadership of the Szeged bishop Gyula Glattfelder. Later Béla Csikós-Nagy went through the full range of political opinions so I cannot judge where he now belonged. I will write about this several times later.



Photo of Béla Csikós-Nagy 40 years later

We celebrated Christmas in the college again. In addition to Béla Csikós-Nagy there was another old friend from Szeged on a college scholarship. Elemér Buócz was on a Wirtschaftstag scholarship and came to Berlin and as I had not seen him in years, a lot of old memories were revived. I got a telegram on Christmas Eve from my father which informed me that he finally received his notary appointment to Balassagyarmat. I showed Elemér the telegram and he warmly welcomed the news.

On the request of the embassy, I soon received information about the Deutsche Arbeitsfront. A senior officer prepared a program that was detailed in all its aspects and was indeed a multi-week study that really introduced me to this organization.

Each morning at the college a car arrived with a driver. According to the program we were able to visit predetermined factories, farms, offices and so I had the opportunity to inspect in detail this part of German life.

They were also mindful to the point that at lunchtime they usually took me into their private house or workers clubhouse.

Here elegant waiters in white uniforms served us and perhaps also wanted to emphasize the new position of the German worker, for example, every time the appointed driver ate at the table with me a simple but hearty lunch. Several times I saw Ley, who was the CEO of the organization also eating in the company's dining room. There was no discrimination. I had the opportunity to study the theoretical foundations of the organization and it was of particular interest to me because the home media saw the Deutsche Arbeitsfront's essence as the replacement of the dissolved unions under a monopolistic corporation under state control.

I discussed with senior people the issues and they pointed out that the old trade unions were the means of waging a class struggle and the German movement sought specifically to break this Marxist class struggle. It was felt that the issue can only be resolved radically and repeatedly explained to me that they could not accept the resolution proposed by Italian fascism. According to fascism the class struggle can be controlled within state frameworks. This tamed and squeezed the process within constitutional limits but did not turn against the idea of a class struggle.

The Deutsche Arbeitsfront organization's leaders saw the main goal in that the body of the employer and the employee could sit together at one table for a common goal to achieve the best for all. They also stressed that the conflict of various occupations under separate union blocs would not be productive. They saw the role of the party to provide assurance to the participants that only the mutual objectives of the Company are followed.

I saw then that the German system - though it called itself socialist in order to obtain the participation of the Marxist adult generation - was basically non-socialist in a Marxist sense.

Foreigners did not see this contradiction. On the one hand they attacked National Socialism as big capital, forces of feudalism called brown-Bolshevism. On the other hand, they tried to compromise the German capital as collaborating with the Nazi forces. But they also accused, especially Hitler, as betraying the socialist wing of the movement.

I myself then I saw that the organization, Deutsche Arbeitsfront (a government sponsored union structure replacing individual unions historically representing different trades) was not really Marxist socialist and the party's socialist name just meant that they wanted to

raise the living standard of the working class and include them in the German life by loosening their adopted position lying outside the sanctity of the Constitution.

The Deutsche Arbeitsfront institutions truly served this purpose and the workers and plant managers worked together for a common solution. The political influence ensured the plant management voted in favor of the improvements and I had the opportunity to see a large number of well-equipped canteens, sports grounds and work places. Organizations also in some cases took care of the problems of commuting to work and finding nearby accommodation and in many cases building new houses.

They also cared for the cultural life of the working class by providing cheap theater tickets and arranged excursions lifting the standard of living of the working class. The '*Strength through Joy*' foreign voyages served as propaganda but the masses had indeed benefited from more modest but uplifting experiences.

In the business area it was recognized that the traditional free-market capitalism was not touched by management but they directed the investments in the direction the government wanted. The question still is, was there a planned economy in the German Empire? My studies at the time gave an answer in the negative.

On the other hand the idea of profit sharing came to fruition mainly by the payment of bonuses.

Of course, the whole system was built on the one-party state and this was exactly the point at which the Hungarian researchers found difficulties and did not answer the question of how these new German ideas could be installed in a democratic system. The Achilles heel of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labor Front) was that the solutions could easily sour if you did not have party leadership but had party dictatorship.

History of course resolved this issue differently. The German Empire fell in the Second World War before it could solve this delicate issue for its system.

However, half a century later, any serious thinker must see that there were many aspects of the declared key tasks of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront program that today is applicable to the current western system balancing free enterprise while addressing social injustices.

However, the course of our research was soon disturbed by the political events of the times. More and more articles appeared in the press negatively evaluating the behavior of the Czechs and the Czechoslovak government. It was recognizable that they treated the Slovak national politicians in a friendly manner and there also appeared articles that the Transcarpathia Russian-Ukrainian populations were leaning towards the idea of secession

from the Czechoslovak state. Then the headlines became thicker and appeared on the front pages and you did not have to be an expert to realize that we were facing a crisis with these developments. When the news of atrocities committed against the German population became known, we knew that the crisis was coming to its climax. This we agreed on in the dormitory lounge room.

Then I suggested to a colleague Laci Feketekúthy that we walk down the Wilhelm Strasse and take a look around to see if there was any sign of the impending events. This is what happened; in the evening around 11 pm we walked along the deserted streets and we passed the Chancellery and the Foreign Ministry building a couple of times. Then suddenly a group of Mercedes cars arrived. A car door opened suddenly and alighting was a two-meter tall, bearded Dörnberg, the Chief of Protocol, whose picture was well-known in the newspapers. He then helped his guest, who was in evening dress, top hat in hand stood for a moment on the sidewalk. You couldn't fail to realize that it was Hácha the new president of the Czechoslovak state. We only saw them a moment or two, because Dörnberg soon ushered the president into the Foreign Ministry, whose gates suddenly opened...

The cars were gone and we decided that to continue to wait was not worthwhile and we went home.

The next day the newspapers reported in large headlines that an agreement was made and Hitler proclaimed the 'Czech-Moravian Patronage'. 'Der Angriff' an afternoon Berlin paper reported that Slovakia proclaimed its independence and celebrated the independence of Transcarpathia under Ukraine signature.

The second edition of the Angriff reported that Hungarian troops in conjunction with German troops crossed the Trianon border and approached the Carpathians.

From German and Hungarian sources, we gained the impression that at this time, the Hungarian government out maneuvered the German plans and it appeared that the German propaganda machine was caught unprepared by the Transcarpathian case which was only significant to us.

I thought of other aspects because on the occasion of the Hungarian National Day of 15th March I entertained a young captain of Hitler's bodyguard, who attended as a guest to our ceremony. This year I did not make the oration but management called me to accompany



***Emil Hácha the third
President of
Czechoslovakia from
1938 to 1939***

this young officer. Our conversation of course, soon turned to politics. I suggested to him, that in my opinion, the English and French would exert strong resistance to the German Empire and this raised the threat of war.

The officer did not think much of the English and French resistance. But when I expressed this different opinion he continued that when assessing the world political situation we must take into account the Russian behavior, he said that the German Reich had learned from the First World War and in no way would it want a war on two fronts. In regards the expected Russian behavior he said that I should have noted that in the last few months there has been no articles in German newspapers attacking the Soviet Union.

I thought about this a lot, and I also began to understand why the Germans made a turnaround on the Transcarpathian question. At first I thought that the regard for Hungarians sensitivity contributed to the adoption of policies covering the needs of the Hungarians. Then on the basis of this disclosed information I formed the opinion that perhaps they wanted to look after the sensitivity of the Soviet Union. After all, under the leadership of a Ukrainian Transcarpathian state this would be a Piedmont role when another power would raise the possibility of Ukrainian secession.

(Piedmont was an initial springboard for Italy's unification in 1859–1861, following earlier unsuccessful wars against the Austrian Empire in 1820–1821 and 1848–1849. This process is sometimes referred to as Piedmontisation)

Later on, I had the opportunity to come together with Ukrainian emigrants living in Berlin including a couple of senior officials who confirmed my evolving views. I was very disappointed at their declared opposition to the German government's conduct. They also showed no understanding to our grievances. They stressed that they would need a springboard to create an independent Ukraine and our behavior would only exacerbate the relationship between Ukraine and Hungary if an independent Ukraine were born. Of course, I pointed out that Hungary was the lord over this land for a thousand years, and was infiltrated by the Ukrainians, whom we have called Ruthenian, and were only guest settlers and therefore were not in a position to demand that we give up our natural borders of the Carpathian Mountains.



Ruthenia area in Slovakia claimed by the Ukraine

I was studying the German literature in detail, which dealt with the loss of the First World War the causes and the question of what determined the German foreign policy objectives and problems. It was interesting to learn that the literature had recognized that the German diplomacy stiffness caused much damage. This fact was usually named after Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany's militarist policy, not just the emperor's personality but ultimately the Prussian character which was unbending and had no regard for individual life. The literature recognized this and the new German Foreign Office definitely tried not to commit the mistakes of the past. Later I will return to this issue and try to evaluate. The literature saw the fundamental problem of Germany was to choose between two options. One idea, which was ascribed to the name of Bismarck, can be summarized as an alliance with Eastern Europe, develop as a maritime and colonial policy and ensure the well-being of the population and relocate the displaced people as required. Another possibility was seen to be that the German Empire continues its historical "Drang nach Osten" policy.

After the First World War, these writers felt that this can only be carried out in alliance with the British Empire. The German Emperor Wilhelm II policy failure was caused by these writers that he could not have an agreement with the advancing Russian imperialism towards the Balkans and nevertheless continued his colonial maritime policy and invited a two-front war against its own destiny.

(Drang nach Osten, (German: "Drive to the East"), German policy or disposition to colonize the Slavic lands east of Germany. The term originally referred to the eastward movement of German settlers in the 12th and 13th centuries but was resurrected by Adolf Hitler in the 20th century to describe his plans for acquiring Lebensraum ("living space") for Germans).

National Socialism acting against bolshevism and utilizing the civil forces it is understandable that Hitler thought that alliance with the British Empire would open the door to the east. This is why he concluded a fleet agreement with England. Officially he did not give up the lost colonies, but he let the English leaders to understand that this can be solved by negotiations.

However, when the British Empire - if not formally, but emotionally was in alliance with the US - strongly opposed the German eastern expansion idea, Germany felt the need to

revise its Eastern policy and began to look to the Soviet Union to examine the possibilities of coexistence.

The reaction of England and France was very strong in their opposition to the Czech - Moravian Protectorate and the British diplomacy left no doubt to the Germans that they will oppose any further steps. Large sections of the German leadership still believed that the resistance of the West was not going to degenerate to the declaration of war. However, the German diplomacy began to look for the right balance and therefore entered into negotiations with the Soviet Union. It can be concluded that, in this respect, the German diplomacy seemed flexible as if they sought to abandon the militarist policy by weapons of diplomacy.

But steps had to be taken towards England, which would have indicated to them that the German policy was ready for an about face but the moves against the east was not finalized. This idea was emphasized by Hitler when he renounced the limited English-German naval armaments agreement.

As a registered journalist I was invited to a group outing, which was held in Berlin for accredited journalists. According to the program, a special train departed in the evening took us journalists to Wilhelmshaven. The long train carriages were sleepers so we arrived really well-rested the next morning at the lovely north German port city. On the train we learned the details of the program. To begin we participated in launching ceremony of the battleship *Tirpitz*. This giant was I think a 20-thousand-ton ship and was launched with the traditional Champagne by a grandchild of Bismarck. To me a boy from the Plains of Hungary this was a really special experience. I paid attention to the fate of the ship during the war. Eventually I discovered that it sank in 1945. For me this later became a memento in Australia when I saw a film about the ceremony in which I myself had participated. The second part of the program was that there were three or four submarines open for inspection by the very interested journalists.

02 November 1936: Lay down on Slipway 2 at the Kriegsmarine Werft shipyard in Wilhelmshaven. Construction number S 128.

01 April 1939: Launched. Christened by Frau von Hassell, daughter of Grand Admiral Tirpitz.

25 February 1941: At 1140 hours, the *Tirpitz* is commissioned under Captain Karl Topp.

09 March 1941: Leaves Wilhelmshaven for Kiel.

Early in the afternoon we took part in a mass rally at which Hitler spoke. This time I could not complain that I could not see much in the large crowd because the guests were placed directly behind the lectern in the grandstand and I was lucky enough to watch the events a few steps behind Hitler. Next to me, I remember well, sat the Daily Mail correspondent. We spoke German and he was in a quite nervous mood when Hitler announced the termination of the fleet Convention. The mass meeting details were no different from the one I had known before. The

following little scene was interesting. A strong offshore wind almost blew the little paper sheets which were used by Hitler during his speech for record of more important details and so occasionally he would look at them when another turning point took place. The local Gauleiter noticed that the wind may cause difficulties and he dropped to his knees so that the audience could not see him and offered Hitler the letter dagger who accepted this help and he used the dagger to play with the effects of the wind.

After the celebrations in the evening, we participated in a great meal and we re-occupied our places on the sleepers and the train raced back. In the morning I arrived at the Friedrich Strasse station and soon I was at home in the dormitory.

The Berlin atmosphere was now definitely stressed. The newspapers had begun to publish anti-Polish articles and everyone felt that Germany's Great Eastern problem 'the Polish Corridor' was close to a solution. The western rigid attitude and the guarantee given to the Poles raised the possibility of war, although the general public almost did not want to consider any of this. The First World War was still too close to the people and even the

THE BATTLESHIP *TIRPITZ*

Compiled by José M. Rico



The battleship *Tirpitz* conducting trials in the Baltic Sea during the fall of 1941.



Tirpitz Badge

The *Tirpitz*, second and last battleship of the *Bismarck* class, was the largest warship built in Germany. She was commissioned on February 1941, and afterwards went to the Baltic to conduct sea trials. At the beginning of 1942, she was sent to Trondheim, Norway in order to repel a possible allied invasion, and to attack the Russia-bound Arctic convoys. As part of the "Fleet in being", her mere presence forced the Allies to maintain a considerable force in Scapa Flow that could have been otherwise employed in other theatres of operations. In July 1942, she was indirectly responsible for the destruction of convoy PQ-17 without firing a single shot. In September 1943, while anchored in Kåfjord/Altafjord, she was attacked by British midget submarines and put out of action for the first time. Later subjected to continuous aerial bombings, the *Tirpitz* was finally sunk off Håkøya Island near Tromsø on 12 November 1944 after being hit by 5.4-ton "Tallboy" bombs.

National Socialist movement had a famous poster with an image of Hitler with the inscription: "Adolf Hitler the front-line soldier knows war. He is for peace" ...

On the other hand, the national feelings overshadowed the people and they simply imagined that in this crisis England would eventually just give in. The movement's political party was increasingly overshadowed by national issues and became one with the people. In this mood the country celebrated Adolf Hitler's 50th birthday. We knew that there would be a large military parade on the wide road of the Unter den Linden at Tiergarten, the heart of the Siegesseule, the Franco-German war memorial column.



Unter den Linden at Tiergarten

The news leaked that thousands of people will march along with major battle units and this review will demonstrate the readiness of the empire.

Heading the given advice, I tried at six o'clock in the morning to find a place along the road. I managed to get a place in the third or fourth row almost opposite to the platform from which the Leader will receive the salute.

The parade was really on a big scale. The fully armed troops marched in the endless rows. Amongst the infantry were Austrian troops. The standard of their appearance was a little

lax when compared to discipline of the Prussians. The crowd welcomed them very warmly but a Prussian near me remarked with a smile: ***'we will teach them how to parade'...*** The large forces of armored vehicles were greeted with special warmth by the crowd and their pride reached a high when the new German air force airplanes roared over us. Before we dispersed, another Prussian hit the nail on the head when he stated that this was not just parade, but the chief reviewing the army...

We Hungarians, after barely a week of the parade, were interested in the visit of the new Hungarian Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki to Berlin. I heard a lot about Pál Teleki from my father as they were really good friends and sometimes, they met and often changed exchanged their political views. I knew that Teleki was very averse to the German National Socialist regime and was aware of the dangers that the Germans meant to the Hungarian State. But basically he accepted Gömbös's basic tenet that a strong Central Europe can only be provided by the geographic forces of the Rome-Berlin axis. It was clear to him that the success of our revisionist efforts depends on the ability to break down the strength of the French led Little Entente. ***'The Little Entente was an alliance formed in 1920 and 1921 by Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia with the purpose of common defense against Hungarian revision and the prevention of a Habsburg restoration. France supported the alliance by signing treaties with each member country.'***

This is why he was a supporter of the Berlin-Rome line of politics. ***'Rome-Berlin Axis, Coalition formed in 1936 between Italy and Germany. An agreement formulated by Italy's foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano informally linking the two countries was reached on October 25, 1936.'***

On the other hand, he was able to talk a lot about his American impressions and he was convinced if a new war broke out the Germans would eventually fall against the excessive material powers of the maritime countries.



Count Pál János Ede Teleki de Szék was prime minister of the Kingdom of Hungary from 19 July 1920 to 14 April 1921 and from 16 February 1939 to 3 April 1941.

He was a supporter of the careful conservative Hungarian political leadership and he hoped that the Hungarian situation would be secured by the introduction of a "Transylvania"

policy to the Anglo-Saxon and German powers. At the time there were serious grounds for such a policy. The US policy of isolation was voted into a law of neutrality and at the time nobody believed that the British Empire and the US interest could become remote from each other.

(“Premier Pal Teleki, himself a Transylvanian sought Axis support for territorial revision in Romania while curbing extreme rightist parties within the country. In his letter to Hitler he stressed Hungary’s inviolable sovereignty.”)

Obviously, it was a relief to the Hungarian diplomacy that unexpectedly we were not against German demands but with the request to help preserve the neutrality of South-East Europe if war would take place. At the time it seemed that Britain had accepted the idea of Hungarian neutrality. We were not guaranteed like Romania and in the background assured the St. James accredited diplomats that after the war they would not allow another Trianon....

‘All Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the United Kingdom are formally accredited at the Court of St James’s.’

This was the basis of the joint statement that was published in connection with the Teleki's visit. Both countries expressed the hope that peace is maintained in Southeast Europe. For the Germans, this was very much needed, since in the case of a Western war it was vital for them to receive farm and oil supplies.

Teleki also visited the college. We stood in a half circle in the Great Hall and the Prime Minister talked to all of us individually. When he got to me in the circle I introduced myself and he responded that he recognized me as the son of his old friend from Szeged. He inquired about the details of my work and immediately pointed out that it would be important to get to know the Italian system too and assured me that he would back any future request for an Italian scholarship.

The last time I saw him was the first of May, when he stood near Hitler in the middle section of the Olympic stadium. Hitler inspected the youth and he was asked to attend because Pál (Paul) Teleki was well known as the Chief Scout in Hungary and had great interest in the youth.

At this time a Polish delegation was in Berlin and visited the University. They were university students and they attended a function of the Humboldt University. We invited them to our boarding school for afternoon tea to acknowledge the Polish-Hungarian border. It gave me the opportunity to get to know the Polish position as well. This time you

could hear that the German claim against them was quite modest and the primary goal was to join the Free City of Danzig to the Empire and join the city with a direct secure Autobahn bridge.

(‘The Free City of Danzig was a semi-autonomous city-state that existed between 1920 and 1939, consisting of the Baltic Sea port of Danzig and nearly 200 towns in the surrounding areas. It was created on 15 November 1920 in accordance with Treaty of Versailles after the end of World War I)’

The members of the Polish delegation, however, did not want to hear of such an agreement and explained to us that this would only be the first step on the German part and anyway this offer was associated with the fact that Poland had to forego the English guarantee to protect Poland and they were not willing to consider a German-Polish military alliance proposal either. In other words, the Poles reinforced my perception that German foreign policy was heading for an impasse and increasingly the possibility of war in the west was a possibility. The Western diplomacy, however, did not realize that German-Russian reconciliation could possibly occur. But it was this that eventually sealed the fate of Poland. The spring was slowly turning into summer and I had a chance to take a trip beyond Germany's borders. My legal trainee salary was transferred each month and was accounted for in German Mark current account. This meant that whenever I asked the Reichsbank they released the full amount of currency at the official exchange rate. This had a big advantage because at this time the German Mark was quoted abroad at low exchange rate. I borrowed 500 German Marks from a good friend of mine and for 300 Marks bought British Pounds Sterling. I purchased a round trip airline ticket from Lufthansa for trip to Copenhagen and I spent a weekend in Denmark. I went to the famous Tivoli, admired the royal palace, the Rodin sculpture depicting a sea mermaid in the harbor and I even traveled to the famous "Hamlet" castle ... I managed so well with British pounds that almost the entire amount remained.

On the way back I exchanged my remaining British pounds on the tourist market so when I came back to the Tempelhof airport I had approximately 700 Marks. So, I returned the 500 German Marks to my friend and there was still enough so I could buy a portable gramophone for my Ica, because we were now approaching the time when I would be returning home.



Hamlet Castle and Rodin Little Mermaid sculpture

But then something happened to me that stirred up the waters around me now and haunted me later and exposed me to attacks.

My old friends István (Stephen) Arató and Béla Csikós Nagy arrived in Berlin for a few weeks short visit. I do not remember exactly, but one of them brought along a book whose title was "Szürke Könyv (Grey Book)" which was written by Ivan Lajos a university lecturer from Pécs. The author was well-known for his royalist views and so it was understandable that he took an anti-German sentiment. His work was essentially a large-scale propaganda attack against Germany and was intended to put the Hungarian foreign policy towards an anti-German line.

We found the writing incredibly primitive and the author appeared not to be aware of the German conditions.

His fundamental premise was that the German population was vehemently opposed to the government's policies and the mood of the population was such that the leadership had to prepare for an insurgency.

He wrote that the German economic life was on the brink of bankruptcy and economic collapse.

Militarily he surmised that the structure of the German army was still far from being able to take part in a war and he highlighted that the tanks were covered in light plates and were only camouflaged propaganda machines.

He believed that the British Empire and France were ready for war and their fight would be supported by both the Soviet Union and the US. Separately he reported the Soviet air force and infantry troop's parade against the German Reich.

He imagined the future war to be fought in the trenches like in the First World attacking the impenetrable Maginot line.

We who worked at the Berlin Collegium Hungaricum found all this incomprehensible and based on personal experience with the knowledge of German conditions were convinced of its falsehood. In the case of a possible war and the role of Hungary we thought it irresponsible to expose the country to a situation that would constitute an invitation justifying a German occupation.

The next afternoon the three of us were guests of Vilmos (William) Szigethy and Vili once again outdid himself, a small beer keg was on tap and we had an enjoyable conversation. Naturally the Grey Book from Budapest was discussed and we laughed at the clearly false assertions. William Szigethy then declared that this cannot be left without action and said that we as Hungarian students in Berlin it was our duty to answer this propaganda document. We were not too keen on this course of action as we tried to stay away from politics and also pointed out that this would cost money and that we did not have. Then William Szigethy stated that we could write the book and he would cover the cost of the work and the dissemination of the book. This sounded much better and in a good mood we undertook to do so.

When we thought seriously about the slightly light consideration of the undertaking we noted that we only had a short time available to us to collect the resources needed for the work. That did not seem too easy, because the only value of the book by Ivan Lajos was that every page was filled with quotes from the press and books, and this material cannot be disregarded, if we wanted to give an answer to the book.

Then one of us had the idea to invite the German propaganda ministry for help in obtaining the source material. We thought that the answer to an anti-German propaganda document would be in their best interest.

I therefore visited one of the ministerial counselors at the propaganda ministry. As a registered journalist working in Berlin I could do this smoothly and gave him our request. The answer was very cooperative and he brought to our attention that they were aware of the book by Ivan Lajos. For us what was most interesting was that they said that this Hungarian book was almost a literal translation of an anti-German book originally published in Paris. The Parisian author of the book was a German living in exile. Ivan Lajos did not make reference to this book and it was marked as the author's own writing.

The ministry willingly undertook to collect the requested resources and told me that they will be available within three days. And so it happened. At the time and place designated he showed us to a large meeting room with a long table and the resources were grouped and

spread out: newspapers, books, texts, etc. Our work was therefore very simplified. We partitioned the sections between ourselves and started copying the material, and compared the quotes in the book with the original quotes. We finished this stage of our work in two days.

We decided that we will endeavor not to be controversial with the author, just to show what it has become clear to us during the research that 90 percent of the quotes were distorted or the facts do not conform to the questions raised. Given the fact that the Hungarian libel laws were strict we were very careful to only disclose forgeries and misstatements in our response.

The hand written manuscript was soon finished. William Szigethy provided a typist and so in about two weeks the manuscript was ready for the printer.

I wrote a preface for the book for my friend William, which emphasized that the response was the project of the Berlin National Front and the Hungarian colony without German financial assistance. We also wanted to exclude charges of profiteering so the profit on William's book would be donated to the governor's wife's winter emergency fund.

There was very little politics in the book, but this was generally written by me.

I pointed out that the German question was over the last thousand years a problem of the Hungarians in their national struggles and obliges us to deal with this sensitive issue carefully and not let the government be pressured in the street.

In regard to issues of a possible war I did not deny that the possibility of a war existed, but I explained my view that the Second World War would not be a trench war, because - as I wrote - the armored and air forces carried enough weight to achieve a decision. I pointed out that if the fronts were hopelessly frozen the maritime powers' preponderance of forces would likely lead to the German Empire's downfall again.

When the German propaganda ministry read the text after its release and were probably not completely satisfied - it must be emphasized that the book was published by William Szigethy without censorship. They obviously took notice of it without any objections. On the other hand they did not publicize it and did not even thank us for our efforts. This of course was not sought by us. Thus, the manuscript was with the printer and we writers turned our attention to our own affairs. For me it was the end of the academic year and I had plans to tour Germany to become familiar with the different landscapes of the German Reich. As a journalist I was granted appropriate authorization to visit listed destinations and was granted first-class tickets and I really enjoyed the study tour. I went to Hamburg,

Cologne, and Frankfurt. I remember well that on the way to Munich, I had to wait at the station -Kempten (Allgäu) for a couple of hours, but I was pretty tired so I didn't do any sightseeing but spent my time at the station... Those few hours in Kempten I later remembered because in the years 1947-49 I spent two years in exile here ... I came back to Berlin in early August and then we were already aware that war was imminent. The German population still did not know or did not want to accept the facts. I remember that on the way back to Berlin a young woman was facing me in the dining car and when our conversation turned to politics and I said that England would not give in on the Polish situation and that war was imminent she practically froze and I was sorry that I had discussed the matter. We of course talked about little else and the young embassy officials and the journalists discussed the impending war and the Hungarian fate in this situation. One afternoon we walked with Bandi (Andy) Gellért on the Unter den Linden and discussed the political situation. He was of the view that Germany would eventually lose the war. I too thought this possible. In turn we agreed that we must harness the opportunities presented by the war to further promote the revision of the Trianon Treaty and in particular raise the issue of Transylvania. . It was clear to us that if we were to drift towards the German side we may be destined to someday share in the misery of war. This raises the question whether we can put aside the revisionist politics and focus our attention only to preserve neutrality. This was addressed by Bandi (Andy) Gellért when he replied in the negative and we could only conclude that bitter years were ahead of us but we must accept our fate.... My summer study trip had one more stop to make. I was planning to travel to East Prussia and look at Königsberg, the city of Kant and on the way back I looked around Danzig, which had already been at the center of world politics. I spent a day in Königsberg and in the old medieval city I felt the Drang nach Osten German spirit "***(Drive to the East)***", ***German policy to colonize the Slavic lands east of Germany***). Danzig similarly raised these feelings as in Lübeck where the German Hanseatic city's patina was prominent in the city's image. Today this was this was represented by the swastika flags and the SS soldiers walking the streets.

Danzig was a German city and this alone did not mean anything special, but suddenly I noticed that amongst the walking uniform units there were members of the Berlin units. I an "old Berliner" recognized them immediately as the uniform sleeves had the writing: ' Reichsstandarte Adolf Hitler – Berlin'.



In other words, this meant that the military occupation was practically finished. I traveled to the famous Zoppot (Sopot) a spa resort and casino. It was a very hot summer day and I swam in the Baltic Sea. I've been to Swinemünde (Swinoujście) early summer when my sister Kata made a visit to Berlin and the surrounding areas but then it was still a very peaceful environment. Now in Zoppot the Polish and German reconnaissance planes circulated and the white tuft smoke of anti-aircraft guns appeared in the sky ... the first shots of World War II.



Zoppot - North Riviera

When I arrived back in Berlin-the news that the printing of the book was completed greeted me and could now appear on the market titled „Válasz a Szürke Könyvre” ("Answer to the gray book" the title of the 75-page booklet. We decided with my friend William that I take with me on my way home a hundred copies and I was to give them to newspaper editors who were willing to distribute them.



'Answer to the Grey Book' by István Arató, Béla Csikós-Nagy and Béla Török

(This book was placed on the index of banned books in 1945 by the communists.)

I remember that I left for home on August 18 which was Ica's name-day. I took with me the gift of a portable gramophone for her and was hoping to see her in a few days and even if late be able to celebrate her name-day together. At this point I did not say goodbye to Berlin because this trip was only a special holiday to finish at the end of November and my work was not fully completed. So I left everything in my room as I expected to return shortly. However, the world of politics disrupted my program.

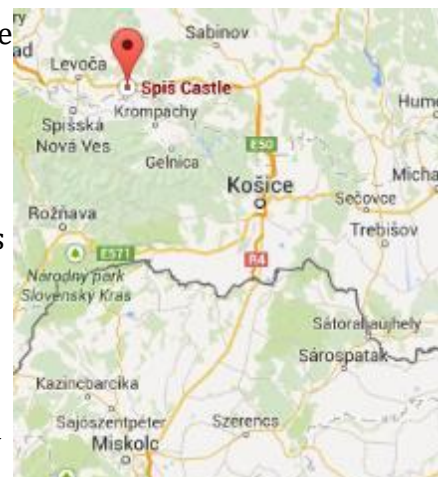
I started from the Friedrich Strasse railway station on the train to Budapest. I bought a sleeper ticket and before going to bed and I met my travelling partner because these cars were double bedroom coaches. It turned out that he was a member of the Ministerial staff of the German Ministry of Economic Affairs who was to join the economic delegation in Bucharest (Rumania). Understandably, the conversation soon turned to politics. I did not deny that I thought that we are on the eve of a war and this shocked my partner and noted his look of disbelief. He was of the firm belief that in the last moment the British government would relent. I expressed my strong belief that the British simply did not want

to allow the German Reich to acquire additional areas and would stand in the way. From his behavior I saw that he thought I was probably a representative of the anti-German Hungarians. I told him that for my part I was not a politician and for the last two years I was in Berlin studying and I feel very sympathetic to Germany's efforts to overthrow the Versailles system and I felt that our countries were running in parallel. He calmed down and again stressed that he still hoped that the British will eventually give in. For me this conversation again highlighted the current mood of Germany. I arrived in Budapest and I immediately visited the editor of Virradat (Dawn) weekly paper. I thought that this paper would be interested in distributing the booklet. Indeed, that's what happened. Gabor Bornemissza immediately saw me and assured me that they will take an active part in the distribution of book. Finances were not mentioned, because I told him that these issues should be negotiated with William Szigethy. The Virradat ran an editorial in the Monday edition and praised the book and similarly the rest of our newspaper in Budapest carried varying lengths of commentary on the publication of the book. I don't know about how the distribution went. The historical events soon superseded the novelty of the book and when the German tanks in encirclement battles crushed the Polish resistance in a matter of weeks Louis Ivan's tin plate German combat vehicles lost their reality.

I contacted my good mother immediately and we spent a few lovely hours together. Passing through Budapest I met my father who was with my sister at Bábolna. He wanted me to spend a few days. For many years he represented the city of Szeged in the August 20 celebrations and he had become accustomed to visit Budapest, but now he arrived from Balassagyarmat where he had a now well-established notarial office. We spent St. Stephen's Day evening at the Hungaria coffee house where he attended every year on this day of celebration. At our table we had the company of Ida Turay and her husband Pista Békefy. We enjoyed a very nice fireworks display and we did not think that this was the last peacetime St. Stephen's Day fireworks display to illuminate the city. Of course, there was talk of the book Louis Ivan and our response. Pista asked a lot of questions and then I pointed out in more detail that the opponents of the war had not yet fully developed and the precarious nature of Russian behavior was touched upon, and that the German and Russian governments were still negotiating with each other ... This made Pista very skeptical. A few days later, when the German-Russian Convention came to light Pista Békefy called me and admitted that when I was in Berlin it appears that I had received a good insight...

The next day, my father continued on his way to Bábolna and I headed to Miskolc to meet my Ica and greet her family who waited at the Miskolc railway station and my father-in-law to be who had a great sense of humor did not wait for any formality. After all we were independent young people and had made our commitments separately. In contrast, he introduced himself: *I am who you'll be ...* We were amused and any possible tension was dissolved. I was very fond of both my father-in-law and my mother-in-law to be. I just called her Mom my only problem was how I could say no to a second helping of food. Her cooking was so great that it was very difficult to refuse. However my meeting with Ica was true love. We toured Miskolc and the surrounding area in a day or two and we were alone together a lot talking and making plans. Ica this year became a high school teacher and she was occupied with the problem of finding a job. The Győr local convent offered her a job. So, she had to leave the family home in Miskolc, which was pretty painful but Győr was close to Bábolna where my sister Kata lived and it seemed that at least she was close to the new extended family and if she encountered difficulties could rely on them. Since it was the beginning of September we decided with Ica to travel to Bábolna together and from there go onto Győr and get to know more closely the conditions offered before finally deciding. So, a few days later we arrived at Bábolna where Ica and I were received lovingly by the family.

We looked around Győr. Ica did not like the job and found the accommodation offered was very primitive especially after a four-years at the Horthy College in Szeged which was really modern and provided first-rate amenities. She urged her parents to help her to look for another solution, there was some hope as the family had good relations with the convent leadership at Miskolc since my father-in-law to be was revered for decades as an excellent teacher at the Frater George Catholic high school. Ica's family was of Szepesség descent. Her father's family lived there for centuries in the high mountains of Tátra and her mother's family was from Gömör (Szepesi Érchegység part of the Carpathian Mountains and was born in Salgótarján Hungary). The Treaty of Trianon tore them from their homeland after the First World War and my father-in-law refused to take the oath before the Czechoslovak



Migrated from Szepesvaralja to Miskolc

authorities and opted to maintain his Hungarian citizenship and fled to Miskolc as refugees. We were still in Bábolna when in late August news of the Russian-German non-aggression pact became known and which meant that Germany was given a free hand by the Russians to resolve the issue and obviously an agreement was made to divide Poland between them. The English guarantee was now actionable and I was convinced that it is now only a matter of days before a new German action. At the same time I received mail via Berlin an invitation to the German Reich Nuremberg political party events. As a Berlin accredited journalist I was waiting for it. However I was sure that the Parteitag der Frieden (Congress of Peace) was now to be cancelled. We got up early the first of September. We had a program but I somehow felt that the time was ripe for events to mature and I expected a German move. I turned on the radio and got a German radio station. They played marching music and occasionally called all German ships in the Eastern Sea to return to a German port. Then the report came that at eight o'clock in the morning a meeting of the German Reich was convened and Hitler spoke. A few hours later we knew that the German attack against Poland had started and that the Second World War had begun. It is with mixed emotions we received news of the event.

We always had a brotherly attitude towards Poland and the German attack recalled the memory of the old national struggles against the Habsburg German imperialism. On the other hand there was some relief that the German Drang nach Osten (drive to the east) was not moving in our direction. The imbalance of power in Europe opened opportunities for our needs. But war and the accompanying sacrifices raised personal fears that affected us subconsciously. Two young German veterinarians who worked as guests in Bábolna were not only party members but they also belonged to the SS. It was interesting to note that they did not have the First World War enthusiasm. In fact, both of them welcomed the news of the German attack very seriously and with reservation. One of them kept repeating that his generation like their fathers in the First World War will fulfill their duty. Ica was then a big badge collector and a few days earlier tried with a kindly smile to get a party badge from one of the veterinarians. Of course, this boy would not comply. On hearing of the news of the war he suddenly took the badge from his chest and gave it to her saying that if she still wanted it, she could have it. Ica could not resist and accepted it for her collection. On September 3rd we said goodbye Bábolna. My father returned to Balassagyarmat, while we were in Budapest waiting for the departure of the fast train to Miskolc. In the afternoon between 4-5 PM we were in the EMKE coffee shop drinking a cup of coffee. At a quarter to

five they turned on the radio for the latest news. The café audience listened in silence to the detail of the fatal events, and when the announcer confirmed that the German government did not meet the British ultimatum, reiterated the English text of the ultimatum: ***Her Majesty's Government, therefore, starting from 5 pm this afternoon sees itself as being at war with the German***



Empire ... Involuntarily the we looked at the clock and it pointed to five o'clock.

We felt the historical significance of these hours and understandably we asked ourselves how the war would affect our personal life. We were full of optimism and then planned for the future and then felt for the first time that history's devil wagon was beginning to sweep us along.

I tried to return to my mother's from the railway station which was in the city and I read somewhere on the Boulevard the latest news that Italy had declared its neutrality in the conflict. This was a surprise. Only a few days ago they signed in Berlin a German-Italian Steel Contract and I could still visualize Ciano the Italian foreign minister driving back with Rudolf Hess from Wilhelm-Strasse the old Reichstag after signing the contract. This however sparked the hope that we too will be spared as we usually followed the Italian government line.

I spent the following days with my mother but I also visited the army barracks and inquired whether I had a place in my battalion if mobilization occurred. They said that it is possible that I would be called as there were some safety measures being put into place. This is what happened and I was called in on September 13. However, my ministry ended September 19 because by that time it was obvious that we (Hungary) can maintain our neutral status.

I also went to the German embassy because I wanted to go back to Berlin, if only for a few days to retrieve all my clothing, personal and study papers that were still in the hostel. In times of war the German Empire was now subject to special entry permits. I gave in my application and they promised to give me an answer probably to permit a short stay in Berlin.

I travelled to Balassagyarmat and visited my father for a few weeks. I discovered this lovely highland town. My father by then had acquired many good friends and at one of the local restaurants I was introduced to some of them. We dined at Balassagyarmat with Jenő

(Eugene) Karsay a csendőr (gendarme military police) Colonel who was the district supervisor. I came to know Jenő as a highly skilled and excellent gendarme officer, but, above all, a good Hungarian man who was full of faith and hope. He talked a lot to me and warmly congratulated me for the booklet "Answer to the gray book". As a soldier he especially liked the part where I stated that the war would not be fought in the trenches but be decided by fast moving armored vehicles and air forces. This is of course was justified by the German-Polish war being currently fought. I told him I owe this to my insight in 1937 when I had the opportunity to seriously study the German literature when translating for our General Staff officers.

I shortened my stay at Balassagyarmat for a week, when I had the opportunity to be together again with my Ica. She went to teach at Győr and examined private students quarters but was still not satisfied with her situation. Eventually she was appointed to Miskolc and so was able to return to the family circle. We then decided that we would officially celebrate our engagement on New Year's Eve with her family, my parents and Ica's beloved aunt Ilu mama the only guests.

After returning to Balassagyarmat the German approval arrived and I was again on the way back to Berlin.

The German capital was quiet and tense. There was a blackout each evening and the entertainment areas were almost empty. The old atmosphere was lacking and the city once again confirmed my opinion that the German people strongly supported the government, but had no illusions regarding the seriousness of the situation.

I had dinner with a colleague at the Kempinsky restaurant. The atmosphere was so depressing that we went home early. My farewell to Berlin was sad.

In Budapest I reported to the Department of Justice and received my assignment. I had to report to the Budapest criminal tribunal. My mother found a room for me in the Új-Lipótváros in Tátra Street and started my life in Budapest.



Tátra Street Új-Lipótváros

Changes in my life during 1940

My first post in the Criminal Court in Budapest was to report to a single judge as a notary. Matters at the district court level which were of a higher degree would go before a single judge, but in fact these cases were not that serious. Still cases that could result in an appeal placed pressure on the judges to thoroughly address all the issues.

The notary's work was undoubtedly as a draftsman, since this position not only meant that you were required to act as a stenographer and write what was heard. The main reason for this was that the regulations did not require the stenographer be a legal professional so that they could be able to write so fast that the minutes were never word for word what was said. If the judge found that the testimony of a sentence could be very important, he called the clerk to write down that part word for word.

The country's difficult situation was characterized by the fact that the notaries were expected to have their own typewriters and to be able to type. There was in the office two typists, who you could ask for typing help if necessary, but if you wanted to work effectively, it certainly was important to ensure one's typing skills to meet the requirements. I had learned to type when I was young and my father's law firm had a typewriter and while in Germany I purchased a portable typewriter. So I was well prepared for this part of the work.

My personal life began to evolve. I was accustomed to independent living. I made tea for breakfast and ate lunch in a small restaurant near the court, usually in the company of young colleagues. My friend and former colleague in Berlin, Pista Arató also dined with us and so our relationship was not interrupted.

At that time the office hours were between 9AM-2 PM but often after lunch we went back to the office where the typing work had to be finished. In the evenings I usually finished the day with a dinner of cold cuts.

I still remember vividly that on about the 8th December on the weekend Ica came and visited me in Budapest and we completed the Christmas shopping in snow in the brilliant city center. The peacetime Váci Street and the visions of Apponyi Park and its surrounding are still alive in me today.



Váci Street Apponyi Park now Városliget (City Park)

Christmas was again spent with my parents and my sister's family in Bábolna. Meanwhile, a little girl arrived amongst us called Katinka (daughter of my sister Kata and Béla Csabai) and I became her godfather. After the holidays in company of my parents we arrived in Miskolc on the eve of the New Year. The parents got to know each other and warm relationship developed between them.

The exchange of the rings took place at dinner within a framework of fully restricted family group. We young ones did not love formalities and ahead of the speeches I pulled the ring on Ica's finger. Our parents did not really understand this and scolded us. We in our strong love cared very little about this and after dinner left them and we sought privacy in the next room and enjoyed each other's presence. Our parents stayed at the table talking and planning for our future. Finally, after they noticed silence from our room they peeked in. There was great merriment and laughter because there we sat next to each other on the couch holding hands, head-to-head and sleeping peacefully. We had to listen to this story even after many years...

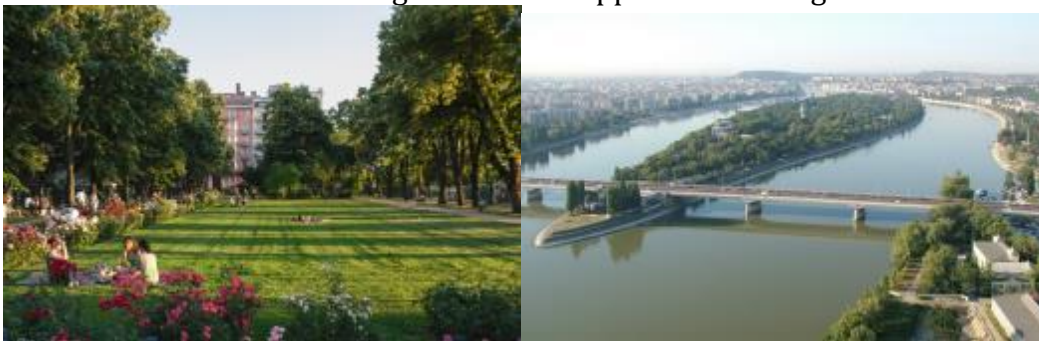
We planned to hold the wedding at the end of the year but we had to overcome many obstacles. My commencement salary did not seem to be sufficient to allow the management of a household and so it was necessary to get Ica a job in Budapest. This however seemed to be quite a difficult matter because there were very few vacancies in the capital. Ica's uncle, Kálmán Bánó a police councilor who was serving in Pécs was in contact with Béla Imrédy who was willing to support Ica's application. I also went to the capital city and discussed the matter with Stephen Bárány the famous swimming competitor (Olympic silver and bronze medalist) who was a personal manager. He convinced me that her application was

pretty hopeless, because there were many other candidates who had been waiting for metropolitan appointments and transfers that preceded Ica's application.

Then it appeared that there was an opening for Ica in Budapest. Due to the war conditions the Government set up a Price-Control Office and was looking for tax inspectors who were accomplished with commercial arithmetic. Ica was a middle school teacher of mathematics and physics major and several other employees there had similar qualifications.

My father knew Bálint Kacsóh the then Government Price commissioner and he saw no problem in the appointment for Ica. The salary was much higher than the starting salary for a teacher and so plans for a civil marriage became more realistic.

We found an apartment building under construction in Pozsony Street. On the third floor was a studio apartment which fitted our budget. At those times new apartments were almost unaffordable for people starting out. However we thought that as a first step the key was to locate our first home relatively close to our offices. I went to the lawyer's office, where the leases were arranged and thus became the first major tenant of this apartment which was still under construction. The apartment was not large. It was sold as a one bedroom, hall and small kitchen and we later found that getting our furniture in was very difficult. However, the area was very nice. From our balcony you could see St. Stephen's Park and later we often walked along the Danube opposite the Margaret Island.



St István (Stephen's) Park, Margit (Margaret) Island

Ica moved up to Budapest. We felt guilty that Ica had to terminate her job before the end of the convent school year, but the sudden opportunity of getting the job at the Government Price Commission could not be missed. Temporarily she found accommodation at the House for Teachers.

Her office was near the Buda side of the Lánchíd (Chain Bridge) so we could have lunch together in a Lipótváros restaurant.

I was not very satisfied with my office position. I was assigned to work with Judge Ferenc (Francis) Nagy who was very nice and friendly and later we kept in contact with him but he was a bit stubborn. The contrast between us was not very appropriate for the system about which I have already written a few words. In summary my position as a clerk required capturing and summarizing the testimonies given. This occasionally failed to meet what he perceived to be the spirit of the judgment. In particular, in cases where an appeal was likely Ferenc Nagy often requested that I amend the summary in some detail to reflect what he said was the spirit of the hearing. Often this was a matter of perception and evaluation. A few times I accepted his good judgment but there were times when I debated it with him because I felt that his attitude was not fully covered by the reality of the case.

I was a pretty stubborn person myself and I did not want our disagreements to affect our personal relationships. It was therefore hard to request a transfer and Ferenc Nagy did not think of a transfer because he was basically satisfied with my work. It occurred to me that a short six-week military exercise would be the best solution. I loved military service and it would be a holiday for me and taking into account the upcoming wedding it would be not so easy to break away from home in the future.

I therefore visited the barracks and discussed the situation with the replacement battalion commander. I was consigned to the armored car group which was in a state of full readiness. The commander made an interesting offer. The first mechanized brigade was then taking shape including the formation of the traffic division under a brigade commander. The commander was Ervin Hollósy who I had met much earlier. The opportunity to be transferred to them had risen. The commander immediately called Ervin who gladly accepted my application. We struck a deal that I would soon be called in.

On May 10 1940 Ica and I took a trip to Balassagyarmat to visit my father. On the same day, the Germans began a large offensive in the west and by noon it was clear that the German armored and air forces provided further evidence of the possibility of a moving war. My father and his friends in Balassagyarmat gave us a warm welcome and we spent a few nice days together.

By the time we arrived back to Budapest the call-up was waiting for me and I said goodbye to my boss who was not very happy but was understanding in noting that military service was required. I reported to Ervin Hollósy with the belief that military service of six weeks lay ahead of me. A few days later it became clear that I was quite wrong, because my position and the overall situation did not mean a few weeks of training.

The government obviously saw that the German forces were fully tied up in the west and it was assumed that the British and French forces did not want to be exposed in Eastern Europe and Hungary had the opportunity to raise the Transylvanian question and this would require some military posturing. I think it was the 20th May when the mechanized brigade took part in a parade. To our great surprise Miklós Horthy viewed us. The visit was very impressive and I saw him for the first time as I was part of the new motorized mobile forces, now this was a real armored division.

A few days later after the viewing, the brigade was on its way and the village of Acsa was the first stop.

At this military maneuver towards Transylvania, I was introduced to the task of traffic regulation for the division. I was a platoon commander. I was assigned 12 motorcyclists and had a car at my disposal. The challenge was that at the road nodes the traffic was redirected to different side roads. The entire mechanized brigade was many kilometers in length and the traffic was directed using parallel roads in order to avoid any congestion. The accommodation also had to be controlled to allow orderly access for the units.

Our brigade was assigned accommodation in the Zichy Acsa castle. The Zichy family was not at that time in the castle and was a very convenient placement. The manor house had many guest rooms and there was a separate room for each officer. Placing the crew was satisfactory in various buildings. We stayed in Acsa two to three weeks. This period of time was filled with the receipt of additional equipment and further training of the crew. In addition we received the triple vaccination and we received identity necklaces which had to be worn by all.



The Zichy Mansion is an eclectic style manor house

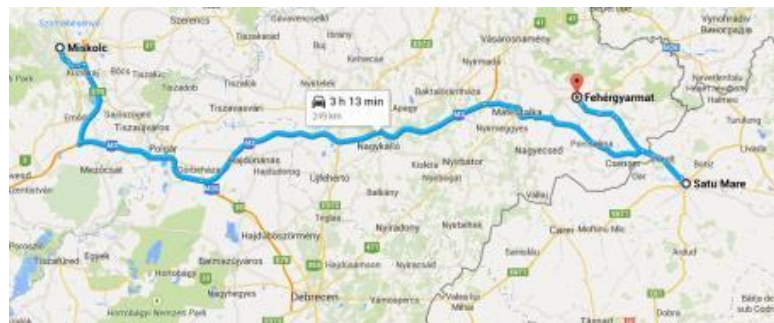
We officers also figured out that we would host our relatives one weekend. Laci Halápi was the first commander and he was a married man. His wife joined him and was a chaperone

for Ica when visiting us and we managed to spend a nice evening together. But Ica was ailing with suspected appendicitis and had to return to Budapest for medical attention. Before I had heard any news of Ica's medical examination our brigade was suddenly on the move and the brigade marched through Miskolc and my platoon had to ensure a smooth transit through the city. As we were on the road leading to the city center I stopped my car to check on one of the motorbike riders I suddenly realized that Ica in the company of her mother were passing on the sidewalk. I immediately rushed to them and learned in a few minutes at my disposal that the examination established appendicitis and Ica went home to her parents. They were on their way to the hospital to set a date for the operation. They were very surprised by the encounter and the view of the military parade. By then we knew the target of the eastern border zone. Our unexpected encounter was gratifying but was also worrying. We had no time to speak in full but I had to say goodbye to them and the brigade moved on...



Miskolc Street Scape

Eventually we reached the border opposite Szatmárnémet (Satu Mare Rumania) at Fehérgyarmat and it was decided that this village would accommodate our division. Our Company was to find accommodation here. The placement officer reported that they had found only four beds and the crew had to be located in a nearby barn. The brigade headquarters was at the center



Map showing route from Miskolc to Fehérgyarmat

of this village close to us because we were in direct contact with the command of the corps. We stayed in Fehérgyarmat peacefully but under some tension and the news only reached us very sporadically. We heard that in the end the Germans scored a huge victory on the Western Front and the news also arrived that Russia had sent an ultimatum to Romania and started to enforce their claims by military means.

I had then a nice few days off from things of a military nature. The brigade received an NSU motorcycle for trial and Ervin Hollósy had to submit a report on the operation of the motorcycle. Ervin decided that we should set off on the motorcycle for 3-4 days touring Transcarpathia.

We also brought a mechanic with us. The motorcycle handled the Carpathian mountainous terrain, mountain streams and narrow paths well and there was no trouble.

We travelled to the Hungarian-Polish border and we truly toured the Verecke ancient way ... I still



NSU 251 or WH 1940 Motorcycle



Verecke ancient way

remember some sections of the landscape. The population was mostly friendly to us and we often bought food from their homes.

The Hungarians regarded it as the western gateway of the Kingdom of Hungary. The Hungarian poet Andre Ady used it as a symbol of modernism and Westernization in his poem I am the

Son of Gog and Magog:

By Verecke's ancient route I came,

In my ear ancient Magyar songs still blaze,

I am free to break through at Dévény?

With modern songs fit for modern days?

Meanwhile, we waited and hoped that something was about to happen. Then we learned that the government began negotiations with Romania. They wanted to prove that Hungary at least for now did not want to resort to military action and so they ordered that some of the troops could take authorized "harvest leave". I received two weeks leave, not on a "harvest" basis but that I could visit my bride to be in hospital.

By the time I arrived in Miskolc Ica was past the surgery which went well and was convalescing at home.

We went for a swim a few times in the local swimming pool and so when I said goodbye to Ica and the relatives again I did not have to worry about her. They however were afraid for me hoping that matters do not take a military direction...

We spent a few quiet weeks but the waiting in Fehérgyarmat was nerve racking. Basically the crew had to be in constant readiness as we were near the border and the main task of the officers was to keep the troops busy. We engaged them in mainly theoretical training, and we discussed map reading and traffic control problems. We had warm summer days, a real heat wave in August so we organized marches near the banks of the Tisza and the mood of the troops was boosted by bathing and playing. They sang loudly during these sessions and every one was waiting for developments.

We the reserve officer candidates lived together in shared accommodation. In the evening we had dinner together. We were lucky that one of the hotel chefs of the Hungária Hotel serving with us so every night a first-class dinner was prepared for us.

Laci Halápi was the section commander. I knew that he was of Jewish descent. They owned the famous downtown Halápi pharmacy. Laci's father had in 1919 distinguished himself against the communist revolution and the family had already been a long time Christian. His wife was a Christian and we did not believe that he had a significant problem. He was a good friend of R. Wolfgang of German decent who fitted in well with Laci and no conflict ever arose between them.

Laci later proved that he was a good Hungarian on the banks of the river Don. But I will recall this event later.

Joseph Czakó was the commander of the fourth division. Joseph and I were volunteers and the old friendship also tied us together.

The four of us lived in a warm fellowship and Ervin Hollósy the commander who was often in our company.

At the end of August, I think 27th they suddenly sounded the alarm. Live cartridges were distributed and it was clear that the brigade was being readied for attack. At dawn, at three o'clock in the morning the alarm rang and an hour later we directed the units to the border where they occupied their positions. It was no secret that we marched enthusiastically readying for attacks and eagerly waiting for the big moment when the Trianon borders can be breached.

Then suddenly the command came. The troops were ordered to withdraw to their quarters. That is the attack was terminated... The troops were very disappointed with this command as we were actually ready for battle...

It was later revealed that the threat of war was understood by Berlin who wanted to avoid the clash of the Romanian and the

Hungarian forces as it would seriously jeopardize the supply of shipments to them. They had no choice but to accept the role of an arbitrator and this resulted in the birth of the Second Vienna Award.

This caused great joy among us, but many accused Germany of not allowing the return of all of Transylvania and it

hurt a lot that Arad and other Hungarian-inhabited areas remained with Romania. The sorrow gave way to joy because the treaty opened up Kaposvár and the Székelyföld (the land of the Székely) and again our borders followed the Carpathian Mountains...

We were preparing enthusiastically for the march and soon we were ready for the long journey.

The commanders ordered the mechanized brigade who were almost without rest to reach the southern Carpathians within one-week. The work of the traffic control division was extremely enjoyable but difficult. It was very nice because we the motorcyclists were always the first Hungarian soldiers present in the liberated towns and villages. Before anyone could cross the Hungarian and the Romanian border the Hungarian General Staff officers agreed on the orders and gave permission for us to begin.

My passenger car always started the entry and with the motor bikes under my control proceeded to the indicated command hubs and crosswalks, where we could control the cars which were following and which included infantry, armor and artillery formations. The division had four sections and we directed the units into these four sections.

We crossed the border at Satu Mare (Szatmárnémet) but my platoon drove right through the city without stopping. The first real stop was Szászrégen (Reghin). When my car arrived at the Szászrégen Main Square the people had erected a welcome platform and a large crowd was waiting for the arrival of the troops. We were mobbed and almost taken apart and it was difficult to maintain discipline. Our work had only just begun. The Cyclists stood



at the appropriate command crossroads in and directed the various formations towards their designated barracks. Just as we completed our tasks the first troops arrived. Jenő (Eugene) Major the brigade commander was very warmly welcomed by the Hungarian leaders of the town and shortly the parade of the troops in front of the grandstand commenced. It was very hard to watch this scene with dry eyes....the newly formed Honvéd (army) was represented by mostly modern army units and the love and warmth radiated towards them.

I and a couple of my officers were invited to dinner by a Hungarian family and listened to and enjoyed their greetings and joy of their liberation.

But we only had a few hours of rest, because our alarm was set at 3am and by five o'clock our unit was on the road again.

The Romanian population did not act in an unfriendly manner. We were warned that there may be attacks against us but up to this stage we did not experience any. I also talked to a Romanian farmer during a rest period, he was an older man and he still recalled the memory of years spent in the old Austro-Hungarian army.

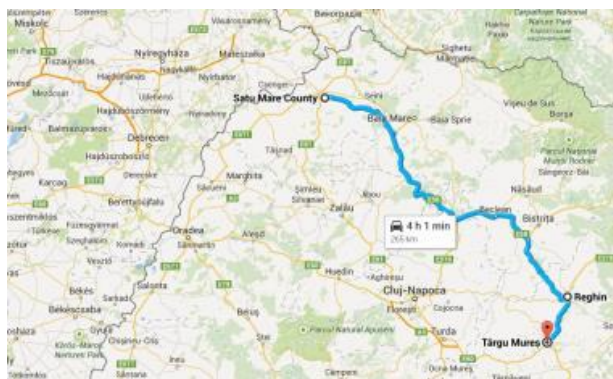
We forced our advance to our second stop at Marosvásárhely (Targu Mures). With pride my platoon was the first unit that entered the city district. The people almost tore us to pieces, they hugged and kissed the soldiers. During these hours the people of this great city were truly unforgettable.

By the time my cyclists took their designated spots and I made sure that I had performed my instructions the first units arrived. I walked over to the opposite side of the host platform and inspected the volunteers retaining the crowds and spoke to our Magyars (Hungarians). The enthusiastic greeting knew no bounds.

An old Hungarian kept repeatedly asking when will the Hussars (light cavalry) come? In my conversation with him, he said that he served with the hussars for some time and so was



Istenhozott (God brought you)



From Satu Mare, Reghin, Targu Mures

waiting for descendants of his old comrades in their red pants and blue uniforms. I tried to explain to him that it was now the modern mechanized troops that marched in front of him and the armored cars and tanks that now replaced the Hussars... It was a great sight, but I



Hussar from First World



Well-wishers welcoming Hungarian troops

also felt regrets we could not hear the clatter of the cavalry horses' hooves.

For dinner I was located in a large restaurant near the main square and amongst many senior military officers I recognized Bela Imrédy (Prime Minister 1938-1939) in uniform of an artillery captain as he was talking to some people.

I could not enjoy this beautiful evening for a long time because the next morning at 5 am we had to be ready to head for Székely Land. I received a briefing at 12 midnight from headquarters and the alarm was set at three o'clock...

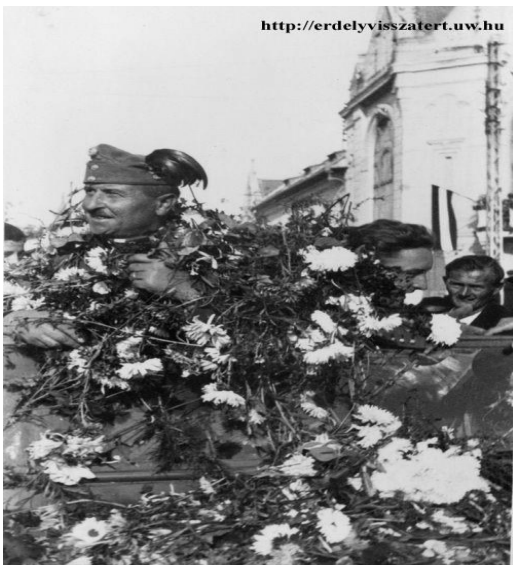
Soon, we progressed in the Székely Land Mountains. Szekelyudvarhely was nearby and then we had to stop near a small village because of the staff officers were not yet ready for the transfer. We stopped in front of the Székely villagers who lined up celebrating and one threw a bugler cake to one of the cars hitting the driver in the face. Jonah from Szeged scraped off the sticky cake and immediately began to devour it. Then he turned to me: **"Tell me Sergeant, what kind of people are these people of Székely?"** I started to give him an academic explanation but Jonah interjected: **"Well, it is certain that they are good people"** ...

(The Székely Land is a historic and ethnographic area in Romania, inhabited mainly by the Székelys, a subgroup of the Hungarian people in eastern Transylvania. Its territory is roughly 16,943 square kilometers and population of 809,000 (2002))

Our waiting time occurred near a group of houses. Sitting at the front of one of the houses was a white-bearded Székely old man. He did not say a word, but when I had a closer look, I could see the tears flowing...and this I could not bear. Up to this stage the cheerful gladness helped to overcome the touching emotional difficulties, but now I began to weep, and I will never be ashamed of this weakness...

My pen is incapable of describing how the people of Szekelyudvarhely welcomed us. The hugs, kisses and tears covered us and we felt that we had returned to our home...

After we completed our task of directing the entrance parade we only we had a short break and we soon turned south and arrived in Barót. This village was selected as the end point of journey. We looked after the accommodation of our crew and "moved" into our designated locations and we did not conceal our delight to Ervin Hollósy commander's announcement that given our almost non-stop assignment as traffic controls we could have a three-day rest.



Welcoming crowds in Erdély

We did not even feel like eating but went to bed and slept for 36 hours and it took a few more hours before we recovered.

We settled in Barót and waited for further orders. The camp postal service worked and I received a letter from my Ica. Back home the construction of the apartment building in

Pozsony road was completed and was free to be occupied. Ica had moved into my Tatra Street sublet room after I had left for my tour of duty and from there helped organize the furnishing of our new apartment and during this time she moved in there. However, the Tatra Street apartment was maintained, because since we were not yet married, I needed somewhere to live after my demobilization and before the wedding.

During my stay at Barót I was notified by the brigade headquarters that I had been promoted to be an Ensign and so a tailor sewed this new insignia on my uniform. It was later revealed that this Budapest news was expressed loosely because this was only a nomination and was only announced in the official Journal on 1 January 1941. It is true that I was appointed to the rank of Ensign on January 1940 and perhaps not undeservedly stitched on the new insignia.

The situation had changed and we became aware that we would be soon returning to the brigade headquarters in Budapest. I wanted to be now discharged as everything was ready for our wedding; my home was waiting and was driven by love. The brigade headquarters understood my application. Major Jen, the brigade commander congratulated me on my performance. I received an open command to leave for Budapest. Later I received the Transylvanian commemorative medal.

My journey went through Kolozsvár (Cluj). I saw King Mátyas's famous statue and I walked the ancient Hungarian streets for hours. I cannot forget Kolozsvár.

Once in Budapest I immediately took care of my military discharge affairs. The Criminal Tribunal where I was employed agreed to a further two weeks leave of absence and with Ica, happily hugging each other we prepared for the wedding.

As the military service and the Transylvanian events thoroughly upset our plans, we decided that the wedding should be held as soon as possible and just keep it in the family circle. We had to prepare for everything in a week. I attended to both the civil and religious requirements and ensured that the papers were in order. Invitations and



Original amongst author's memrobilia



King Mátyas's famous statue in Kolozsvár

notifications were sent out and it was later found to have offended some and it was not sent to a wide enough circle of friends for the big day.

Both of us were urban residents of St. Stephen's parish and therefor belonged to St. Stephen's Basilica. However, since we only had a few months residency in Budapest, we did not really know many parishioners. We asked Béla Witz a papal servant and the Basilica parish priest to celebrate the wedding and he graciously accepted. We had to ask the witnesses. This was not a problem on Ica's side because she and his family wanted Kálmán Bánó uncle and Police



Witz Béla, a Szent Jobb őre átveszi az amerikaiaktól az ereklyét, 1945

Béla Witz guardian of St István's relic

Councilor as a witness. My good Father asked Bálint Kacsóh in my name thinking that there was a connection with Ica as she was employed in his office. Bálint Kacsóh accepted the invitation but eventually had to excuse himself because he had to leave Budapest on business. So instead, my brother-in-law Dr. Béla Csabai agreed to testify.

October 5th 1940 was a little windy but sunny day and it heralded one of the most beautiful day of our lives. First, we signed the papers before the civil authorities and then got married within the framework of the imposing Basilica vowing eternal loyalty to each other.

In front of the Basilica - although we organized our wedding day in a matter of days - lots of friends appeared and our regret was that we could not hold a feast to celebrate...



Happy couple on Steps of St. Stephen's



Basilica and Interior

The wedding dinner in the hotel Pannonia was conducted in a private room. Only the immediate family was present; our parents, Ica's uncle and aunt, my sister Kata and my brother-in-law Béla and my cousin, László Faragó

Pápay and wife. The head of the table was occupied by Béla Witz, who really gave us a memorable ceremony.

We made many photos of both the wedding and the lunch and even today have some in our possession even after sixty years and are reminiscent of the first moments of a very happy family life.

We young were just waiting to be alone as soon as possible. We changed in my father's room, who always stayed at the Pannonia on his journeys to Budapest and was regarded as a regular.

For a while we wandered happily in the city center and then watched a movie. I honestly do not know what played, it was not interesting...

Around eight o'clock in the evening we went to the Cuckoo's tavern, in Buda. This restaurant was then very fashionable and nice music played, the dinner was good, but our hearts and souls were already waiting for us at home.

At midnight a taxi took us home to Pozsony Street and we were home.

The conditions were such that we could not think about going on a honeymoon. We should be glad that we finally succeeded in making our first steps in our life together and during the next few days we tried to get to know Budapest.

These peaceful and carefree hours did not last long. Our leaves had expired and we both had to return to work in our offices.

The work load for Ica in the Government of Price's department became very busy. Bálint (Valentine) Kacsóh the big boss was also the Secretary of State for Trade and in the evenings, he had to deal with the problems of government security. Therefore, the administrative department decided that employees could have the afternoon free between 2 and 5 pm but after 5 pm had to be ready to assist if the government asked certain questions that needed to be addressed in the evening's work.

I formally worked until 2pm in the afternoon and only had to work later on a few occasions. Our daily program therefore for during the week consisted of lunch together for a couple of hours and then Ica went to her nearby office near the Lánc (Chain) Bridge and I went home. I could begin my studies for my judicial qualification. The examinations were due in 1941 and I put all my full effort in completing this ultimate obstacle.

On weekends we had a lot of my mother's company who gladly helped to organize and solve the various issues associated with married life, washing, ironing and workaday problems. In our case this was not easy because of Ica's busy work schedule.

It looked that a relative peace would prevail because the western war appeared to be over. It is true that Hitler's peace deals were rejected by the West, but we in our home vision did not notice the gathering storm clouds...

For us, the first sign was that a succession of trains carrying German soldiers passed through the marshalling yards towards the east and soon realized that the Balkans will be the new battlefield and our country could easily be included and become involved in the war in the course of events.

Swept into War - 1941

After the honeymoon my serious legal work began. At the time Jenő (Eugene) Szemák was president of the criminal court a highly skilled lawyer who had a good reputation. I introduced myself before him and he talked kindly to me.

In addition to our official encounters, I only saw him much later, in 1946, when in Munich he was very ill.

The vice-president position was filled by Felix Avedik. He was the descendent of Armenian Transylvanian family who was widely known for his criminal law skills. As a result of a busy administrative schedule, he rarely took the chair in fact Janos (John) Lengyel presided over as lead counsel. I was assigned to this Board which was regarded as a privilege. The Council was presided over by John Lengyel and he had two judges assigned to him. As coincidence would have it, a few months later Ferenc Nagy, my former boss was assigned to this chamber and so I worked under his direction again.

The Avedik-Lengyel Chamber had serious criminal cases assigned to it and often worked as an appellate forum, overriding the appeal of certain judicial judgments.

I had the opportunity to study more deeply into the issues facing the criminal justice system. Many lawyers hold the view that criminal law is not sufficiently deep and scientific and the lawyers' interest often turned to private law and its philosophical implications. I do not doubt that I drew this conclusion because I preferred Legal Philosophy and tried to immerse myself in constitutional law. Still, I learned a lot from these well-trained great practical judges. They were good Hungarian people who often considered that the criminals were often victims of society and the legal judgments tried to introduce a forgiving and educational aspect.

After the completion of the negotiation phase I especially enjoyed being present when the three judges discussed the matter expressing their individual views. They often had opposing views and after considering them a compromise resulted. In any case there was thoughtful, serious work behind quality of judgments and the then Hungarian judiciary was truly European.

By the forties the jury system had not been operating for many years and so I could not express an opinion as to the merits of either the jury system or that of judges. Later when I myself had experienced law in the English-speaking system as it functioned in the industrialized twentieth century, I remembered the Lengyel Chamber's serious

deliberations and in my opinion, the system requiring three judges for tribunals, five for courts of appeal and seven for the Kuria (Supreme Court) was appropriate.

My work in addition to considering higher viewpoints was hard work because taking the minutes was certainly not an easy task about which I have already written. The judges always took into consideration that we were recently qualified notaries and so asked our opinions during the deliberations. The drafting of the decisions also belonged to the clerks and soon I became a party to the legal system.

Next to the office work I had to get stuck in the judicial exam material. The judge exams at that time were regarded as one of the toughest tests in Hungary. Not only was the matter huge but was divided into two installments and we had to be ready for a very comprehensive test. The chairman was usually a senior lawyer politician who sat next to two sitting judges and two lawyers who were regarded as eminent lawyers of excellence, who not only possessed a thorough knowledge of legal theory, but were also masters of judicial and law practice. The oral examination was regarded difficult not only because of the multitude of questions that were bombarded at the candidate but if the examiner noticed that the candidate knows the answer, he would interrupt the answer and give a new question. We were all afraid of this examination, and we all knew that only very serious study would achieve the required standard to obtain the degree.

These months were filled with lots of hard work. Usually, I got up at five in the morning and I started my work in office after two or three hours of learning. In the afternoon I spent at least three hours with the books and after dinner another two hours. It was no trouble that Ica was also very busy and only got home at 8 pm so it was to her merit that I could keep up this pace for many months.

Nevertheless we were young and we had enough energy to go out to a dinner to the Vadászkiirt or Pannonia restaurant. We also attended a theater or two so we did not bury our self in work completely.

I picked up communication again with my friends from Berlin and we arranged to meet once a month at a restaurant and share a glass or two talking to a standstill. We met William Szigethy our friend from Berlin once or twice when he was in Budapest, and received a lot of information from him that were not reported in the newspapers. He recounted that while we were in the Sweet Transylvania in the euphoria of: 'We live and die for you' during these unforgettable months the Hungarian diplomacy was experiencing very difficult days in Berlin. William Szigethy said that the German leaders were angry that

we had cooperated with the Soviet Union in moving into Romania. The Germans regarded the occupation of the Baltic States as a hostile move on the part of Soviet Union and William expressed the opinion that the Germans might decide to eliminate the Russian issue before the Western powers were ready for a counter-attack.

So, we started to pay attention to the increased movement of German troops in Budapest towards Romania.....

Romania after the Russia attack accepted the guarantee offered by Germany. The Germans asked Hungary to allow the passage of so called "training troops" through Hungary. Thus, after gaining areas of Transylvania, Hungary could not deny this access and the area became a military assembly point and increasingly we were moving away from neutrality. According to William Szigethy the German leadership was also apprehensive towards the Italians. After all they only expected benevolent neutrality from the Italians. In 1939, the Hitler Teleki communique wanted to ensure peace in South East Europe. However, it is understandable that the Russian, Italian and Hungarian governments also assumed that after the great victories in the west both England and France would be willing for a compromise peace and the concerned countries did not want to miss out on the legal enforcement of their needs. We felt that the Hungarian interests were the most important and the recent decisions of the Hungarian leadership were welcomed.

At this time negotiations began with the Yugoslav government itself. Our contacts reported from Berlin that the Germans warmly supported our plan to cooperate in order to maintain peace in South East Europe. It was in Germany's best interests, particularly in those months when they had obviously decided to solve the Russian problem in - by peace or war.

The Hungarian leaders were filled with concern that the war in Europe would not end with a compromising peace but judging the strong Anglo-American behavior concluded that the war would escalate in a new world war.

The Hungarian society was afraid of the expected developments and at this time began a division in society in both foreign and domestic policies.

This split was felt in everyday life. The Western powers propaganda skillfully exploited the revisionist ideas that saturated Hungarian social life and flamed an anti-German feeling and stressed that the positive results of two Viennese decisions were restricted by Germany's hostility towards us and what we did get was only gained by Italian influence. They accused the Government using the "We want all lands returned" battle cry with chauvinistic fervor while not wanting to acknowledge that it was the Hungarian government's moderate

policies, which did not want the fate of the nation be settled in a new world war on the German side that resulted in Slovakia becoming independent with Pozsony (Bratislava) the capital and the annexation of Pozsonyligetfalu (Petržalka) demonstrating that the Germans did not wholeheartedly support the needs of the country.

There were however in our society those who were friends of the Germans, who thought that the victorious Germany would eventually break the Slavic ring embracing us and therefore secure our future. Others were still afraid of German imperialism, which we knew in our thousand years of history. The names of Rákóczi and Kossuth were used by the English in their radio broadcasts combined with patriotic slogans trying to influence the country.

The Russian question was only seen by a few people. The German-Russian Compromise was recognized by the leadership to hold off the aggressive Russian policy towards the Balkans and we too had tried to establish correct relations with the Soviet Union.

The bright western front German victories made it inevitable that part of the society was under the influence of German National Socialism. But these movements did not actually have true leaders. Francis Szálasi might have been capable of developing into a leader, but the conservative Hungarian political leadership instituted a politically inspired lawsuit which resulted in a three year imprisonment for him, the bulk of which he had served. Thus at the most crucial times he did not participate in politics, after release he became head of a movement to which he now had to adapt to because of the already existing factions.

Politically the announcement of his original insight into Hungarianism and the nationality question within the framework of a federation of liberal management was ahead of his time. However, he had to adapt and slavishly copy the German National Socialism system. In foreign policy, of course, he was a supporter of the German federation, but as it proved later, he was not willing to accept, even in the most difficult situations, German claims which he did not agree with.

The development of the far-right movements were also inhibited by a decree in law, the government banned public servants and employees of various government institutions from membership of political parties. Thus, only those could join who had nothing to lose, or were completely financially independent. The Trianon Hungary had very few people in these categories.

The country was in essence middle class and was politically the only class capable of action, and was divided not only in foreign policy but also in domestic politics. Their conservative-mind did not allow radical land reform or programs for social renewal.

My generation considered ourselves as new twentieth century Hungarian reform generation. So, it is understandable that I and my circle of friends talked about social renewal and advocated radical land reform. At gatherings we always criticized the government and its very cautious policy. We certainly did not agree with one of the national radicals and well-known scholar of history Ödön Málnásy completely rejecting the policies of the Horthy regime but agreed with the direction of the revival.

My colleagues and I in the judiciary service we were far away from the daily politics. According to the rules of judicial independence we did not think about connecting to any political party. However, there were among us some who did not believe that they should be subject to the regulations of the government and joined political parties. My friend Béla Csikós Nagy joined the Arrow Cross Party. He was full of enthusiasm and under the influence of Germans and was of the opinion that the national socialist system would soon take over.

My opinion was different from this because I realized that the German National Socialist leaders did not support the foreign national socialist-minded parties and rather wanted to ensure co-operation with existing conservative powers. We teased Béla by asking him, "When will you take over power?" In these cases, Béla always gave a great speech and usually referred to Paul Vágó, who was one of the party's leading men and was involved in the party's policy formulation on economic matters.

The government was aware of the fact that from the German side there was no interest in the national socialist parties and they capitalized on this situation and they used administrative, police and judicial means to suppress or compromise these national radical forces.

The Szemák council discussed the criminal trials of Kovarcz and his accomplices. The charge was that there was a conspiracy to remove the Governor. I observed the course of the trial up close and was of the opinion that the trial was a political harassment and to an idealistic young lawyer caused great disillusionment in the way it was conducted as well as its final judgment.

There were amongst us those who in the spirit of the English direction were of the opinion that only slow but consistent work would be able to convert our basically underdeveloped country.

Even though there were differences between us we were good friends and as young people, we were full of hope for the future...

The German policy at that time seemed to be much more flexible than during the First World War and both the treatment of the French and the Franco Spanish governments appeared to be of moderate behavior giving us a good impression. Then shortly after the conclusion of the Hungarian-Yugoslav treaty of friendship it was made public that Germany guaranteed the Yugoslav government's peaceful co-operation giving strength to the hope that it might still be possible to stay away from an extended world war.

The crucial turning point occurred when British diplomacy succeeded by revolutionary ways in toppling the Yugoslav government. The conspirator officers were under British direction, but it was clear that they belonged to the Serbian layers who were fed by a brotherly sentiment towards Russia.

The revolution was violently anti-German and it became inevitable that a German response would come. The winds of war struck our region.

There was no doubt that the Hungarian-Yugoslav treaty of friendship lost its validity as a condition of this treaty was a 'sine qua non' (essential condition) to have benevolent neutrality towards Germany to preserve peace in the region. We had no conflict with neither with the new government nor its predecessor or an alliance with Germany which would have obliged us to enter the war against Yugoslavia. On the other hand, now that our treaty had lapsed, we had to suspend our demands for our ancient lands of Bácska and Bánát but it also seemed impossible to look idly by as Germany may take possession of these ancient Hungarian territories.

The situation was further complicated, as we learned from Berlin sources later, by the fact that Hitler on this occasion and against military alliances wished to accept the Hungarian sovereignty of the Bánát and Bácska and Croatia and further suggested the opening of the port of Rijeka (Fiume) to us.

What was leaked was that apparently there was quite a sharp debate in the cabinet as to how we would answer this question. Paul Teleki was a moderating influence in the government and it was decided that only after the disintegration of Yugoslavia would we

move into Bácska which had a without doubt a Hungarian majority and it was hoped that this would not be opposed by the Western powers.

I was of the opinion that it did not make sense to reject the German offer, because I thought that preserving our neutrality was becoming impossible and therefore my friends and I were increasingly critical that we did not join in the German attack. After the war, when I studied the question, I realized that the decision of Teleki was good because it was still possible that a settlement be born from a compromising peace and it was important that the Anglo-Saxon powers be benevolent towards the reorganization of Europe. However, I began to doubt the correctness of the Teleki policy, mainly because of the policy, which he called "Transylvania" policy, was looking for a balance between Anglo-Saxon and German powers but this was almost impossible to achieve as the communication between the

German military and the Anglo-American forces was interrupted. The Balkan campaign meant exactly that. Teleki eventually collapsed under the burden of serious pressures on him and he committed suicide.



We sincerely mourned him. In the sight of the Castle on the Danube shores the advancing marching columns of German armored forces symbolized the last hours of our peace. After the joy of the occupation of Bácska which meant the return of this area to Hungary the Anglo-Saxon propaganda radio broadcast tried to fuel Hungarian nationalism by not stressing the "treason" of the occupation of Bácska but attacking the German Empire for not returning the Bánát area and describing a non-existent "plan" that the Germans wanted to start a "Gau" "(subdivision)"...

My outfit the First Mechanized Brigade took part in the military operation. Moreover we soon had to face a guerilla war because the Serbian army and the civilian population conduct flouted military law. Several incidents occurred and I was also affected, because the section commander of the armored car company was a good friend of mine died then. Not from fighting but when a large Serbian unit was surrounded he got out of the car and

walked over to discuss the surrender he was shot by one of the Serb officers. The Hungarian soldiers opened fire resulting in a number of deaths due to the Serbian officer's disorderly conduct contrary to the laws of war.

The Balkan war soon ended and it seemed for a few months that no fatal steps had occurred because the British Empire did not declare war on our country but did break diplomatic links. The Hungarian diplomacy attempted to paint the suicide of Teleki on pressures from Germany and Churchill in the British House of Commons also said that Hungary would have a place at the peace negotiations table.

However, I was worried because my attention was drawn to a snippet of news that on the eve of the German attack the Soviet Union concluded a military alliance with Yugoslavia. There was no suggestion that the Soviet Union would attack the Germans but the Russian forces would act in a similar manner to past experiences as with Napoleon, to wait to be attacked. This step in diplomatic terms meant that the Soviets anticipated a German attack. Interestingly the propaganda would have one to believe that the German attack surprised Stalin. However, I thought that the conclusion of such an agreement between Russia and Yugoslavia proved the reality of the situation that Russia after the unsuccessful Berlin Molotov negotiations knew that a German war was inevitable.

The Yugoslav defeat occurred quickly but the British diplomacy still succeeded because Germany had to postpone the originally scheduled May 20th Barbarossa offensive.

I gave up following politics for the time being at least because the first stage of the judicial exam was approaching. In early June Ica took a few weeks of leave and traveled to Miskolc to see her parents and I got two weeks study leave. So the first two weeks of June was spent almost every night and day among books. I got up at four in the morning and without a break studied the bulky material till ten in the evening....

The exam was scheduled for Monday morning June 23rd. I remember well that on Saturday evening I went out to get something to eat and I bought a copy of "Hungary" which was then an afternoon paper. I didn't even look into the newspaper but continued to study. Sunday morning I woke up at 4 AM and continued studying. Suddenly my eyes glanced at the newspaper which was left on the table and I read the headline: ***Berlin is waiting for a quiet weekend.*** I think this came from Andor Gellért a friend of mine and well-known for the true meaning of this phrase: ***Berlin is waiting for something serious to happen ...*** I immediately turned the radio to a German station and was shocked to hear Ribbentrop announce that that morning at five Germany was at war with the Soviet Union.

Before the German-Russian clash as an observer of events I thought that Germany had a significant chance of winning the war, especially after their success in Norway and France. The hasty action of Mussolini in the Balkans looked dangerous. Based on my father's stories I did not really trust the Italian military capabilities. He always spoke of the competence of the Italian officers but not the infantry...This was proved to be correct on the Albanian and Greek fronts. This increased the burden on Germany and it seemed that the Anglo-American forces had an opening in the south of Europe to attack the German Empire. When it became clear that the Anglo-American forces intend to continue the fight and the German-Russian war broke out it had to be acknowledged that the German Empire had again been involved in a two-front war which they always wanted to avoid. It became clear that the fate of the war now depended on whether they could knock out the Soviet Union before the Anglo-American forces were ready for a counter-attack.

I remember well that I was really shocked at the war news and my heart sank...

The next day was exam time and so I tried to forget my concerns and I went on studying...

The exam went very well; I got the confirmation that I completed this obstacle with honors.

The second phase of the exams was set for Oct. 23 and I could only have a few days rest before continuing the hard work. For now, it seemed that our peace did not fall over because our government only broke diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. By the same token we were aware that this state of affairs cannot be permanently ensured because the German Empire and Italy expected a stronger action from us. Later we learned that the State Department obtained notification of their displeasure over the conservative Hungarian politics. The Barbarossa attack of Germany was backed by Romania and Finland took part and Slovakia and Croatia also declared war on the Soviet Union.

The Transylvanian Question's compromise solution became uncertain and the German displeasure seemed to jeopardize our results so far.

The dilemma of the Hungarian government was solved by the air raid against Kassa (Kosice) and we could only respond by considering the country in a state of war with the Soviet Union. We joined the German activities and my unit the first mechanized brigade also crossed the Carpathian Mountains and fought on Ukrainian land. I did not get drafted then but it could be expected that I would get a call up as replacements were needed.

The draft did not come and so I could only follow the developments in the newspapers at the famous "Cafe Konrad" coffee house and continued my judicial work in addition to exam preparations.

The weather had turned to autumn when I had the opportunity to talk with Professor Orsós who often appeared as an expert witness in many criminal tribunals. More recently he returned from Katyn where as a member of an international committee considered the mass graves that contained thousands of Polish officers' dead bodies. It was definitely confirmed that the murder of the officers occurred around 1939/1940. This killing was determined by not only the state of disintegration of the bodies but the dates found in personal letters. It was clear that the massacre in the Katyn Forest was executed by the Red Army or the Soviet secret police. The dark shadow of a devastating total war reared its head...

One honor for my exam results was that I received unexpectedly a transfer to the Royal Court of Appeals. The offices were in the Royal High Court Mansion.

My room had lovely large windows looking out at the Parliament and if I was not working, I could feel free to continue my preparations for the exam. The high court had quite a different atmosphere from the full, very busy criminal tribunals. Here we only dealt with matters of very high complexities with no investigation of the facts but focused on legal questions. Council members were lawyers of great ability and now I really enjoyed their deliberations and, in many ways, and I believe I achieved during these months the higher standard of knowledge of the legal system required of judges.

By this time I was hoping that after completing the second phase of the exams I would get a judicial appointment and I was already starting to think about whether to choose an appointment in Miskolc or Szeged. With our family background these two towns come into our calculations. A Budapest appointment would mean a long waiting time.

On 23rd October 1941 I completed the second round of the judicial exam and took my degree which was awarded with honors. Ica and I kissed each other and I thanked her again and again that during this study period she stood by my side I promised her that this was my last exam...

This of course was later brought up by Ica many times when in exile as I had to start all over, so I could be a lawyer again. We were then happy planning our future.



Discovery of massacre site



***Palace of Justice building
now Ethnographic Museum***

To my surprise, however, the President of the Department of the Ministry of Justice called and asked how I would feel to serve in one of the departments of the Ministry. This was an absolute honor and also ensured that after the judicial exams I would be able to get a judicial appointment in Budapest. This decision also meant that in practice that I would basically swap the judicial career with the administrative work of the Department of Justice. My idea at the time was that after the exams I would rework my research materials and publish the results to ensure a private teaching position. This would eventually escalate into a teaching position at the university. The Department of Justice would have helped in this endeavor and so I decided to accept the invitation with thanks and soon I applied to Jenő Lutilszky who was the presidential chief of the department.

In the Service of the Ministry of Justice 1942-1943

Fare-welling the judicial path was not easy. I loved doing it and I treasured the independent atmosphere of the judicial courts. I was also aware that the Department of Justice was only the executive government's administrative branch and can therefore never be totally independent even if they wanted to represent the high ideals to their members. We were often visited in Budapest by my father's old friend Láng-Miticzky who was the Chairman of the Szeged Court of Appeals who criticized my decision. I could see on him that he wanted me in a judicial career and was disappointed that I had accepted the offer from the Department of Justice.

The President of the High Court accepted the news with mixed feelings but in their document accepting the transfer to my new appointment and expressed their good wishes and congratulations.

The transfer document said:

"The Minister of Justice ordered that you Mr. Secretary be employed with the Ministry of Justice.

I wish to inform you Mr. Secretary that under my leadership at the High Court you have serviced with excellent success and exemplary zeal and in recognition of your work you are released from the 27th day of November, 1941. "

The transfer document was signed by Jenő (Eugene) Lutilszky ministerial head notification the next day said:

"Dr. Bela Török accepted his position today."

I then learned that I was assigned to the Legal Reviewer Department. Next to the law preparatory group the department is where the work was really of a high level and so my position was in recognition not only because of the summa cum laude degree but took into account my time spent at the Collegium Hungaricum as well as the honors achieved at the judicial examinations. Perhaps it is understandable that I was very excited and nervous that I could perform in this environment as it was common knowledge that my colleagues and bosses were the best lawyers of Hungary and I would bring an apprentice's desire to learn...

Andor Sárffy was department head. He had the rank of Curia Council President.



Andor Sárffy
1889-1951

As a lawyer he had national prominence and he was considered the grand master of all land legal rights and his voluminous land registry book was the benchmark in this area. However, his knowledge was far superior to the detailed descriptions to the legal profession. His legal literacy was almost universal and his legal theory rested on moral grounds. As an administrative leader he led the group with sure hands. He always emphasized that the administrative officer needed to examine each piece of the case and see how to fairly resolve the issues raised and should not primarily consider the negative aspects. His knowledge of the Hungarian language also rose above the average. While administrators generally used the usual long sentences style he wrote short sentences to express his view.

I myself was often the subject of his managing hand. He inserted a point here and there and therefore broke up my sentences. He created new paragraphs by inserting a word or two and made understanding of my point clear.

The law preparation group was in close contact with the various departments in preparation of draft proposal for which opinions were needed. Most of the department's job however came from the various ministries who if they had a case in front of them and which had legal aspects in them they would ask the Department of Justice for an opinion. Thus, case pieces usually began thus: ***"I have the pleasure to communicate to your Excellency my opinion as follows..."***

The officer who prepared the "opinion" would present it to Andor Sárffy who, if he accepted the opinion endorsed the piece and the case file was given to the Minister who saw on it a ***"may be released"*** sign. The office then re-typed the whole thing on the Minister's letterhead and after the signature of the Minister would post it to the Section Minister.

Andor Sárffy was not a completely healthy person. This was aggravated by his residual childhood polio disease and he dragged one of his legs so when I was visiting our colleagues he did not come with me, but that asked a senior colleague to present me to the ministry.

I did not have many friends in the Justice Ministry, after my years in Szeged and my years of study in Berlin and having spent only a very short period in the judicial service. I gladly welcomed my old friend István (Stephen) Arató a former colleague in Berlin, who was working in the family law department. He was teaching as a university professor on international family law and cases were examined before him and his clear arguments

were usually presented for adoption. László Gál who was a descendant of an old Szeged family and his family and my father were also a good friends worked in the criminal department as a ministerial advisor. A nephew, Aigner Dodo from Szeged was one of my dear friends. Uncle Laci (László Gál) was pleased to welcome me and wish me luck in my new position. In the law preparatory department was an old friend Jancsi (John) Csiky who was also a high school student in the Szeged Piarist Order. His father was the director of the Star Prison of Szeged and so had many common friends and acquaintances.



ID card for the Department of Justice

István (Stephen) Bíbó worked in our department who was also from Szeged and we became friends at the Piarist high school. His father was the head of the Szeged University Library and we often recalled our times spent together in Szeged. When our department moved to the second floor about half a year later to the west, our rooms were next to each other and so we talked almost every day. I remember well his habit of pacing up and down in his room sometimes for hours. The non-initiated probably thought he was not doing anything but he would argue with himself about the contents of a very tough situation to arrive at a good resolution. He was a skilled man who was the strongest in all aspects of legal theory.

The ministry was headed at this time by László Radocsay. He was a serious professional with great legal knowledge and skills who was not in this position on political merit. The Hungarian political system at this time was characteristic of the fact that ministers were usually professionals not just politicians. This differed from the Westminster system. We had no need to be an elected representative when it came to a ministerial appointment. The professional, soldier or civilian was eligible for appointment. Of course, in case of a district

vacancy a minister could stand for parliament and therefore eventually be a true representative of the parliament.

Two personal secretaries worked with each minister. The older secretary was the connecting person between the minister and the other departments. At this time this important role was filled by Béla Térffy the ministerial department head. He was a well-mannered, hard-working person whose name meant a lot in legal circles. After all the famous Térffy legal pocket book was in the hands of almost all the lawyers. This critically acclaimed summary was put together by his father Sándor (Alexander) Térffy but was kept updated from time to time by Béla Térffy.

László Trócsányi was assigned next to him he was a magistrate by qualification and who was really in charge of the personal affairs of the minister. He answered all letters, arranged and organized all visits and handled all the minister's personal affairs which the minister had referred to him.

The Presidential Division of the Justice Department assured the seamless operation of the organization. At the head was Jenő Lutilszky who was regarded as a powerful man and whose office controlled the appointment of assistants, draftsmen and judicial officers. He was strong-willed and had good organizational abilities and who always tried to behave impartially, which was not an easy task because of political pressures. He had enemies, but this was naturally only when taking into account higher opinions.....

The deputy head of the presidential department was Louis Radovics ministerial advisor. I remember a hard-working person and later even in the 1944 serious situation he always maintained objectivity. I remember well the office director Kádár, who was a loyal and hard-working staff member of Jenő Lutilszky. His son also did law and, in my time, took a position with the administrative department of the Department of Justice.

For a time István (Stephen) Antal was the State Secretary to the Minister of Justice. As Secretary of State, he worked closely with department managers and draftsmen and never failed to point out how much he learned in these months from the Department of Justice experts. He later became minister of propaganda and then only in 1944 did he return to us as Minister of Justice.

The department trusted with the preparation of new laws at that time was headed by Gábor Vladár with the rank of Chairman of the Curia council. He was a very well qualified lawyer who had quiet manners who wisely directed his subordinates and who considered them as colleagues. The Division was full of well-trained, knowledgeable lawyers. I

mentioned John Csiky who was a constitutional law expert. He worked with Francis Bacsó who in 1939 helped in the codification of the modern Defense Act II. Béla Csánk worked in international law and law-making diplomacy. I also remember Károly (Charles) Visky and Francis Windisch as important members of the law preparatory division.

I myself was often in contact with this department because it was customary that in some important cases the opinion of the reviewer's department be sought and sometimes the Act Generator department professionals asked for our opinion. In a matter of great commercial importance they forwarded us a legal case for our opinion and Andor Sárffy assigned the matter to me. My remarks did not agree with his opinion of the law preparatory department. Andor Sárffy really liked my view and he returned the case to them accepting my comments. He smiled and said that once or twice we too can lecture our friends ... Then I noticed that basically our legal training was not sufficient in certain legal aspects of commercial law which we entrusted to accounting professionals and that a deeper knowledge of double-entry bookkeeping should be part of our commercial legal qualifications. Later in exile fate forced me to get this (accounting) qualification and once I became a lawyer again, I benefited from this commercial knowledge.

My work at first covered many issues and slowly it developed that I became the constitutional and legal expert in matters of citizenship. Around 1942-43, this area of law raised a very broad problem area. Many fled from the old areas of Greater Hungary to Hungary, in particular those of Jewish origin since it was known that in Slovakia, Croatia and Transylvania rigid German considerations prevailed and they were therefor in a dangerous position.

This meant that our department had to decide whether the refugees' Hungarian citizenship should be considered. If the answer was no, the Interior Ministry expelled them and deported them back from where they came. We had a great responsibility placed on us. Despite the fact that there was a very strong anti-Jewish feeling we adhered strictly to a proper and reasonable interpretation of the Hungarian law. In many cases I suggested to the Minister of the Interior that based on the data available he confirms their right to Hungarian citizenship. Andor Sárffy in such cases usually approved my proposal with the comment ... ***I think you're right.***

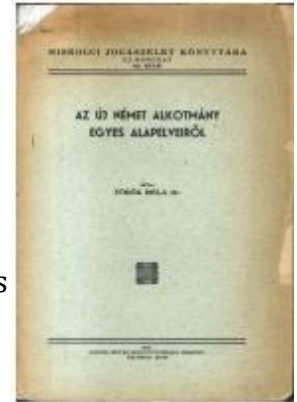
During these months an article of mine appeared in the Miskolc Lawyer Life magazine which dealt with one of the more sensitive issues of the German National Socialist regime

and in particular the problem of the Führer's succession. (data gathered while on a scholarship in Berlin) (Banned by the Communist Government in 1945)

Andor Sárffy was well known in that he was not to be sympathetic to the German system and he criticized my article saying that that the system itself was confusing to the point that even the German experts were confused... I never denied that I was an advocate of international cooperation with the Germans. Nor did I hide the fact that I would like to see radical land reform and better conditions for industrial workers in Hungary. However, Andor Sárffy was too conservative on domestic policy. The Justice Department was truly represented by an independent spirit, and always listened to and often disagreed with accepted opinions. He was my boss for more than two years and we never had a disagreement in the management of the department's affairs.

And if he did not agree with something and he felt it was important to emphasize this, he was able to put his debating partner in an awkward position. Once the conference was with the Ministry of Agriculture on an important issue and they wanted to take into consideration the Justice Departments opinion to ensure proper legal line had been taken. After a long submission by the Minister of Agriculture representative he asked if Andor Sárffy was in agreement. Sárffy simply said: ***Maybe I'm limited, but I do not understand all this ...*** During the startled silence it became clear that Sárffy did not consent to the solution offered. In such cases, the Minister of Justice always stood firmly behind his specialists and never consented to a case that was not supported by the professional and his boss.

The Review Department worked in this spirit. Among my colleagues in the first place I would like to remember Sándor (Alexander) Kálnoki Bedő, Ministerial Secretary whose office was next to mine. He was only four years older than me but had much more experience and he helped me many times in judicial questions. He was one of the well-trained and highly experienced draftsmen and if the question of marriage validity matters were raised Alex usually had the solution. As fate would have it we spent several years in exile together and the only regret was that they migrated to the USA while we ended up in Australia and we were torn apart.



**Some Basic
Principals of The
new German
Constitution**

As I have already written, István Bíbó was another neighbor. We talked both legal and political things every day. Alajos Degré was proficient in Sabbatarian (the observance of the Sabbath) cases. Indeed, he became an expert and his fair proposals were in most cases adopted. Another good friend of mine worked for us Jenő Eugene Csorna who was my age. Sadly, only in 1943 did we get to know more about each other and as an artillery officer spent many months on the Eastern Front.

Panel Judge Lóránt Nyeviczky was a hard-working man who showed diligence and clear insights.

László Semjén Ministerial Counsellor was an old-fashioned Hungarian gentleman. These years were difficult for him because we knew that his wife was Jewish and he was filled with concern for the future.

I remember Louis Klivinyi with warm friendship and we had a personal relationship with them and visited each other. Miklós Nagy and Lajos Slezák also worked in our department. By this time, we had been married for almost two years and we became concerned that there was no sign of the expected "little one". Ica started going to Dr. Balassá who found her a little weak, but thought that all was well otherwise. She received some 'strengtheners' and we were delighted shortly to hear she was pregnant. This immediately raised the question of housing as it was obvious that when the child arrived we could no longer live in the Pozsony Street studio apartment ... It was very difficult to get an apartment at a relatively reasonable price. Luckily the ministry had a program to help staff to obtain housing and so they allocated an apartment in Káplár Street. This was a second-floor apartment with two rooms and a hall. The rent was quite expensive but we both worked and so could fit it into our budget.

I received my official judicial status dated June 30, 1942 and my salary was increased appropriately. The transcript of the ministerial judicial registration was as follows:

"His Serene Highness the Governor on the 30th day of June the Lord has appointed you Mr. Secretary as a Judge in the Royal Budapest Criminal Court.

With this appointment Mr. Judge, I consent to your continued service in the Magyar Royal Justice Ministry under my leadership. "

I took the judicial oath on July 13, 1942, before my past manager Félix Avedon.

This spring we visited my father-in-law for a couple of days in Miskolc. When we were there, the city was farewelling a division of the Second Hungarian Army that would fight on the Eastern Front. Ica bid farewell to an old childhood friend a Lieutenant Eugene Vuskics

who was with the departing troops. Poor Eugene was later killed in action during the offensive.

My unit was on the road again but I still did not get drafted. A few months later I heard sadly, that one of my comrades Laci Halápi was killed in action. Laci's fate was tragic. He had Jewish ancestry but till now was not subject to any discrimination, but later I learned that his superiors decided that he would no longer be required to serve with his comrades across the border. Laci, I understand could not bear this hurt of leaving his comrades and on the occasion of his last mission I believe that he voluntarily sought death. Later, I took part in a ceremony in barracks, when General Eugene Major gave the widow of Laci a Posthumous award.

This summer around St Stephen's day the assistant Governor died a hero's death. The city was full of gossip of how this fatal accident happened. Much later in exile I had the opportunity to talk to his fellow officers and the then commander of the airstrip and they clearly stated that a pilot error caused the fall and they assured me that there was no truth in the malicious story that was spread. Several years later I read a memoir about Hungary in which the writer tried to blame this tragic accident on the Germans. I then contacted my air force comrades who again indignantly rejected this irresponsible slander.

The beginning of September 1942 heralded the first air raid against Budapest. The city manor church was hit and as we lived close to the church, we could look at the resulting damage.

We were expecting the arrival of the baby at the beginning of October but unexpectedly at noon on September 16 the contractions for Ica were advanced so by 4PM in the afternoon we drove to the Üllői Street clinic (Pest). My mother also joined us. Ica's pain had accelerated and we waited for the big moment.



Üllői Street clinic

At that time, it was not fashionable to allow family members to be present at the birth so my mother and I went for a couple hours to the city. When we returned to the clinic around 8 PM we were happy to be told a son was born to us and we showered Ica with kisses. We could not spend a lot of time with her because of the curfew and blackout imposed on the clinic (air raids) and they worked in a

slightly confused state. We had made advanced arrangements for a separate room for Ica and yet she was placed in a large ward which meant limited visitation options. Ica befriended a couple of bed neighbors and sometime later we also met them and were introduced to each other's little ones.

Thank God there were no complications and the official report said: "**mother and child are doing well**" - and soon we brought them home. We had a domestic worker by then called Piri, who was referred to us by Ica's mother from Miskolc. She was very fond of the little boy and lovingly cared for him till the end of 1944 so Ica's household duties became easier as the Government Price Control department where she worked maintained her employment position.

At the sacrament of baptism our first born was given the name László Béla Sándor. I wanted to honor my uncle László; Sándor was my grandfather's name while Béla was my father and my name.

Later Ica began to call him "**Maxi**" a name that stuck throughout his life, even in remote Australia.

The joy of Maxi's arrival was overshadowed by these weeks and months which were the turning point of the war and we all felt that the Stalingrad fight increasingly warned of a very serious threat.

The bad mood culminated in the 2nd Army's major ordeal when the Russian army outnumbered our scantily equipped soldiers and basically destroyed the second army ... This serious blow was unfortunately predictable. The sometimes-returning officers from the front confessed to relatives and friends that their equipment was very weak and the troop's attitude was questionable. The soldiers on the front viewed with hostility the noisy and cheerful life of an almost peacetime Budapest and perhaps rightly felt that the government was sacrificing them under German pressure and did not make the necessary steps to strengthen the Hungarian front. Later I read about this question in exile from British writer David Irving in his book that Hitler could see that the Hungarian and Romanian front was an Achilles heel and instructed his staff to strengthen these parts. It seems today that some of the German generals had sabotaged this and therefore was not implemented.



Mother and child

The Hungarian society was increasingly forced to face the facts that we were drifting into a world war. Very few people saw the reality and were incapable of understanding the government position. The then government wanted to minimize the bloodshed through these months and years. They hoped that eventually there would be born a compromising peace and if there was a German defeat England following its *"balance of power"* policy would not allow the return to the Versailles State of Affairs in Europe.

Miklós Kállay also tried to keep open the still accessible lines with England and regularly informed of the British leadership of the Hungarian views. Domestically he also tried to maintain the rule of law and had negotiations with the Hungarian Social Democrats and other opposition parties and sought to reassure the Jews that their current situation would not worsen in the future.

However, the Hungarian society was divided by these conflicting aspects of the looming shackles. There were those who still hoped that if not total German victory, a compromising peace will result with British understanding ensuring our territorial integrity and existing state and social order. By this time the right wing began to realize that the war had shifted in favor of the Russians and in addition to the Old Russian imperialism there loomed the specter of Communism.

Others saw the future of the nation in activating the Anglo-Saxon line and disapproving the collaboration with the German Empire. As the wife of my colleague Lajos (Louis) Klivinyi said to me once: *"Béla, I so trust in the English..."*

My friends and I were increasingly filled with concern. More and more signs pointed to us to the fact that here in Eastern Europe the main danger was Russian imperialism and the Slavic Bolshevik rule would mean death to the Hungarian nation...

This threat was felt not only in our social life but these problems were encountered in the office amongst our colleagues and often in fierce debates we discussed the situation and pondered the possibilities.

During these months we spent almost regularly one hour each morning in István Bíbó's room as we tried to evaluate our situation.



Dr. Miklós Kállay Prime Minister March 1942 to March 1944.

István Bíbó's opinion was interesting. He was a descendant of a Transylvanian Protestant family. He married one of the daughters of Bishop Ravasz and his Protestant, anti-Habsburg family opinion was moved essentially against the German Empire.

He was a highly educated and outstanding academic legal scholar contended that as there was no scientific basis to National Socialism and he only saw in it the revival of German military imperialism. In contrast he rated highly the Soviets philosophy of government and Hans Kelsen's book 'Pure Theory of Law'. He believed that the Bolshevik revolution's excesses would be outgrown and the Stalinist dictatorship was not important within the parameters of the Politburo community leadership but the effort to achieve the rule of law was.

One of our colleagues Jenő Csorna who had just returned from a long period of fighting on the eastern front tried to explain that the Russian people were uninformed and backward yet the communist rulers exerted unbridled dictatorship in an unimaginable brutal totalitarian warfare. In all this, István Bíbó only saw German propaganda phrases and explained that he would rather wait for a Russian invasion than see a German victory. This philosophy was also recognized amongst other colleagues and soon we knew each other's view as those that were *English friends* and those who were *German friends* as we simplified our definition of each other's views.

Very few agreed with István Bíbó's theoretical considerations on his declared Russian orientation. I only knew one such a colleague. It was widely known that Tamás (Thomas) Simándy, who was born in Transylvania, loved his people and who saw the country's need for social regeneration. He openly confessed his socialist feelings.

However under the Horthy regime this expression of views could be done and the police only intervened if someone tried to break down the existing social and political order by force.

So, we could openly discuss these issues with Tamás Simándy and István Bíbó and they were never brought before the courts and no one ever reported them.

After the war, of course, there were those who tried to take advantage of the free speech existing within the Justice Department and present this as some kind of "resistance movement". It is understandable that some people tried to strengthen their own position. They did not expect that the communist system did not regard this kind of "resistance" enough but the reality was that their position in society could not be denied and sooner or later became victims to their new lords.

Such a man was Kálmán Zolnay who's brother Laszlo Zolnay pulled down the veil in his biography. Kálmán Zolnay went so far as to denounce his uncle László Gál a kind conservative who did not care about national politics because at the beginning of 1942 in a family circle said: ***"It seems that the Germans have won the war."***

Our life went on and the happy marriage promised another fruit. We were expecting the arrival of this new arrival in October and we decided that Ica would resign from her position because with two small children it was necessary that the mother should be at home. At the later stages of the pregnancy her mother came to help us and we allowed ourselves to take a break of two weeks at Balatonföldvár.

Ica did not do much swimming but could spend many pleasant hours relaxing in the shade of the old Földvári trees I did however go to the lake for a swim. Lili Murata was also holidaying there and she brought the news of the fall of Mussolini ... We felt that our world was in motion and threatening us with drowning.

I met my friend Miki Tompa by chance on the grounds of the Földvári Park who I had not seen since Szeged. He was a Csendőr (Military Police) Lieutenant and he bitterly told me about the conditions in Bácska that made it such a difficult situation for the militia forces.

My friend Nicholas towards the end of the war left the country as a divisional commander of the Szent László battalion. He lived in England until his death.

My sister Kata and Béla Csabai my brother-in-law visited us and we spent a lot of nice hours together.

On returning to Budapest, I met my uncle Kálmán Falcione several times. He was the Szeged legal defender of the defense forces and he often visited the capital as a representative of the so-called Novi Sad massacre leader Márton

Zöldi gendarme officer. We talked about the case and my uncle admitted that undoubtedly his reaction was too hard as a result of unsightly atrocities. We agreed that the over-reaction was provoked by the partisan war (guerrilla war) which led to the brutalization of the war on the eastern front. My uncle was an old First World War soldier who himself



**Italian dictator
Benito Mussolini**



Balatonföldvár

spent many years in Russian captivity spoke of the fact that the officers were allowed to keep their swords and was not like today when the soldier realistically dealt with the idea of suicide when contemplating the horrors of a prisoner of war.

(Hungarian troops took part in the Nazi invasion and partition of Yugoslavia in 1941. In January 1942 they conducted brutal anti-Partisan raids in which they killed over up to 4,000 civilians, mostly Serbs and Jews, in the Novi Sad region. In 1943 the Hungarian government investigated the massacres and the leaders responsible were sentenced to death. But when Yugoslav partisans recaptured Vojvodina and they in turn began a mass and systematic revenge execution of ethnic Hungarians: around 40,000 civilians were tortured and killed between October 1944 and May 1945.)

At this time my cousin Lóránt Falcione visited us he was then a Military Judge Lieutenant and had spent some time on the Eastern Front. He recounted how the partisan (guerrilla) warfare activities made it difficult to manage the military and he found it difficult to tolerate the military judicial executions even though international law did not preclude this form of retaliation.

Meanwhile our second child signaled his intended arrival. First we found we drove to the clinic in vain. But then a week later on October 5th night Ica felt that time had come. I was successful in catching a cab quickly. We did not have a telephone and we had to use our neighbor's but found time to arrive at the private sanatorium named after Zsuzsanna Lórántffy known as the 'Város (City) Ligeti Home'. This time we did not have to wait much longer and by three o'clock in the morning our little second son Béla cried out. When he came I also turned 29 years old. We did not plan to name him Béla but since he saw the light of day on my birthday we decided that we would call him Béla Sándor Lóránt. My cousin Lóránt Falcione became his godfather.



It was about 4 AM and I did not go home. The obstetrician Dr. Balassa drove me in his car to the Gellért hotel and here after a spa I slept a few hours and went to the office in the morning.

The Baptism was attended by my parents and Ica's mother and father and the family was full of happiness. Thank God there was nothing wrong and we enjoyed the happiness with our children.

We did not live a great social life during these years. The first years I was preparing for exams and Ica was busy at work and now after the arrival of the children we again were

**Béla Sándor
Lóránt born 6
October 1943**

limited in time. My mother was often with us. She was then with her third life partner a Dr. Károly Mórícz who became our family doctor. Lovingly he handled the children and taught us some pediatric knowledge which we put to great use later when life swept us in unfamiliar surroundings.

Occasionally we went visiting or received visitors. We kept in touch with István (Stephen) Arató and Peter Kemény colleagues from Berlin and Ferenc Nagy a magistrate who with his wife eventually became good friends of ours. We also got together with my cousin László Pápay-Faragó and family who visited us several times from Bábolna and later my sister and brother-in-law Béla from Székesfehérvár. Sometimes my father also took a trip to the city when we enjoyed fine dining and a theater evening.

We old Berliners did not see each other often. The wartime blackouts, military assignments disrupted our number and opportunities. I joined the German-Hungarian Youth Society in their work. This group had my friend Peter Kemény as youth secretary and he asked me to draw up a short presentation in a booklet *Ungarische Studien (Hungarian Studies)* on the Hungarian constitution. This publication series was designed to showcase the Hungarian public life in the German language and thus increase the sympathy towards us. Gyula Rézler was the author of the first booklet discussing social issues. The second booklet showcased the major Hungarian cities was written by Ferenc Erdei. The third booklet was written by me and called *Abriss der Ungarischen Verfassung (Outline of the Hungarian Constitution)*

The German - Hungarian Society's work increasingly sought from the Hungarian side to appease the German leadership so that even in the crisis of these war years we did not think of an about face against them. It was obvious that the German leadership was concerned with Miklós Kállay's increasingly neutralist policies. The German propaganda ministry also sent a representative at this time to Budapest and the he with the rank of Head of Minister's Department delivered a lecture in Parliament of the possible negative effect of an unsuccessful end to the war.

Obviously, he wanted to show that the Anglo-Saxon powers would eventually not be strong enough to limit the Soviet Union's Eastern and Balkan advances and explained in detail that in all probability America would again move towards an isolationist line and we were hoping in vain that with their help we could escape the Goebbels formulated "iron curtain". This prediction was published by the propaganda minister in one of the Reich magazine's editions.

This performance was listened to by many leading Hungarian statesmen; amongst other things I remember seeing Béla Imrédý for the last time. It is not impossible that this serious and completely open lecture convinced many Hungarian right-wing politicians not to oppose the revolution that took place on 15 October 1944.

The eastern front was approaching our one thousand years boundaries. With such concerns we said goodbye to 1943 as we faced 1944.

Personal Secretary to István Antal and Gábor Vladár 1944

We wore the problems of the threatening world situation with youthful optimism and our two little boys occupied us enough to give us lots of happy hours.

Spring was approaching and my father came up once again to Budapest and we wanted to spend March 18/19 weekend with him. As usual he stayed at the Pannonia Hotel and on Sunday early afternoon, he came to our Káplár Street apartment. We attended Holy Mass at the Rákócziánum Chapel which was a few hundred meters from where we lived and then we took the children for a walk in the Marcibányi Square.

It was a beautiful spring day and the neighborhood was peaceful and we really enjoyed having the family together. Of course, I talked with my father about the war situation and tried to reduce his concerns by painting a brighter picture. Piri our maid prepared a delicious lunch for us. My father slept half an hour in the afternoon as usual and then we spent pleasant hours as a family till the evening hours until 8-9 pm when my father said he wanted to retire to the Pannonia Lodge. I went with him and after a lovely day I said goodbye to him at the entrance of the hotel.



Rákócziánum Chapel

I bought the first edition of the Monday's newspapers on the corner of Rákóczi Street and Museum Circuit and taking a tram headed home. I noticed there were groups of people in front of the Astoria hotel but I did not know the importance of this. The tram rattled on and I began reading the newspapers. One editorial was reporting on a political assembly and reported that the right wing could in no way be responsible for what happened. The article did not explain what was actually going on and I simply did not understand its message. The next morning, I headed off to work at the Justice Ministry. On the Margit (Margaret) Boulevard it struck me that I could see quite a number of German soldiers who were walking in groups. But I still did not think that this was anything special since it was normal that the German troops passing through often took short vacations in Budapest.



German Troops in Budapest

At the ministry I learned that while we were walking peacefully in the Marcibányi Park and our family spent

our reunion on this beautiful Sunday Hungarian history took a serious change and we had to face the fact of German occupation.

In 1944 Budapest residents faced a crackdown from German troops

The ministry was like an anthill. There was no chance of work and we huddled in groups in our rooms discussing the events. The fact of German occupation shocked us all. There was no difference in this respect between those on the right or the left. My friend Jenő (Eugene) Csorna, who everyone knew had right-sided political views, vowed that if the Germans removed Miklós Horthy (the Governor and Head of State) he would take up partisan resistance.

We all agreed that the German occupation was as a consequence of the so-called Miklós Kállay two-edged dealing policy. Miklós Kállay never thought of turning against the German Empire but he always endeavored to represent the Hungarian position vigorously towards the western allies. It was understandable especially in light of Italy's actions last year that the German High Command wanted guarantees. After all, the war front had almost reached the Hungarian border.

Later on, we got news that the Government began negotiations with the German political appointees and we hoped that an agreement would eventually be reached.

News circulated that the German security forces arrested Hungarian politicians with left leanings and we all condemned this as a violation of Hungarian sovereignty.

The rumor spread that Kállay had sought refuge in the Turkish embassy and it was reported that the resignation of the government had been accepted by the Governor.

Formation of a new government was delayed because almost no one wanted to take on this very thankless role.

Later I learned that neither the political far right nor the conservative forces wanted to take on the formation of a government.

The Germans did not support the extreme right but continued their policy of supporting those in power and basically wanted to cooperate with the conservative forces. Eventually our ambassador to Berlin Döme Sztójay agreed to the Governor's request to form a government even though he was seriously ill.

During the negotiations to form government there were a number of problems but I knew nothing about these and was only informed later. From the Justice Ministry's department of draftsmen, the most important news was that István Antal was appointed the Minister of

Justice. This was almost without exception warmly welcomed by everyone. Antal was well-known in our circle. As Secretary of State, he was in a very good relationship with the department managers and was well known how much he appreciated the skill of the Department draftsmen.

Politically his presence was reassuring and we were sure that he would only play a role in a government which was indisputably Hungarian. We knew that he came from a poor family of craftsmen and his social policy always aimed to raise the standard of the Hungarian people but he always kept a distance from the extreme views. I personally also welcomed in him an old comrade from TURUL (University Club). One of his closest staff was the writer István Eszterhás who was my hero in my academic years.

Moreover, the circumstance that the government appointed by Miklós Horthy was regarded as a good sign that the German occupation might be reversed if the Hungarian Government can win the confidence of the German Empire.

The refusal to cooperate looked impossible and the thought of partisan resistance was just a romantic notion. The politicians committed to the Anglo-Saxon connection were aware that the fundamental interests of Hungary ran parallel to that of the Germans. The country had more than two decades of continued 'revisionist' policy and an Italian Republic style turnaround would not have been possible even during Kállay Minister's presidency. And it was less likely to be attempted now under German military occupation.

We saw that we had to stand behind the government appointed by the Head of State and the Department heads directed their subordinates accordingly.

We stopped our politicizing and we again got on with our jobs. But then I encountered a surprise.

They asked me to attend the president's department. Lajos (Louis) Radovics was then the actual leader of the department because Jenő (Eugene) Lutitszky recently became seriously ill and was hospitalized. Louis Radovics then informed me that with the arrival of the new minister there would be some changes to the Secretariat. István (Stephen) Antal expressed his desire to bring his former personal secretary to the Justice Ministry. There was no obstacle to this as board secretary John Lányi was a judge who served temporarily in the Propaganda Ministry and so he just returned to the judicial service. Béla Térffy had no option but to return to the pre-drafting department. Béla Térffy did not mind this as he had



István Antal
Minister of
Justice

asked László Radocsay several times to be relieved of his duties. László Trócsányi was the younger secretary who arranged personal affairs of László Radocsay. István (Stephen) Antal however, insisted that his personal affairs would be continued to be managed by János (John) Lányi. It was his wish that the senior secretary would arrange his personal affairs while the younger subordinate would act as coordinator where the Departments of Justice was concerned. László Trócsányi would not accept this and a vacancy was created. Louis Radovics called on me to take this position. He pointed out that in this delicate political situation considering the importance of proper contact with the Germans thought about me as one who had spent two years in Germany, spoke German well and was an expert on German institutions.

On the other hand, he stressed that he knows me well, knows that my moderate understanding will certainly help me through any difficulties and asked me to accept the transfer to the presidential department. He also mentioned that as custom has it after the role of personal secretary a vacancy would exist for me to act in the preparatory department which was really the aspiration of all those in the draftsman department. István Antal accepted my person and therefore I could only say yes.

The other secretary was János (John) Lányi and this was pleasant news because his family was well known in Szeged and I had a previous connection with him and a friendly co-operation from the outset seemed assured.

I had mixed feelings accepting this rewarding commission. On the one hand I was glad to be transferred as it meant a promotion and increased my skills as a legal draftsman. On the other hand, the political changes worried and disturbed everyone. I did not like leaving my work in the reviewer department. I was warmly applauded by my colleagues and my boss Andor Sárfy wished me luck.

István Antal took up his position and soon would have felt at home in his old work place. János Lányi continued his role as personal secretary to István Antal. For me it was a pretty big change. I replaced my humble little old room with a spacious area with two large desks on either side. About four phones rang almost incessantly and you had to be always ready. The work would go on without any interruption till about 4PM in the afternoon and then we escorted István Antal home in the ministerial car and on the way back I got out around the Rózsadomb district. One of the advantages of the new post was that within 24 hours they provided me with a home phone which I had not yet dared to apply for because of the

war conditions. On the other hand, the two-hour lunch disappeared and it was not until 5 pm I managed a mouthful.

From the general war situation, the government had to expect that the Western Allies would not now spare the city of Budapest and would begin bombing. As a result, regulations were made for the partial evacuation of the city. Thus, the Department of Justice had also implemented a plan to evacuate the officials' family members. We also took part in this and within a few weeks Ica moved to Balassagyarmat with the two little boys. They moved into the house of Korbás the Balassagyarmat city councilor. Our family were kindly received and spent six months there, in relative safety.



Budapest to Balassagyarmat 90 kilometers

I became an orphan and it became easier for me to keep up with the increased work load. I sat behind the desk well before 9 am and my first task was to read through the MTI mimeographed (duplicated) report, which summarized the previous day's main radio news. So, I immediately heard the details of the British, American and Russian news services.

My job was to see if in my opinion the news contained items that could affect the Minister or the Ministry and relay this news to the attention of the Minister. I once read an English rumor that there had been an assassination attempt against my boss István Antal and that the minister was wounded. Of course, I presented this to him, who accepted it with a sad smile.

On my desk was the daily mail and the typist secretaries helped by opening the envelopes.

It depended on my judgement which letters came in front of the Minister. I forwarded some letters, which apparently belonged to individual departments to those departments. In many cases, based on the instructions given to me by the minister, when it was clear to me that the minister did not want to deal with the matter, I replied on behalf of the Minister. There were also cases where the writer's standing required a response from the minister himself. In this case, I dictated the answer and attached it to the letter for the Minister's signature.

Meanwhile the phones rang and often after each conversation I switched from one phone to the next. The department managers rang and I had to agree to what was the most appropriate time for the Minister and the candidate to meet.

Often when the minister was not able to meet visiting MPs and journalists it was fitting that I would chat with them while waiting. In these cases, I often learned some details of political events which never appeared in newspapers.

The work continued without stopping till 3-4PM in the afternoon and after a few weeks it was customary before going home, for János Lányi and me to accompany the Minister to the Pest District Rural Courthouse where the German security forces kept the arrested Hungarian politicians. István Antal gave them to understand that negotiations were going on for their release, but until then he was committed to make sure that their well-being was maintained.

This quiet and not advertised duty was one of the most important attributes of István Antal. In appearance and personality, he created an impression of both a very quiet and a humble man. He was a good writer and as a speaker was outstanding, but in private life he was soft-spoken and withdrawn. I got to know a religious and compassionate person during these months. Under no circumstances did ambition lead him to accept the ministerial portfolio in these difficult times and struggled like all of us knowing that the situation was almost hopeless.

The government ordered a state of emergency in respect of the air attacks and declared martial law for all offenses committed at those times. Police arrested a burglar who committed his offence during an imposed blackout. A convened court martial specified the death sentence. The prisoner had only one hope, pardon of the Head of State. The Department of Justice suggested that as it was necessary to make an example of him the Minister should refuse the clemency petition. I presented the case to the Minister. The state

wished this action but the signature of the Minister would mean one man's death. István Antal struggled for several minutes before me before signing the proposed death order. The sweat beaded on his forehead and he said sadly: ***Bela, he also is a Hungarian man ...*** - but then he checked himself and signed the letter of rejection.

On a different occasion the Justice Ministry placed a draft decree before him one which dealt with the possibility of using long term prisoners to voluntarily participate in a medical procedure that by contracting typhus provide material for vaccine manufacture. István Antal realized that the regulation created a moral problem - the punishment of prisoners as against the hope of curing others again he hesitated for a long time before agreeing to the issuing of the regulation. Finally, he agreed and as a result the protective serum saved hundreds of military lives.

The Minister of Justice was not involved in the rules taken against the Jews, but I know he watched the events with deep concern.

István Antal had no illusions about how his behavior would be judged if we lost the war. I remember well that, once on the way home after work and Mrs. Antal sat in the car. There was a traffic congestion and people coming down the street wearing a yellow star (Jews were required at that time to wear identifying yellow star badges) stared hatefully at the occupants of the obviously high-ranking officials in the State owned Rolls-Royce. "What will they do to us if we lose the war" – asked Mrs. Antal. The minister did not respond.



Jewish women wearing compulsory yellow badges.

The problem of the Jewish question came to the fore and we learned from the visiting MPs that this issue had become an issue of central debate. The Hungarian politicians in general were of the opinion that it would be unacceptable that the Germans take action in determining the fate of the Jews in Hungary.

Szálasi Francis was well known for his desire to maintain Hungarian sovereignty and he declared that he was not willing to accept his appointment as Head of Government if the Germans insisted that they (the Germans) would solve this Jewish problem. It was because of this that Francis Szálasi was omitted from the eligible list of politicians when negotiations were launched. Indeed, the Germans insisted that Hungary should limit their sovereignty in this regard if they wanted to reverse the invasion (of Hungary).

After all this there seemed no other way and the Sztójay government agreed that Germany reserved the right in this respect as an occupying power.

The Governor finally decided to accept this pre-condition to the Germans. His vision was that if the country remained in the hands of the Administration there would be later a chance to intervene. Horthy's tactics proved to be correct, because the Government was able to take advantage of the attack against Hitler and when German controls became loosened and he could stop the removal of Jews in Budapest. But this was possible only because Horthy always followed the orderly administration of government regulations. The Royal gendarmerie and police gathered the rural Jews in cooperation with the Germans, but they also followed the instructions of Horthy against the Germans wishes when the groups of Jews in Budapest were threatened with removal.

Even after October 15th before the siege of Budapest Ferenc (Francis) Szálasi continued his policy of denying the Germans wishes to deport the Jews in Budapest to the west.

In this delicate political situation István Antal fulfilled his duties as a mediator in the cabinet. There were in this government people who could be counted as members with radical nationalist views but others were essentially conservative in thinking. István Antal took a middle position between these groups.

The reconciliation process was laborious and the behind scenes work took a lot of effort but the role was also difficult because Sztójay was not only a sick man but he had never taken part in Hungarian domestic politics and so István Antal's task also included looking after the presidential duties.

So it was that when the Sztójay Government had to be introduced to the parliament the prime minister's statement was edited by István Antal. He did not like to dictate and so the handwriting pages were produced sheet after sheet. When he got to the end of a page, he rang for the lady typist, who then typed the hand written page. The typewritten pages were examined by the minister who made improvements until the speech was complete.

Parliament took note of the Sztójay government report and voted confidence in the new government and thus ensured the continuity of the constitution.

For all that had happened, the Sztójay government constitutionally accepted the political responsibility.

Between the conservative, moderate and radical forces the whole society was subject to a continued fight and those on a moderate line are exposed to attacks from both the right and the left.

I felt this even though my secretarial position was not subject to decision making. A lawyer wearing a yellow star came to us for an audience with the minister who he personally knew. I treated this colleague with due politeness, I sat him down in armchair next to my desk and listened. I had to reject his application on a matter of principle; the Minister would not be able to accept it.

After our conversation I escorted him from my office, shook his hand and said goodbye to him. Because of this those who were of radical mind spoke out.

In similar circumstances Elek Kaszó an old friend from Szeged visited me. He was full of concern and problems. He was a half Jewish but was regarded as an exception since all four grandparents were Christians at birth. The situation for his mother and our Aunt Böske (Betty) the situation was not clear because even though the same Békefy family were christened before her birth but her Jewish descent was not in doubt. My friend Sityi asked me for advice. I gave him advice which I thought was the best under the circumstance and we parted on friendly terms. Ironically later (after the end of the war and the country was controlled by the communists) when my parents asked him to look out for my work dossier kept by the communist masters. Sityi was in the fifties a practicing lawyer in Budapest. I learned from him with interest that my communist cadre had only one "stain". I only remembered that particular event when reading it in my communist dossier; I never considered the event particularly important.

In an air raid against Budapest we (employees) went down to the air defense basement. The minister was at that time accompanied by John Lányi on some matter and was not in the building.

I was with the old colleagues and we talked quietly. László Semjén a ministerial advisor was there and he was living through hard times because his wife was Jewish. He bitterly discussed the recently published regulations branding them inhuman and sharply attacked the government and all the people that contributed to these inhuman laws. Specifically, he attacked the minister as well. Dead silence descended on the cellar and my colleagues looked at me. It seemed that Laszlo Semjén did not realize that I the Minister's Secretary, was also present..

The way I solved this embarrassing scene is by pointing out to him that the government was forced to proclaim these regulations because of the German demands and by denying their implementation the fullness of the German occupation would break upon us, and the

government believed that this result would cause much hardship that would not serve Hungarian interests.

I did not get an answer and our daily agenda overrode the incident. Of course, I did not report the incident because basically I understood László Semjén's desperate state of mind. Only the churches could afford to speak out against the harsh and inhumane regulations. The Catholic Bishops pastoral letter was read in the churches and Archbishop Serédi personally protested. The Government represented by István Antal received the chief priest. János Lányi and I were waiting in the stairwell for the Archbishop and escorted him into the minister's study. Of course, István Antal could not give a satisfactory answer. I too experienced viewing the inhumane methods used in the deportation of the Jews. When passing through a country railway station on my way visiting my family, we had to wait for the passing of a freight train carrying Jews.

The freight wagons were crammed with the unfortunates.

These harsh methods changed the public mood in the country in relation to the Jews. Before the German occupation there was an almost a general anti-Semitic sentiment, because the Jews obviously sabotaged the war effort and in Budapest in general showed a challenging behavior. Even the chief Jewish rabbi warned his flock to moderate their behavior.



Deportation of Hungarian Jews

But the tough German retaliation caused revulsion. On the German side they pointed to the Western powers inhumane carpet bombing (of a number of cities) forcing the German leadership towards this line but this did not justify the inhumanity of the deportation. There are many people who tried to help their Jewish acquaintances and friends but this did not change the situation.

My father struggled during these months. As a result of the anti-Jewish regulations there was a vacancy as a notary in Székesfehérvár. My father was a notary in Kalocsa at this time and the family had long been looking for a vacancy in Székesfehérvár. Kata my sister and her husband had already lived there for a number of years. Béla my brother-in-law was a town doctor and it seemed that as my father was aging the best solution in his old age would be to be close to his daughter.

When the said vacancy became available in Székesfehérvár the family's first thought was that he should apply for a transfer. I also talked to Lajos (Louis) Radovics the head of the department and he supported the application.

My father; after thinking about the circumstances of this vacancy and no matter how much he wanted the Székesfehérvár transfer decided that he would not be able to accept the position as this would disturb his conscience and he charged me to tell Lajos Radovics to withdraw his application on these grounds.

Radovics just said that he understood my father's position and sent his warm greetings. The terror of losing the war increasingly reared its head. An old Budapest lawyer friend of István Antal who was considered an 'English friend' told us that the Western Powers felt that the end of the war was still very far away because eventually the Anglo-American powers would turn against the Soviet Union. This news was brought from the Turkish Embassy.

The majority of people were still hoping that eventually we would come under British occupation and therefore everyone followed with great attention the advance of British 8th Army in Italy. The landing success of the Western powers, the attempted assassination of Hitler obviously caused by a deep military dissention all dealt a blow to the people's faith even in the fact that maybe the war could finish in a negotiated peace.

Finland announced late August that it had requested a truce from the Soviet Union. For us this was not a direct threat but increasingly it was likely that soon we would have to face reality. The Romanian betrayal had directly and fatally affected our situation. Finland ensured the safety of German units on the Finnish front but the Romanians turned against its ally and resulted in the capture of a division of the German army. The Romanians also made it possible that the Russian forces could go around the Carpathian Mountains and opened the Tartar mountain line making it very difficult to protect the north-eastern Carpathians.

My brother-in-law Béla was recently called up to serve and do his duty in the Székely Land. Horthy then thought that it was time to make desperate attempts to exit the country from the war. He dismissed the Sztójay government and appointed a government official. This position was filled by Lieutenant General Lakatos who assumed this heavy position. At the same time the position of Minister of Justice also changed hands. István Antal retired and was replaced by Law Preparatory Department chief Gábor Vladár the President of the

Royal Curia. However, the secretary positions did not change. János Lányi and I continued to serve in our positions.

Gábor Vladár was a highly cultivated jurist, nationalist minded conservative person who never had any political connections. That is why our secretarial work was reduced as he never met political visitors and his relation with the department was increasingly unstructured.

The balance of the fighting in Transylvanian was increasingly turning against us and could anticipate the emptying of Northern Transylvania.

In this situation I made preparations to have Ica and the two little boys to return to Budapest. I thought that we could be safer in a big city if eventually law and order were turned upside down.

I was very alone. My afternoons were free till the evening and I did not know what to do with my time. One afternoon, after work I wandered into a movie theatre on the Pest side near the Margit (Margaret) Bridge and I watched a movie the title of which I don't remember. When I came out of the performance I collided into an old friend from Szeged, Vilmos Obetkó. We started to talk and eventually said goodbye on the corner of Margaret Boulevard and Keleti Károly (East Charles) Street. I knew Obetkó from Szeged. He was a member of the Emericánás (Catholic University) but we often met. Béla Csikós-Nagy worked with Tivadar (Theodore) Surányi Unger at the Economic Faculty; he also spent a few months in Berlin on a Mitteleuropaeischer Wirtschaftstag (Central European Business Forum) scholarship. I knew that he served in the Industry Ministry. At that time he was a forensic lawyer. They said that while he was the treasurer of the Hungarian - German Society he committed irregularities and the Industry Minister accepted his resignation. It was also said that Jenő (Eugene) Lutilszky the head of the Presidents Department of the Ministry of Justice and the industry affairs hushed up these charges and so was appointed to the Justice Department Drafting arm.

Of course, I did not let him know that I had known about this event. After reviving the memories of Szeged, the subject reverted to politics. Obetkó by then had no trust in anything or that matters would become right and he counted on the fact that we would soon come under Russian occupation. When I began to lament what horrors were waiting for us he elaborated that the young of those in high positions should not think of escaping



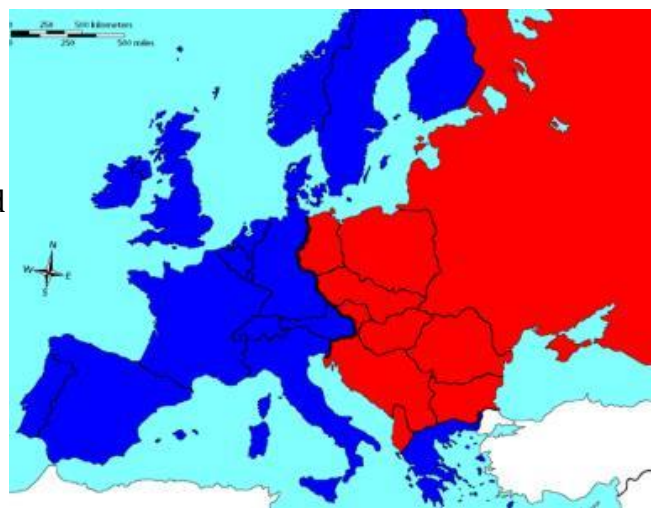
we should not let the people down and explained that the occupying powers will also need qualified administrative officials.

I could not disagree or introduce fresh argument but kept repeating: Maybe you're right, but I cannot imagine myself living here in Budapest while Russian soldiers stroll in our streets... Then we shook hands and I never saw him again. I did come across his name some years later when I learned that he had changed his name to Vilmos Olty and as Council President took part in the show trial of the Primate of Hungary Cardinal Mindszenty. Fate however caught up with him and he was brought to court on currency crimes and then there was also news that he committed suicide. Recently, however, I read a Hungarian newspaper saying he was still alive.

But then my bachelor existence ceased and Ica and the two little boys were back at home. My mother brought a domestic worker for us, Maria, who the boys later nicknamed "Mayaka". But life in Budapest was very difficult. The procurement of food was difficult and our pantry was empty especially because Ica had been living in the country for months. The air raid alarms forced us into the cellars all too often. Once the house was hit with a fire bomb but fortunately, we were able to put out the flames.

During these weeks Ica told me the good news that there was a third little one on the way, but certainly it only increased the uncertainty and we were unsure about the future.

The Conservative Members of the government even then hoped that we would be able to avoid the Russian occupation and had high hopes of the British 8th Army's advances in Venice. They did not want to take into account that there was already a full agreement between the US and the Soviet Union in the sense that the Soviet's sphere of influence would be drawn at the Stettin-Trieste line.



The Iron Curtain described by Churchill at Westminster College, The Stettin-Trieste Line

I think there was an American air raid against Csepel when all the ministry staff went down to the cellars. The alarm had not yet been called off, but the minister and some people ventured out into the yard and gathered around Gábor Vladár who spoke reassuringly to

them that with the accelerated advance of the 8th Army, and there was hope that they will soon come into Hungarian territory. I could not resist pointing out very politely that this was not likely because unfortunately we were in the Russian sphere of influence. The minister did not respond to my comments.

Gábor Vladár the eternal optimist considered the news of the Russian invasion positively. Both he and Lajos (Louis) Radovics stressed that when the commander of the Soviet troops arrived in Transylvania, they were met by Bishop Áron Márton and they also believed that news was wrong in describing the way the Russian troops were supposed to have conducted themselves.

The government officially continued to stress that we must continue to fight against the enemy. However, the city was full of the news that we will conclude a truce.

The Lakatos government was to be sworn in parliament on September 16 and I accompanied Vladár Gábor for the sitting. The secretaries of the Ministers were placed in a separate area and so I could take part in this truly historic meeting. The deputies appeared to be in almost full strength. András Tasnádi Nagy chaired the meeting and, in a general's uniform Géza Lakatos gave the assembly lots of color.



Géza Lakatos

In these months somehow party differences became blurred because no one thought the different elements of domestic politics were important and the deputies were full of concern for the backward-moving front and the advancing enemy who appeared so alien to our social order as based on the news preceding them.

The large landowners who were against land reform, the Christian national politicians and national radicals pondered how would the nation come out of this threatening situation. During these months and weeks, the National League took shape and it was joined by the vast majority of the anti-Bolshevik deputies. Their published newspaper said that the League believed that the Hungarian nation was ready for further victims and not one soul was willing to surrender before such an alien system. However, the League was in a very delicate situation. The Government appointed by the Governor reiterated that they would continue to fight but they felt along with the people in the street that a crucial step was in the pipeline. Even at this time there were some who were waiting for American or British paratroopers and believed that the situation would be resolved so that we did not come

under Soviet occupation, Others even if they did not believe that the "wonder weapons" would decide the war hoped that the final efforts of the German Empire would lead to a compromised peace.

There was leaked news that the Government was carrying some negotiations with the enemy, and although this could only be carried out with the greatest secrecy, the parliament believed this was unconstitutional and was obviously wary of these official moves.

The presentation speech of Géza Lakatos was conventional. He stressed that the country intends to continue the fight, but he did not discuss the essence of the problem.

Then - apparently with the knowledge of the National League - Tibor Kórody the Arrow Cross parliamentarian spoke in the debate. I knew him personally. He was quite a modest man and for example on the Jewish question he was not unbending. He maintained a good friendship with the Békefy family and visited them several times as well as the Department of Justice in case he could help.

In his speech (Tibor Kórody) he said that he had become aware that the head of state (Governor Horthy) was having armistice negotiations with the Soviet Union. He could not substantiate his allegations because András Tasnádi Nagy interrupted and he called the house to order and declared it an attack on the Governor. He explained that the Governor under the Constitution was the Supreme Warlord but had no right to take this step.

Political action can only be made by the Governor when approved by parliament and the government is responsible to the Parliament which body bears state sovereignty. The governor was the honored guardian of the Constitution for more than twenty years; it therefore cannot be assumed that he would make such a constitutional violation.

Kórody naturally sat down and the Parliament returned to its agenda without further debate over the incident. Yet this interlude was of great significance. In this way, the parliament strongly expressed the view that any possible operation of the head of state in this direction would be considered unconstitutional and against the spirit of parliament.

The National Assembly finally voted confidence in the government.

After the sitting the Members of Parliament spent a long time talking in the corridors and I was waiting for Vladár Gabor, who attended a meeting of the Cabinet. Members mingled and I observed the debates. In my memory I particularly recalled the conversations in the group at whose center was the President of the Party of Transylvania. The group pointed out that the representative's Transylvania area was now almost completely under Soviet

occupation. As a consequence at a confidential meeting, they decided that the Transylvanian representatives would share a varied response to these tragic events. Thus, there will be those who are going to persevere with the German line, others will cultivate the Anglo-Saxon direction and others representing areas under the Russian-Romanian occupation will attempt a reasonable modus vivendi (agree to disagree) with them. I was deeply moved by the stand of the representatives of Transylvania but it thoroughly stirred up my emotions too.

At this time a general mobilizing order was proclaimed "**Officers Marching Orders**" which said that all reserve officers - even if they had been exempted to date - must report on a specified date and place.

On October 6, 1944 on my thirtieth birthday, I had to register at the 'Train Barracks' where the remaining First Reconnaissance Battalion detachment was located.

The Justice Department's policy was that nobody asked for dispensation and so it was natural to have to obey the command. I later learned that this reserve officer recall was one of the steps that were intended for members of the reserve corps to ensure military discipline at the moment of an armistice.

Personally, military service raised mixed feelings in me. Ica and the two little boys had just arrived back to our apartment, she was pregnant and the pantry was empty ...at other times I had been happy and eager to serve, but now my heart sank. The impending political truce was displeasing to endure and yet with this reservation I was pleased to don my uniform. Once again in uniform I appeared in the Department of Justice as an ensign and I said goodbye to Gábor Vladár...

The sensitive Gábor Vladár obviously felt that my call to arms could result in Russian captivity and stressed that the government was only taking steps that would serve the interests of the nation.

To this I just replied with: "**Your Excellency should be assured that the front will fulfill its duty.**"

Rear Cover of book. *I was born on the 6th October 1914. My father was a lawyer **nemescsói Dr. Béla Török** and my mother was **ittebei Katalin Kiss**. On both sides of the family, my ancestry included a member of the Arad Martyrs of Arad (1849) **Ignác Török** and **Ernő Kiss**. I completed my schooling in my home town of Szeged and in 1936 was awarded a doctorate of law with honors 'Summa cum laude' from the University of Ferenc József.*

*I became acquainted with **Ica Láng** during my university years; she attended the Public Teachers Training School. Our love was strong between us and in the autumn of 1940, we were married in Budapest at the Saint Stephen Basilica.*

After my university training I joined for the usual one-year volunteer military service. After my discharge I lived in Berlin for two years on a government scholarship staying at the Hungarian College of Berlin. During these years I studied Constitutional Law partly on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

By this time I decided on my career and started practicing law at the Szeged district. I completed the judge and attorney's degree with honors and in 1942 I won appointment as a Royal Judge of the Criminal Court in Budapest. I was invited to serve in the Ministry of Justice. For a few years I worked in the Legal Review Department and later worked with István Antal and Minister Gábor Vladár as their private secretary. In the autumn of 1944, on my thirtieth birthday, I was reclassified as a result of the officers' entry command and, according to my record sheet, I entered military service. My position was that I was able to take my little family with me and my retreating division. This is how we ended up in Bavaria. At that time we had three little children: László, Béla and András.

After dreadful years in Germany, Australia accepted our immigration application and we have now been living for over fifty years in Sydney on the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

I first qualified as an accountant, but then I completed the local law studies and spent the last two decades of working life as a lawyer. My sons are adults and we have fourteen grandchildren. So, in the evening of my life, it is understandable that I remember past events and wish to convey my thoughts to our offspring.

In any case, I would like to emphasize that I do not regard my memories as a historical work. These are contemporary views, but perhaps in this sense, can be considered as source work for later historians. I belong to the hundreds of thousands who from great distance from our homeland, had never stopped from being Hungarians and with all our efforts wished we could once again contribute to the renewal of Hungary. Therefore, in my recollections, I have tried

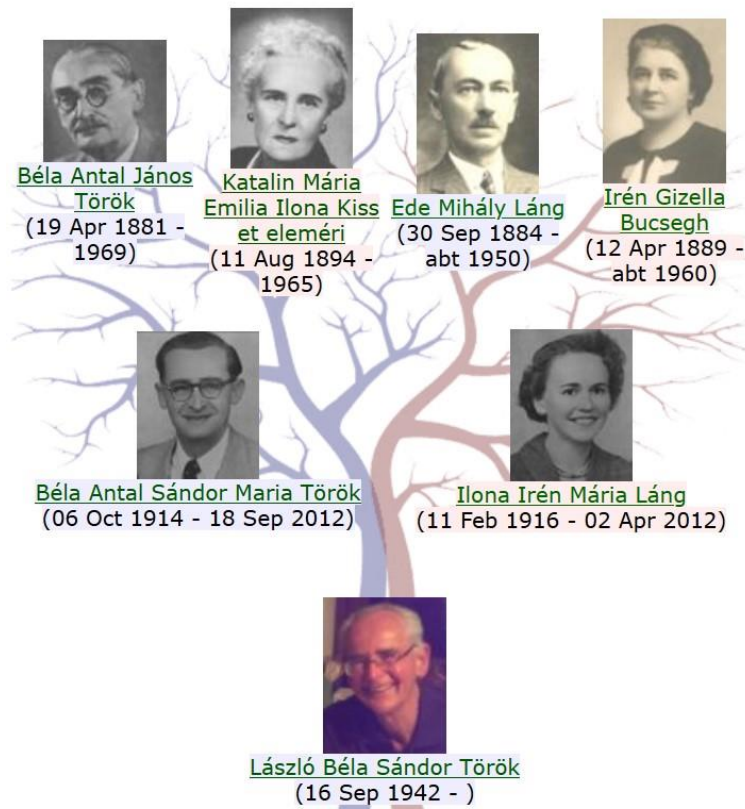
first to outline the true story of the quarter century which was smeared by the Russian occupation powers.

However, I would also like to show my view of the current world situation. We who have been scattered around the world, fate may have expanded our horizons and therefore hope that this book will help the current Hungarian population.

Finally, I wrote these modest memories of the 20th century in memory for the Hungarians lost to their Hungarian homeland.



The author Béla Török and his sons



Immediate Török Family Tree



Béla Antal Sándor Maria Török

6 Oct 1914 - 18 Sep 2012

Brother of [Katalin Klementina Judith Mária \(Török\) Csabai](#)

Husband of [Ilona Irén Mária \(Láng\) Török](#)

Father of [Leslie \(Török\) Torok](#), [Bill Török](#) and [Andrew Török](#)



Béla Antal János Török

19 Apr 1881 - 1969

Szeged



Katalin Mária Emilia Ilona Kiss et eleméri

11 Aug 1894 - 1965

Király Hegyes



Sándor József Török

16 Mar 1844 - 18 Apr 1888

Szeged, Csongrád, Hungary



Etel Josepha Anna Koór

28 Mar 1852 - 11 Dec 1916

Jászberény, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Magyarország



Elemér Kiss de Elemér

22 Nov 1857 - 23 Mar 1896

Wien Austria



Gizella Erzsébet Tekla Blaskovich

30 Aug 1860 - abt 09 Apr 1940

Csanádpalota, Csongrád, Hungary

Antal Franciscus Török

05 Feb 1815 - 1886

Bazin, Pozsony, Hungary

Hermina Preiszler

14 Sep 1822 - abt 1900

János Koór Péterfalvi

abt 1803 - 03 Sep 1881

Szatmár, Magyarország

Terézia Lachmann

07 Oct 1814 - abt 1888

Miklos Kiss de Elemér

1813 - 05 Nov 1882

Temesvár, Temes, Magyarország

Helena Damaszkini

29 Dec 1827 - 1886

István József Bertalan

Blaskovich de Ebeck

abt 17 Nov 1828 - 16 Jun 1881

Tibolddaróc, Borsod, Magyarország

Amália Rónay de Zoltán

26 Oct 1839 - 12 Jun 1900

Nagykirályhegyespusztaszentmária, Magyarország