

# Mein Dampf - My Steam



Paul  
Lukas

**VOL. 1**



---

**STORIES**

**from the**

**OLD**

**WORLD**

***NIHIL OBSTAT***

# PREFACE TO THE INTRODUCTIONS

Mark Twain said (actually wrote):

*"I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened."*

And now Paul Lukas:

*"I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, and unfortunately they all happened - and many more."*

I leave it to the reader to decide which side to take: his, or mine.

You decide.

As to the chronology – if it can be discovered at all in this writing – it does not really exist. Somebody asked once Saint Augustin: "What is time?". He replied something like this: *"If I think of time, I know what it is, on the other hand, if you ask me to explain it, I cannot."* By the way, “modern” science cannot explain it either.

Who am I to challenge St. Augustin and his wisdom? Back to Mark Twain:

*"The old saw says, 'Let the sleeping dog lie. Right. Still, when there is much at stake it is better to get a newspaper to do it'."*

For this reason, I stopped reading newspapers a long time ago.

I can figure out quite accurately myself what will happen.

Likewise, I do not listen to the weather reports. Instead, I look out the window. I can tell right away if it is raining or shining outside. Free.

With this, hopefully I was able to set the tone for this book. All criticism will go unheeded. I am incorrigible.

*"I like criticism, but it must be my way."*

– or –

*"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything".*

All applies. Guess who wrote the above lines. I did. He invented them.

This book contains no index. If you want to know what is in it, read it.

*Good reading!*

## **Warning - Danger --- READ LABEL ---**

For some adults only - the contents of this book may affect your thinking or life. This book contains no politically correct statements.<sup>1</sup>

*This book should be kept away from our precious modern TV and computer-fed children and teenagers at all costs because:*

- it contains no sex
- it contains no lies
- it contains no vulgarity
- it contains no swear words
- it contains no science fiction
- it contains no wild and sick dreams
- it contains no obscenity and profanity

*-- but ---*

- it teaches integrity
- it teaches discipline
- it can teach character
- it contains clean humor
- it teaches human values
- it does not justify excuses
- it teaches to be a *Mensch*<sup>2</sup>
- it quotes from famous people
- it could be a clean entertainment
- it is factual in its treatment of events
- it portrays violence as a negative value
- it sets an example to serve your society
- it is honest in portraying events, good or bad
- it can teach survival under adverse conditions
- it teaches respect for and obedience to parents
- it may teach what not to do in order to stay alive
- it can teach self-respect and the value of honesty
- it points out the fallacies and horrors of dictatorships
- it demonstrates the educational value of self-reliance
- it does not pretend of being anything else but a book
- it treats subjects as they were seen at the happenings
- it may give the idea of the existence of a Supreme Entity
- it may teach the value of endurance in the face of danger
- it calls the shots as they happened even if self-incriminating
- it may give the impression that total government power is not good
- it teaches the value of standing up for justice armed with the weapon of truth
- it has no reverence for politics, the art and science of corruption, lying, and deliberate deception
- it teaches compassion for decency, truth, for fellow humans regardless of race, religion, and other totally unimportant factors, willing to expose oneself to danger in order to save other's property and life who can not help themselves.



<sup>1</sup> for the definition of 'politics', see next page.

<sup>2</sup> '*Mensch*' in German: 'man, human being'. But Jewish people know by heart, what it *really* means: a feeling, loving, living, caring entity.

## ‘Politics’ Defined.

The following text was taken exactly as it appears in Webster's New Practical Dictionary.

Copyright © 1961 by G. C. MERRIAM CO. - page 499:

" **pol'i-tics** (pŏ-lī-tīks), n.   **1.** The science and art of government.   **2.** The management of affairs of public policy; also, management of affairs of political parties; in a bad sense, dis-honest management of political parties for the sake of securing success in elections.   **3.** political affairs as a profession or chief interest. " - Underlining is mine.

How about a later edition: Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Copyright © 1989 by Merriam-Webster Inc., page 910:

" **pol-i-tic** \ 'päl-ə,-tik \ *adj* [**ME** *politik*, fr. **MF** *politique*, fr. L. *politicus*, fr. Gk *politikos*, fr. *polités* citizen - more at POLICE] (15c)   **1 :** POLITICAL   **2 :** characterized by shrewdness in managing, contriving, or dealing   **3 :** sagacious in promoting a policy   **4 :** shrewdly tactful *syn* see EXPEDIENT, SUAVE. " - Underlining is mine.

Page 911:

" **pol-i-tics** \ 'päl-ə,-tiks \ *n pl but sing or pl in constr* [Gk *politika*, fr. neut. pl. of *politikos* political] (ca. 1529)   **1 a :** the art or science of government   **b :** the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy   **c :** the art or science with winning and holding control over a government   **2 :** political actions, practices, or policies   **3 a :** political affairs or business; *specif* : competition between competing interest groups or individuals for power and leadership (as in a government)   **b :** political life esp. as a principal activity or profession   **c :** political activities characterized by artful and often dishonest practices   **4 :** the political opinions or sympathies of a person   **5 :** the total complex of relations between people and society. - Underlining is mine.

(NOTE:

*Do not look for the word "dishonest" in the Random House dictionary in connection with politics - it is not there in the edition I looked up. This, in my opinion, is also politics in a subtle way.*

*I checked the Hungarian official dictionary as well, almost the same, references to pejorative expressions included. So, next time you hear a 'politician' (maybe corrupt by definition) lie to you - don't get upset, it is in the specification of politics. Would you by a car which has the following specifications:*

*"The ignition system and the suspension of this model is corrupted.*

*Also is the speedometer, which may not reflect the actual speed of the vehicle."*

*In case the police officer arrests you for doing twice the speed limit, why not explain to him that you are innocent - you are just a politician and such, you are entitled to perform accordingly - dishonestly! And now if the above was not convincing enough, read 'The Rest of the Story')*

**Roget's Pocket Theasaurus:**  
Based on Roget's International Theasaurus  
of English Words and Phrases (105<sup>th</sup> printing, May 1975)

*Politics, item# 702.*

**702. Cunning.** - *N. cunning*, craft, subtlety, maneuvering, temporization; circumvention; chicane, chicanery; sharp practice, knavery, jugglery, concealment, a negro in the woodpile [*colloq.*], guile, duplicity, foul play.

**diplomacy**, politics, Macchiavellianism; gerrymander, jobbery, back-stairs influence.

**artifice**, art, device, machination; plot, maneuver, stratagem, dodge, wile, trick, trickery, ruse, finesse, subterfuge, evasion, white lie, gold brick [*colloq.*], imposture, deception, net, trap.

**schemer**, trickster, sly boots [*humorous*], fox, reynard; intriguer, man of cunning.

*V. intrigue*, live by one's wits; maneuver, gerrymander, finesse, double, temporize, circumvent, outdo, get the better of, throw off one's guard; surprise, waylay, undermine, flatter; have an ax to grind.

*Adj. cunning*, crafty, artful, skillful; subtle, feline, deep, profound, designing, timeserving, tricky, wily, sly, insidious, stealthy, underhand, double-faced, shifty, deceptive; deceitful, crooked; shrewd, acute; sharp, canny, astute, knowing. ---- (I think no underline is necessary.)

*These are the political leaders –  
Any wonder why the World is in a sad state?*

**INTRODUCTION TO THE INTRODUCTION**

*--- caveat lector ---*

- reader beware -

The content of this book is nearly totally disorganized chronologically and otherwise in an effort to achieve a condition approaching Entropy 1, maximized random dis-organization, the tendency of things in this Universe as formulated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics. This feature will be eminently obvious to the reader from the first page on. Typos, misspelling, PEG (Poor English Grammar) and other unique features considered by some as aberrations are intended here for your entertainment, hence I wish to bring up the following inexcusable excuses concerning my penmanship:

*"I don't give a damn for a man that can spell a word only one way" ---*

*"Beware of the struggling young author, my friends. Whom God sees fit to starve,  
let no man presumptuously rescue to his own undoing."*

---- Mark Twain ---- so do not blame me.

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

After the birth of our beloved planet, the so-called Earth about four-and-a-half billion years ago according to ‘some scientists’, they still argue about the exact time - yes, the exact time, give or take a few million or billion years - as to when did it happen. Some religionists insist that the Earth (and the Universe too, perhaps) is only about 6000 years old. The ratio is only 1-to-750.000, a minutia by Government standards. Congress makes errors of similar magnitude in the budget and not too many people get upset about it. The latest number at the writing of this issue is 13.787 billion years,  $\pm 0.020$  billion. Why all this noise and commotion then? A human being lives *only* about 120 years or so maximum anyway, but Liberals may live shorter. Or longer, as their punishment because they have to put up with the Conservatives. The Rubik cube can teach you how to look at things in different ways in this world. Maybe in some others too. Some notes on the Rubik cube can be found toward the end of the book.

I took the advice of an ancient Chinese speckle of wisdom which states: "When you reach the age of 60, call all your friends and relatives together and throw the biggest party you can afford, (this in itself is a good advice) because you have reached the *halfway mark* of your life!" This infinitely fine line of demarcation at 60 will haunt you throughout your remaining life if you manage to live *that* long - trust me - like it or not.

Nevertheless, this brings up the obvious question: when did time begin? Is there a possible answer? Is modern science capable of determining the beginning of time - give or take a few billion? (Talking of millions and billions, Ladies and Gentlemen I must remind you at this time that this is not a discussion of a Congressional Debate over the budget appropriation proposed for an Untitled Entitlement). So, the question still remains: When did time begin?

One of the ideas in the scientific community in this connection is the presently advertised 'modern' "Big Bang" theory formulated by theoretical physicists in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, quite recently, that is.

*Wagner's music is better than it sounds* --- Mark Twain

*The Big Bang (Theory) is older than it is* --- Paul Lukas

[illegible]



*"In the beginning*

*There was neither existence nor non-existence.*

*All this world was unmanifest energy ---*

*The One breathed, without a breath, by its own power,*

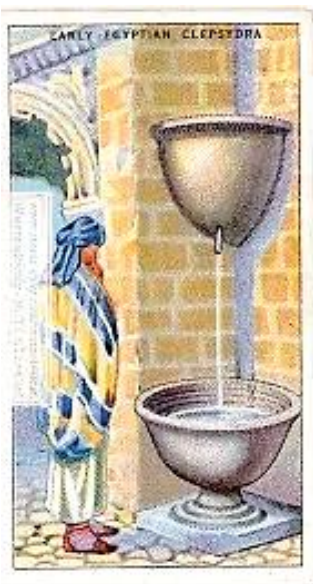
*Nothing else was there."*

**Hymn of Creation --- The Rig Veda** [underline is mine.]

Do you remember  $E = mc^2$  - and the rest? Some folks have known something about this eons ago. Is this science or religion at its best or what? The question still remains: among the two sources, which one is science, and which one is religion? People seeking a satisfactory answer to this vexing problem of time so far neglected to ask me about it. Why? Nobody believes that I can give a cohesive, airtight hypothesis – if there is such thing? Or fact, for that matter?

To the chagrin of those timid ones afraid to ask me for the answer, I will offer a solution voluntarily by stating that I have an answer, none of this give-or-take a few millions or billions. The beginning of time was in 1930 AD<sup>1</sup>. That is the year I was born, and for me, that was *de facto* the time of beginning. Well, well, a few months earlier, for the sake of the purists or if you are a Catholic. Some people believe that time begins when their children grow up and leave the house. For my favorite timepeaces, see the next page.

Another nice circumstance is that the monks way back then, who's job was to decipher the happenings for the Pope, not only neglected to start counting from zero, but by converting the previous calendar system to the Julian one, stole another year - maybe more. According to this then, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was born when he was at least 2 years old, maybe 4! *Hurrah Homo Sapiens!* Figure when were you all born.



*Early*

*Egyptian*

*waterclock*

*Elephant*

*waterclock*

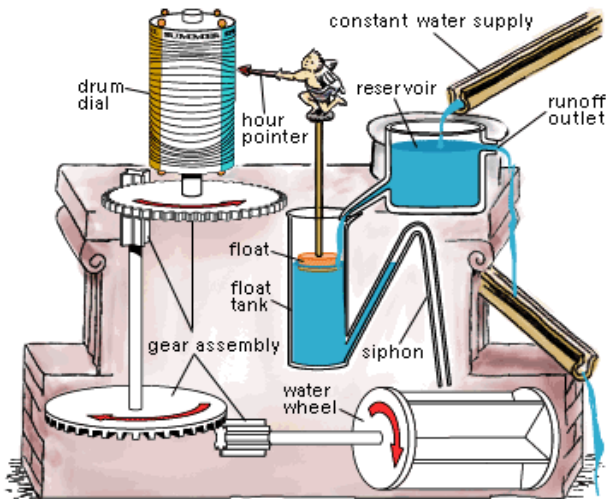
*from*

*1206*



<sup>1</sup> The number '1930' is a lie. The bright people who started the fad which provided the basis for the Julian Calendar, started counting the years at '1', not with '0'. Those days 'zero' had no meaning, since it is actually means 'nothing', so why worry about it? Therefore, according to this 'scientific' calculation relating back to the calendar baseline with all the other errors committed, all people are born at age 1, 2, 3, or 4 take your pick. No exceptions. *Viva Homo Sapiens!*





## *Clepsydra - Water Thief*

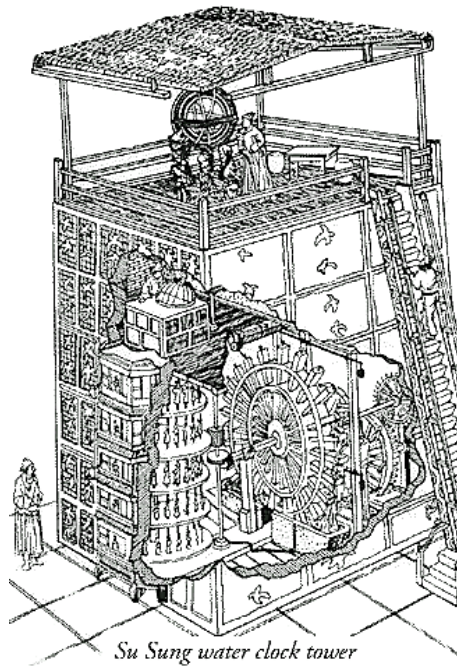
*works with wine too,  
but needs recalibration.*

*my favorite clepsydra –*

*(ouzo and vodka*

*would*

*evaporate too fast)*



## The Chinese Clepsydra –

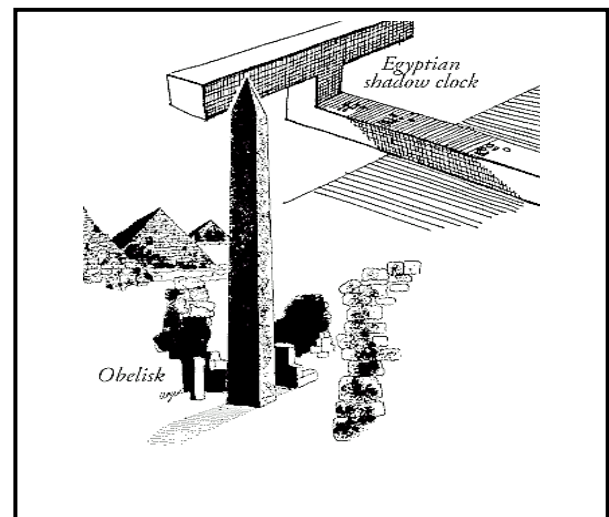
*not exactly a wristwatch, but  
it was more spectacular, and  
nobody could steal it from  
you ...*

*besides, it needed a female  
assistant!*

## **Ancient Egyptian ingenuity - the sundial**

\*\*\* \*\*

*During my trip to India, I had  
the fortune to see a similar one  
designed by an Indian scientist  
– I could read the minutes!*



## Tempus Fugit –

### -- *The Running Time - a short and grim historical account of the past era I grew up in--*

The formative sheltered early years of my life were going quite well. As far as formation is concerned, **military formation**. And **bomb shelters**. My father, an Army Officer who was a First Lieutenant with a Doctor degree in Law at that time lived with a fairly good-looking woman, actually with his wife (my beloved Dear Mother, nevertheless) in various military buildings where his duty demanded, the best ones a poor country could afford - and those were not necessarily luxurious, believe me. I can recount numerous occasions when through my deeds - misdeeds actually - I gave my father from an early age some unforgettable insight as to what to expect from his offspring in the future to come. I grew up in military buildings, stewed in the scent of the lubricant grease for machine-guns and other antiquated instruments of peace. Or war, depending on your aspect angle toward the subject. I must state here that a boiling pot of chicken-paprikash excited me far more than weapon grease unless I was very-very hungry. As I found out later in my life, tree bark and tree leaves taste better than machine-gun grease, I tried them all, and definitively not because I liked the stuff. Hunger. In connection with the subject, let me quote here a piece of advice (if you win, it was good advice, if not, it was bad) by ancient Latinos: "**Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum**". If you want peace, prepare for war. Shooting enthusiasts should remember this when they let loose their high-powered "**Parabellum**" projectiles. Are you guys for peace?

The Hungarian people (actually there are still such at his writing) wanted peace, and for that end they did not want to excessively arm themselves, did not have the money for it anyway. A big, big mistake, as we will see later. And, if they had armed themselves more, it would have been an even bigger mistake. It seems that they were preparing for peace and unknowingly inviting war simultaneously, which created a big confusion. You cannot do that, as history taught them - too late. You can't win anyway, if you are small and peace-loving, especially if you do not pay attention to politics. Hungary, after the Germans lost the war forced on them (twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), two-third of the territory and population in the so called "**Peace Treaty**" of Trianon on June 4, 1920, was taken away following WW I, subjecting her to the largest injustice by far committed against any nation in modern history by so-called "**civilized, Western**" victors. Later, by the disgustingly stupid, arrogant, and belligerent politics of Austria-Germany, Hungary - an unwilling and overpowered satellite<sup>2</sup> again - against her wishes - was swept in the sea of hatred and war by those two.

To the right (looking at the map of Europe, north up) was the Russian Motherland - **the whipping boys of the West** - with her 160 plus millions or so Asiatic barbarian masses ready to overrun us and tear us to pieces, if we do not go with them. It happened before. To the left 80 million (not less barbarian) Germans in their Fatherland, armed to the teeth brandishing the world's most advanced army at that time - 1938 - ready to run over and devastate us if we do not side with them. Hungary sat in-between, eyes closed waiting for the big blow, with 8 million almost totally disarmed farmers and lawyers. My heart goes out for those diligent, hardy and self-sacrificing **farmers** who, with their sweat fed the nation (**including the lawyers**) in good and bad days. (During WW-II they were machine-gunned down for fun by Allied fighter planes from above while they worked on the fields. No, not the lawyers.)

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<sup>2</sup> If somebody does not believe this, read a book titled "Hungary: The Unwilling Satellite" by John Flournoy Montgomery, Ambassador Extraordinaire to Hungary, sent by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the '30-s as a 'listening post', to gather information on the developing war sentiment promulgated primarily by Germany.

And the blow came. Hungarians were outnumbered 30 times at least. And after WW II, Hungary was punished again by the victors – "how come", they say – "you did not put up a successful fight against the Germans?" The Hungarian Air Force (*Air Farce*, more accurately) - if you can call it that - for instance at the beginning of WW II consisted of a few dozen canvas-coated 1st WW leftover Italian Fiat biplanes and similar, some even had a small *sling shot* (machine-gun) mounted on them! Wow! A small biplane - matching the postage stamp size country - with 2 sling shots counted as a *super fortress!* According to some "political experts" the Hungarians were supposed to stop the war-proven (the German-aided Generalissimo Franco in the Spanish civil war, you know) and at that time super-modern Messerschmitts and Stukas! The US and Allies with their incredibly large supplies, determination, war machinery and material reserves had to throw down everything but kitchen sink on Germany to stop them, and the war still lasted for over 6 years! I computed the chances of the "Hungarian *Royal* Air Force" (Hungary had no king since before WW-I) against the *American forces alone* - based upon firepower, airplane numbers, types and production, pilot training and availability, fuel, and ammunition availability, etc. as multiplier factors. The number comes out to be about 2500-to-1! If every Hungarian pilot had shot down 2500 American planes, it would have been still a standoff of 50-50 or so at best. And the British and Russian planes? Ridiculous. Do you think the Hungarians did not know this at the beginning of the war? The Hungarian Prime Minister at that time, Dr. Teleki Pál, an eminent scientist and patriot summed it up beautifully after the 2nd WW started:

**" N o m a t t e r w h o t h e w i n n e r s w i l l  
b e , H u n g a r y w i l l b e t h e l o s e r . "**

He was totally right; the country was forced by Germany-Austria into a "lose-lose" proposition as in the 1st World War too. Shortly after he said this, he was dead. Most likely he was murdered by the German secret police, the *Gestapo* due to his opposition to the war. Suicide is also possible, but unlikely. Indeed, why the Hungarians did not beat up neither the Germans, nor the Russians or both simultaneously?! Outnumbered 30-to-1 in population? Had no weapons? So, what! Don't give us all these stupid and irrelevant excuses! Likewise, I myself never forgive the now 10 million Hungarians for this irresponsibility and neglect by not jumping immediately, without hesitation upon the opportunity of a national suicide by attacking the 80 million Germans, when the German Army was at its peak, and simultaneously the 160 million Russians as well! Neither forgave this fact the victors, who remembered this flaw in the Hungarian character at the ensuing Yalta Agreement in 1945. The British Prime Minister summed it up nicely upon concluding the 2nd World War - comparing Hitler with Stalin:

**We Cut the Head off the Wrong Pig"**

*(Sir Winston Churchill)*

The pathetic motto: "*if in doubt, punish the Hungarians*" became a cruel reality again. After all, they are small, decimated and can not defend themselves, have no oil, no weapons, they are already beaten, they are demoralized by the unwanted war lost for them by the Germans, therefore nobody has to worry about them, they can not resist but accept the verdict. Right? (They do not even belong to any of the known and accepted groups of Europe: they are not Germanic, not Slavs, not Latinos, not English, not Scandinavians, not even Greeks! What are they - no one understands them! Hopeless.) The country was handed over to mass-murderer and stage-coach robber ex-priest novice "Uncle Joe Stalin" with a smile, alias Yosip Vissarionovitch - no questions asked, and free hand given. First the Nazis devastated the country, forcibly taking many of our untrained farmers (not enough lawyers), and high school boys, the cream of the country (like my brother) to the war, to the Russian front positioned in front of the German Tiger tanks facing the

other enemy, the Communist T-34 tanks - to be slaughtered like rabbits, then the massive Allied bombings decimated us, then the Russian bombings and artillery, then the war front and Russian tanks trundled through her destroying most of what little was left so far, not to talk about the Russian soldiers who got free hand in pilfering, raping and murdering - and if that was not enough - turn loose Communism on them (the second time in the Century) in the name of Holy Democracy. Thank you, Mr. F.D.R. Apologists to these events recount that to err is human. I like to quote my all time-favorite in this connection:

***"All that I care to know is that a man is a human being –  
that is enough for me; he can't be any worse".*** (Mark Twain)

Cynical? Not at all. Just very much to the point - check your history books (if you have any.)

'Nuff said about the fun part of history. The following is an account of a skinny (not now!) sometimes half-starved kid, who beat the odds all the time and thus survived and now has a satisfied broad (**very broad**) smile on his face. He has buried Murphy for good (well, for awhile, anyway). He has arrived. He kissed the ground of the Land of the Proud and Free when he stepped on it the first time, right on the tarmac, thanks to the courtesy of the US Air Force which brought him ashore from the barbwire-surrounded barracks - legally. He can recommend the experiences described in the following chapters as therapy - no sessions with a psychologist are necessary – for the benefit of those who can only complain about **their bad luck**, nothing else. Instant cure. It works. Guaranteed.

#### Just a note:

American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the '40-s gave the Russian Communists **11,3-billion-dollar** worth of help under the “Land-Lease” title. Now, in 2015 this amount would be over a **trillion** - based upon the Consumer Price Index. I found in Hungary a small cardboard box made in Chicago printed in English and Russian, originally holding Russian military decorations for the soldiers’ heroism in shooting us. Talked to an American Merchant Marine friend who was delivering the goods to Russian harbors. Upon arrival, the American soldiers were corralled and locked up in large stalls. One soldier got furious and broke the door open. He was immediately machine gunned to pulps by Russian soldiers. Did Roosevelt report this? ----- Birds from the feathers -----



NEW  
FRANCE

HUNGARY  
NOW

The man wearing the T-shirt  
was photographed in  
Budapest.

France would look like as  
shown - about 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the  
country turned over to  
others if their Trianon  
example was applied to  
France.

What would the French  
people say if presented with  
this picture?





***RUSSIAN TANKS SPREADING “DEMOCRACY” IN  
HUNGARY WITH THE PERMISSION AND FOR THE  
AMUSEMENT OF THE “CIVILIZED WEST” ...***

## **THE REVOLUTION OF OCTOBER 23, 1956**

***— ABOUT 67 YEARS AGO IN 2023 —***

***Some Preview as to what to expect further down the line.....***

*or*

*young kids are always needed - for one thing or for another:*

Not from the standpoint of some dictator who is planning to capture the children's mind at an early age and subdue them by indoctrination and intimidation and use this mindless conglomeration of masses turned trash earmarked to carry out blindly his/her sickly plans. History is full of these shady characters, just listen to the radio and TV, read your daily paper and the history books.

What we are talking about is just kids, as I remember myself at that age who successfully resisted brainwashing and was able to appeal to the Nature-implemented unquenchable ideal of freedom. The ones who grow up and become soldiers. I did not, however, although I was in the Communist Red Army (jail)<sup>3</sup> too long - for almost a full day. I was arrested for not reporting to military service in time. This heinous and by them unthinkable deed evoked martial law there.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix ‘A’ for description.

The idea of ‘Conscientious Objector’ was not known in the Workers’ Paradise and was rewarded with bullets - usually after considerable torture. I knew this and was destined to be executed on the grounds of the Communist Military Court, on one of the dozen or so gallows positioned between large army trucks which were fired up to suppress the death cry of the unfortunate victims in the center of town - ***but miracles still happen***. I have no knowledge of anybody coming out alive from that court building. I am still here, however, read on. I did not join the Red Army because – among other things - I was a sharpshooter even at that age and did not want to fight against you, my friends in the Free World. It would have been unfair (to you), why should I shoot at my friends - it made no sense to me.

***“If people would be their own dictators,  
there would not be room on this Earth for the real ones.”***

***This is Paul’s Principle, aphorism (ἀφορισμός) #1.*** Think of that for a moment. The key words are in this connection: ***goodwill, intelligence based on discipline*** – ever diminishing qualities these days. Nothing else is needed. With these three ingredients, no dictator could flourish. Intelligence in this context encompasses the idea that goodwill, one’s behavior should consider the striving for the benefit for all, not a selfish manifestation of slogans proffered by politicians. At the same time, I do not demean the ideals of entrepreneurship and commercialism, the cornerstones of success in a free society. Discipline, on the other hand, is self-limiting in nature. It ***can*** keep balance between the excesses – even if they are conceived by the best of intentions – to shape, ***optimize***, and ***not maximize*** the outcome of the endeavor one is undertaking. This awkward principle can be demonstrated by everyday happenings. Do you want examples? - just one or two of the thousands: to ***maximize*** the output of the crops, farmers (with the aid of the chemical companies who made huge ***maximized*** profits) started using DDT and other substances to subdue the ‘enemies’ of the plants. One of the main concerns was the loss caused by birds and worms sampling the fruit on the trees. So, chemicals were used to eradicate the problem, which, in turn caused a chain of undesirable events. Birds, the natural containment agents which feed predominantly on insects including the harmful ones, were seriously harmed – the poison intended to (fortunately banned by now in most places) the insects also decimated the bird population: direct poisoning, the egg shells became soft and could not protect the young life within, eggs became infertile, birds became infertile, killing of beneficial insects which feed upon the harmful ones, the runoff dissolving the poison seeping into the soil, the water entering the rivers and the sea, further poisoning the fish and other creatures humans feed on, etc. Birds, in general eat one or more times the weight of their own bodies, which could mean many thousands or insects each day per bird! Sundays included. Saturdays too, if you are not an ***orthodox***. Other poisons may be somewhat less destructive, but still deadly – by entering the sea they provide food for algae, which can proliferate to a degree that chokes off animal life in the waters by using up the available oxygen. There are other harmful effects too, and the chain of consequences goes for ever.

Years ago, Penney’s department stores adjacent to the elevator buttons displayed a nice shiny brass plate. The plate said something like this: ‘we charge less price and this way we return the profit to you’. They indeed had good prices. Then, as the marketplace became unconditionally and apparently irreversibly ***maximized***, the plates were taken off. In the Old Country we have a saying for this “***if you mix with the acorn, you too will be eaten up by the pigs***”. And it happened.

Instead of accepting Nature’s ***balanced*** way which evolved through billions of years, we have the idea of controlling it. One could do so within limits with minimum damage, but this moderation is rarely used. Instead of allowing a 10-15% loss of crops due to birds and other things, we invested several times the money of the loss in so called “preventive” measures. Is that ***really*** Homo Sapiens?

At one time, ladybugs were exterminated in the Midwest, poisoned, because it was *believed* that they are harmful to crops. They were found at the sites of infestations. It never occurred to the “intelligent” growers that the ladybugs were there because they ate the harmful ones! Dozens of tons of ladybugs had to be imported from Europe on planes to replace them when they realized what happened. By then extensive damage was done to the plants, birds, and the pocketbooks of the proliferators. I do not think, however, that the chemical companies which produced the poisons lost too much in the process. The saga goes on, and on. These are but a few examples of the lack of intelligence. Instead of optimizing, we<sup>4</sup> are maximizing the profit. Shear inconsiderate selfish greed, *not* Capitalism, as some like to portray the phenomenon. In the long run, are we really maximizing by disregarding the factors that evolved on this planet for millions or billions of years? *Arrogance* coupled with short-sighted *uncontrolled profit motive*, is the pinnacle of destructive stupidity.

Have you seen lately gasoline prices expressed in other fractions than \$1.59, 2.79, etc. per gallon? Used to be 23, 27, 15, 37, etc. cents. Not anymore. Later: 86.3, 95.7, and later in 2004: \$2.29, etc. Systematic exploitation of psychological “9”-factors governing trade. *Maximizing*. A car is advertised with loud arrogance: it is “*under \$36,000*”. It sells, of course, for \$35,999.95, I have seen one occasion, where the price was \$35,999.99. Squeeze out the money from people, who are conditioned in decades by this trick. The 5 cent “loss” on the car price is thousands of times paid back to the seller by selling the cars to people, who try to “maximize” *their* profit. For a 5 cent “advantage”, they may overlook a deal equal or better, for \$36,000. And the fuel cost and time to travel to the maximizer dealers? No intelligence demonstrated by a fraction of buyers. Expressed in percentage: it is a 0.00278% gain in favor of the buyer. Is it worth? Greed + applied psychology. The buyer would have to buy 20 cars (for a total of \$719,999) at that price, to make a “profit” of \$1!

I plan to write something on this subject in the future. Since optimizing appears to be against 'human nature' as this issue evolved in technocratic societies, the book will fail. The merciless pursuit of larger-and-larger profits shifted the realm of sound and conservative mercantilism toward a condition where the last penny is forced, extracted from the business – at least on paper. This ever increasing demand within the framework of Democracy in the free marketplace evolved into in large uncontrolled greed. Once somebody asked me in a debate over inflation: would you not have a salary 50% larger than the one you receive now? Of course not! – was the answer. If *all areas* of business would stay put, your buying power would be maintained. The person almost fainted. Looking at the problem logically: my salary is now 10-times larger than 50 years ago. The housing and other life supporting necessities about 20-50 times! Which is better? I have far less buying power now than 50 years ago! A series of global disasters – war, drought, pestilence, plague, etc. if happen simultaneously, *could* bring a more equitable attitude around, but don't hold your breath. In case of dire hardships, people have the tendency to get together and be more human. Maybe after WW 3 of the survivors. I've always been an optimist!

### ***Just a note:***

To me, *freedom* is the most important component of life. *Freedom* has many manifestations and can be found in practically all aspects of life – plant, animal, human. Every blade of grass is trying to outgrow its neighbors to gain independence from the shadow their neighbors cast on it, to elevate itself over the others in order to capture more life-giving sunlight. Free-running animals in the open will not knowingly walk into servitude, bondage. Some die if subjected to incarceration by *Homo Sapiens*. In general, people also possess this quality, but at the same time

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<sup>4</sup> Only newspaper editors, kings, and people with tapeworms should use the editorial ‘we’ -- Mark Twain.



devised systems since time immemorial to exploit, incarcerate, torture, kill his/her fellow man – many time in the name of *freedom* itself. What incredible disgusting arrogance and hypocrisy!

*Freedom, Liberty, are the most robust phenomena in the world* as we know it, people fight for them, die for them, and sacrifice themselves for the following generation to live freely..... Éclatant example is the story of the birth of the United States. That is the reason I am here and not elsewhere, escaping from servitude to *freedom* through mine fields and machine gun fire.

Yet, *freedom* at the same time is the most delicate thing as well. Oxymoron? Not to my understanding. When and where *freedom* is the everyday experience, maybe only in academic circles or in university chambers is discussed. But *freedom* becomes an everyday issue once it is lost or is perceived to be threatened – ask people who lost their body parts. Same principle. Numerous examples can be documented of this phenomenon – people under the Communist subjugation, the Nazis, etc., etc. But when the issue emerges and is being harped on in ever increasing frequency, usually it is too late to save it. But only for an undetermined time, because *freedom* will emerge even from the most severely enslaved societies, as it always did – when will *homo sapiens* learn?

## **W i n t e r   P l e a s u r e s ,   H o r s e s , S p a r r o w s ,   S l e d s ,   P h i l o s o p h y   - E a r l y   I m p r e s s i o n s**



Although I always liked the Spring and Summer seasons when the warm sun rays bearing down on the creatures of this Earth are nudging, provoking, inspiring the plants, bugs and other living things to come out to the open and shed the chilling memories of the past winter to playfully frolic and bask in the golden, life-giving rays of hope, power and beauty - the winter nevertheless always fascinated me. I could not get over the white, gracefully descending fluffy stuff when I saw it the first time in my life - the adults called it snow, or something - quietly settling on every horizontal surface and sometimes even on the vertical windowpanes too. The world became silent, beautifully deaf. The snow choked up the revolting noises emanating from ill-tuned automobiles and other mechanical monstrosities indigenous to our new brave modern world. Beautiful quietness engulfed the scene, the type I never experienced before, subconsciously directing the attention to the inner self even at that early age, witnessing the splendid visual effects: slowly, evenly, and consistently descending pure white material apparently from nowhere, occasionally breaking out in a wild swirling cavalcade of glittering white mass at the command of a freak localized wind swell. I observed gravitational forces in action, wind resistance, wind force, atmospheric phenomena, fluid dynamics, equilibrium states, pattern variance, hexagonal crystalline conformance, thermodynamics, physical adhesion and cohesion, pressure-temperature connections, and a host of other natural factors in action without knowing anything about their existence.

Occasionally, in solemn evenings looking out the frosty windowpanes on which my mother thought me to write with my fingernails at the old age of three, remote and ever louder bell sounds were often heard signaling the approach of horse-drawn sleds. Rich people - I thought - could rent or buy these magic, silently gliding exciting vehicles, taking their families for an

unforgettable round-about on the city main streets, glancing at the stores' brilliantly illuminated display windows and heavily clothed couples' arm-in-arm slowly edging home from shopping or from the movies through the glittering curtain of a white transfigured dream. The horses gracefully and apparently in full knowledge of their gala performance, while seemingly effortlessly jogging with a happy gait - let out small clouds of water vapor through their nostrils and mouths as they silently trotted on the frozen snow, leaving two parallel shiny lines behind lending the scene a fairy-tale-like ambiance. Where are these tracks leading to? The lines seemed to be converging in *infinity* in both directions - where they originated from and where they proceeded to. I wondered: are there two infinities?

To my utmost surprise and pleasure, I had the good fortune to take a ride in such a sled. One glorious snowy evening my father rented one. It must have cost a little fortune, I thought. Are we rich? I did not notice before (or after) but I was very happy, nevertheless. Even now, when I am troubled with problems, I close my eyes and the shimmering frozen crystallized water flake scene emerges before my closed eyes and quiet resignation sets in - the exhilaratingly beautiful snow-curtain and the smell of the horses. Calm reclaims my troubles then and when I open my eyes, the problems seem to be half solved already. I unconsciously discovered that I am one with Nature.

Half-frozen little sparrows were descending, chirping happily, and pecking at the arrival of the warm, fresh life-sustaining residue what the sled-pulling horses left behind. I found this quite educational and interesting even at that young age. Those who turn up their noses and shiver at the thought of this scene do not understand anything about life. Or about the other stuff either. But politicians do. They feed their odious residue to billions of people daily literally with the speed of light across the planet, and people by large happily digest it. Not too many people turn up their noses at *that*. Just switch on your radio, TV or read your favorite daily paper and try to analyze the contents with an unbiased mind, if you still have one. When you hear a politician - independent of nationality, sex, or party affiliation - extolling his/her virtues and his/her extraordinary achievements, think of those little innocent sparrows.

*Are you one of those?*

## *Radio and Rosita - my Eternal Loves* --- *ευρεκα!*

At the advanced age of 4 or so, I got thinking: how come, an ugly box on the table can talk. We had an old simple German-made Telefunken (a big name then) radio. It was made of a very ugly dark brown bakelite, (it was the taste at that time) *the* plastic-like stuff available at that time for things. It was about 18 inches high and had a curved top so you could not put your newspaper on it after you read it or anything else without sliding on the floor. But its sound was pretty flat as less expensive old sets. We could not afford a better radio at that time.

Two knobs controlled the box, each knob located at the bottom of the set. The knobs were graduated in 100 divisions. This allowed the lucky listener to tune in to the stations (not too many) next day too if he remembered the numbers. If the left knob was turned beyond a certain point, the set gave out a whistle whose pitch dependent of the right knob, the station tuning knob. I already learned to bring out the most revolting cacophony of this box as soon as I was able to reach up to the controls, to the disapproval of my parents. My father occasionally watched what I was doing but could not prevent the radio from falling on the floor on one occasion and losing one corner of the set. The radio still worked but I was highly

discouraged to touch it again. I was sad, I had to listen to music and such, (including through the gaping hole) instead of the funny noises I used to create by turning-twisting the knobs.

As time passed and I still displayed an interest toward the radio set, my father decided to give me a present at the Holiday Season: a nicely colored book explaining the inner guts of a radio on a very elementary level. I was by then 6 years old, and I could read (not very well), I devoted a lot of time studying the book. As I proceeded to comprehend a few things, it was getting more and more interesting to me.

*"In the first place God made idiots. This was for practice. Then He made School Boards"* Mark Twain.

I was now about school age lad by now and my mother took me to register in the elementary school. *"My dear lady, you can not register your son!"* - was the reply from the official. My mother was totally demolished and near tears. She looked at me and accusingly admonished me that I should have been eating more as she always demanded - now I am too small and scrawny, unfit for school. (She had a point). I felt terrible. I *almost* made an irresponsible vow to eat more from now on. The official listened to this with a half open mouth and with the coolness of a *real* bureaucrat; he told my mother that the size and frame of my body has nothing to do with anything. I was simply born one day too late! Now the responsibility suddenly shifted to my mother. Why were you waiting until it was too late? This was clearly not my fault and I started feeling much better, considering that I could play one more year at home, not struggling in a school room. The final day a student could be legally admitted to the school that was born on September 2nd or before. I was born on the 3rd! My mother gave him a blood-chilling look and we left. It took my father to pull some strings to have me admitted after all, so I do not have to wait at home twiddling my thumb for a full year. One year of playtime lost. Congratulations, School Board!

I was still 6 years old and one winter morning I was ready to go to school. *The* radio [with the broken corner] was on every morning, playing pleasant music for the awakening population preparing for the day's work. Then I heard a singing female voice which captivated me (and a lot of grownup males too!) and could not forget it still this day. I have an album now of phonograph records, made tapes of her singing in Spanish, German, French, Greek - and how beautiful could she whistle! She had a high pitched soprano voice, sweet, heart-grabbing, melodious and arresting, very sexy (although I had no clear concept of that issue at that time, maybe it was a subconscious reaction) - to me, anyway. As I learned later, she was Chilean by birth and her mother was an opera singer - it is clear where the talent came from. Her name was: Maria Martha Esther Aldunate Del Campo, better known as *Rosita Serrano*.

When I am in the melancholic mood while driving on the road, I put her tape in the player - and the world is transformed for me into a beautiful place, I visualize bright sunshine while raining, the stop signs become blossoming trees, the traffic lights become twinkling little colorful stars, the other cars on the road a group of peacefully grazing sheep, the policeman behind me with the red and blue light a wonderful rainbow collection tied in a bouquet - "do you know what you were doing sir?!" - I hear the stentorian voice of a duly anointed official - "do you have a driver's license at all?" It is time to wake up fast and try to explain what nobody can explain, a strange Platonic love of some kind for somebody you never met. The best I can describe what happened way back then is that my awakening masculinity and my love for beauty and music got married in my brain. For ever. Do you think the policeman would accept this explanation for my erratic driving? Please do not try it - you may find yourself in a funny place at least for the next few weeks. Rosita will always stay with me. Not even death can take her away from me - I feel. I love smart and talented people - especially if they are females! - and good looking ones on top of that. This fact alone may help explain the reasons behind my failed marriages.

As time proceeded to advance at a fast pace, I became already 7 years old. My mother, about half the days of the week prepares food for me for school - a sandwich. Two slices of very good tasting bread made of the mixture of wheat and rye flour, lard on them, slices of green pepper, maybe a slice of cold cut, red paprika and a pinch of salt. Luckier days the lard was substituted by sweet butter. Salted butter was unknown (thanks God!) those days. On other occasions she gave me 7 pennies which could buy a small bottle of tasty, rich milk and a croissant or a small bread, a satisfactory facsimile thereof. I, by nature, was always quite thrifty and treasured the money, often time reached in my pocket just to be sure the pennies are still there. I liked the milk and croissants and enjoyed consuming them during the 10 o'clock recess - the time the food was made available. We had some very poor students in the class, occasionally I gave them half of my food. Then a big change came upon me. No, not adolescence, worse than that – radio – if a box could produce such wonderful sounds, what else could be in it?

I would browse around in the weekly radio schedule booklet (something like the TV Guide today) listing the radio programs for each week. In them sometimes I found simple short technical articles about radio. I read them and was trying to understand the terms. There were many strange words and expressions, occasionally some electrical schematics as well which I could not understand. When the booklets were thrown away at the end of the week, I retrieved them and quietly cut out the articles pertaining to radio. I also gave up eating in school despite my very skinny frame and occasional hunger spells. I saved the pennies and invested them in a terribly expensive monthly radio publication of 80 pennies a copy (about 7 American cents then)! Since I did not get the pennies every day, it took just about a month to accumulate that huge capital. I was hungry (and a born Capitalist!) for food but I was even hungrier for knowledge, I was happy, despite hunger. I checked the newsstands for the arrival of the new issues even days before they were published, miracles could happen - I philosophized - and may be able to read the stuff sooner. At any rate, I bought the magazines on the way back from school and one day just *had* to sit down on the street on some apartment house's steps or on a bench in a nearby park to read it immediately. It happened at one time that I forgot about my books and left them on the steps of a house after reading the radio stuff in the magazine, totally overtaken by the contents. I had to go back as soon as I realized the situation, fortunately the books were still there. Early onset of Alzheimer's symptom, no doubt. Times like that I was late for dinner and my mother was giving me a piercing look asking about my whereabouts. "Just walking slowly" - the best excuse I could give, with the magazine visibly under my arm. I was never good at lying - did not practice enough.

We lived close to the railway station at that time in a two-storey building, on the second floor. A glass-surrounded verandah was overlooking a large yard and 4 tenants. Under us lived an older high- ranking Catholic priest. Across the house on a large round square was a beautiful large Catholic church with its copper plated cupola patterned after Saint Peter's, the famous one in Rome. Two identical looking extension buildings were attached to the church, one served as the Rectory; the other - ingeniously - was made into a movie house! The name of the movie house was "*Gloria*" - what else. The movie generated the funds to maintain the large dome. Unlike nowadays, people could take the whole family including children there, the films were always clean. That old priest was in charge of the church and the movie house.

Overlooking the tenant's apartments, next to us lived a very cordial and sympathetic young (for me quite old) Air Force Signal Corps man. He had built a beautiful large, modern radio set by himself with 8 vacuum tubes in it! Upon learning that I was interested in the subject, he showed me the set - indeed it was a technically advanced all-band machine, long wave (still used in Europe), regular broadcast band, all short-wave bands. There were no FM bands those days. To my absolute amazement and pleasure, he demonstrated the radio and said that I can talk to him and ask questions of him any time he is at home.

*All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure"*

--- Mark Twain.

The meeting with the kind airman changed my life in that I took a turn - more correctly - I cut out a course in my life to become electronics! I did not know that then. Encouraged by him, I decided to build a radio set for myself. But how? Had no money to buy parts but had enough self-confidence to overcome that obstacle.

In speculation-filled days, I noticed that the Airman's long beautiful antenna which was strung between a tall pole and our verandah roof was sloping down into his apartment right under one of the verandah windows! This gave me the impetus to tap into his wire. But how? The wire was still quite a distance away over a steep roof. I had to wait until my parents were away from home, then I went to work and got the necessary stuff out of the closet - I had prepared things in advance. I tied the broom, the sweep and another piece of wooden stick together to be able to reach the antenna wire. The contraption was now so heavy, I had to really exert all my meager power to be able to manipulate the pole with one arm, hanging out of the window holding on to the window frame with the other. A stiff wire was twisted around the pole, the wire ended in a hook. It took me a long time to be able to hook into that antenna. I used up all my power, I was sweaty and exhausted. I could not find lighter materials to construct the pole from. One more trial - if I can not do it, maybe some other time. Mother may have been right all this time - may have to go back to the milk-croissant routine to get stronger! I had to hurry up, my parents were expected to come home any minute now. With a desperate last try, I succeeded! I withdrew the pole, disassembled it into its natural components and pulled the tap wire into the verandah.

Besides going to school - what a waste of time, I thought - I was busily trying to collect enough material to construct my first radio set. Fortunately, the Air Force man helped me out a little. I was on the way to making history - for myself anyway. After a lot of experimentation and defeat, the *thing* finally worked! It was what is called a "crystal set", the simplest radio that can be made. I had my earphones on till my skinny ears were red, raw, and hurting, but I did not give up, I did not *really* felt the pain. I made it! The crystal (lead sulfide) had to be adjusted occasionally to find a sensitive spot on it with a thin springy wire called the "cat whisker". Happiness was established on its own right.

One day my mother noticed the weird collection of wires and strange components etc. and put some questions forth: why all this stuff - it ruins the look of the verandah! I almost cried. My father was much more perceptive and saw a tiny seed of developing technical achievement and congratulated me, listening to the radio. He took the earphones off my head and put them on. It was working. With a satisfied smile, he wished me good luck in furthering my skill and very emphatically expressed his desire to see me more at the schoolbooks which were put on the back burner at this time. Advice well taken with some afterthoughts. My mother did not say anything from that day on - my best estimate was that my father instructed and set my mother straight in this matter in the bed that night.

My conscience was a bit uneasy because I stole radio signals out of the Airman's antenna without asking him first. One day I could not contain myself anymore and noticing when he came home, I humbly admitted the mischief. He laughed and said - to your health! He said he had noticed the theft before - he did not consider it as such, and it was OK with him. After that heavy rock was lifted from my sole, now I could enjoy *my* music more freely, unrestrained by a dark threatening cloud of conscience.

I ran wires under the carpet and channeled the sound from the radio to my bed. Mother watched silently with the face of a defeated person. Only once she remarked that vacuuming is difficult because of the wires under the rug. I looked at her, and without a word, I left, smiling. We all have to face difficulties in life, Mother. Now I can have *my own* Rosita, my favorite programs just to myself. I went to sleep with the



radio; I woke up early in the morning with the radio. The program on Radio Budapest started every day at 6 o'clock in the morning. About 5 minutes before 6, a tone was transmitted - that woke me up every day, having the earphone positioned beneath my pillow. This tone was puzzling to me, and it took some time to find out the significance of it: it was accurate pitch middle "A" sound at 440 Hertz, allowing musical instrument makers and tuners to align their instruments! Actually, I could weakly hear Radio Vienna, Austria before 6 am – the two stations were close in frequency. If I woke up earlier, I could hear Radio Vienna in Austria – to the sound of nice Austrian waltzes. When the Budapest transmitter came on around 6, it suppressed the other. Stronger dog, you know.

The next project I embarked upon was to generate oxygen and hydrogen. I found the description of this simple process in a magazine, and I decided to have a little fun by exposing the collected gases to open flame. This creates a flash and a small explosion with a loud noise. Since the gas quantities were very small, I did not worry about the consequences. All I needed was a flashlight battery, some copper wires, two small bottles and a pot of water. The water would be decomposed, and the two gases would collect separately in the two bottles. It worked again! Mark Twain was right! I spent hours watching gases being made, tiny bubbles rising in each bottle, the gases creating mini-explosions by holding a match to the open end of the bottles. One time I had left the circuit connected for overnight, generating a larger quantity of gases I was not used to. The explosion scorched my eyebrows and burned down my eye lashes, that is all. I gave up the gas business primarily not because of the little 'big bang', but because the battery was now exhausted, and I had no money to replace it.



*Rosita*

*"The Trouble with Western People is that they  
Can Not Be Satisfied in an Empty Room."*

*(quote attributed allegedly to noted French scientist René Descartes).*

Watching the children behave in this highly mechanized society provokes a comparison between my life as a young boy and what I see in the homes, in the schools, on the streets today. I loved all seasons; obviously the summer presented the greatest pleasure because among other things the summer vacation arrived with regularity when I did not have to go to school. Going to school in good spring and fall weather was a sheer pleasure, walking 4-5 miles (no school-buses, of course) one way under large shadow giving horse-chestnut trees. Winter, besides allowing me the pleasure to ice skate, slide down on hillsides with a sled, but it provided some difficulties too. We lived in a medium size city of about 40 thousand. In a small country that is medium size. It was a city in an agricultural area, with lots of fresh food provided by farmers around. We lived near the railroad station, in a sparsely populated area. In some years the wind driven snowdrift would build up the white stuff to our second storey apartment windows. The old priest

lived downstairs with a little old (*really* little and *really* old) emaciated and very wrinkle faced caretaker lady, who cooked and cleaned for him. One such day, early in the morning we heard knocking on our bedroom floor, the priest's ceiling. We knew what this was all about: he could not get out the house, needed help. Prayers must have been frozen solid on the way up midway before they could have reached their intended destination and summon help from far above. My brother was then 6 years older (still was until the last minute of his death) and as such represented the bulk of the muscle power in cutting through the snow, actually making a tunnel passing by the priest's door, so he could get out too. I cannot help thinking, what a modern young boy would have done in my place? Maybe order his father to get the motorized snowplow and clean the way. We had no such thing; we had to do it by hand. That made us stronger.

Naturally, in "bad" weather like this, we did not go to school that day, it was impossible. And the next. Snow 2 feet deep or so did not present a problem to worry about, however. The older students who lived in the countryside and arrived daily with the early morning train made holes in the snow with their boots and I learned to hop in-and-out of the vertical snow shafts, sometimes losing my books in the process sliding in all directions *under* the snow. It was a great deal of fun and used to arrive quite wet and shivering at the school. We were allowed to keep our overcoats on until we felt reasonably comfortable. The iron coal oven in the far corner of the room for 50 kids did its best to broadcast the heat but it took some time to reach the students in the opposite corner. But then it was almost time to go home. In very severe winters the continuous snowfall combined with the 30-40 degrees Celsius below temperatures presented a challenge to the coal suppliers and as the school coal reserves were burned up, we sat in the cold. At that point the school superintendent declared coal-vacation lasting for 2-3 weeks, usually coinciding with the Christmas season. Those were the really good times; we could devote all our energy to playing in the snow. Often times I saw poor little sparrows on the rooftops and barren tree branches with their feathers all ruffled up to provide a more efficient insulation from the cold. But 40 below is no match for those hungry little creatures and oftentimes they fell from the roofs and trees frozen solid by the time they hit the ground. I used to put breadcrumbs and other foodstuff on my windowsill, but the little worn-out birds did not have much luck eating the food, it was rock-hard frozen in a minute. Sometimes tears came to my eyes seeing this cold, merciless death, but I was helpless in that matter, as they were too. It was a combination of unparalleled natural beauty and natural cruelty. Or just normal occurrence on this planet, as I learned later. This is the world we are forced to live in. This sad image came up time-to-time in my memory and found many times a parallel fate with these innocent little creatures. Then I started to grow and reached the age 8 - WW II was just around the corner, literally. Then became 12, 13, 13-1/2, and looked up at the sky just to see hundreds of bombers letting loose their deadly cargo.

*Our Heavenly Father invented man because he was disappointed in the monkey ---*

*Mark Twain.*

One such memorable occasion was during the war after a horrible bombing, finding men, women, soldiers, little children torn to pieces. In this relation, bombing is a very Democratic institution. Without distinction, if you are in range, you will be killed regardless of race, religion, gender, age or how much money you happen to have in your pocket or in the bank. As Boy Scouts, to live up to our oath to help people - we tried to match the bloody body parts to larger and similar body parts in the hope that an identification can be made later by the authorities. Most people carried identification papers in their pockets and by wiping off the blood, we could see at night the names of the victims at the hellish red light provided by the burning city around us. The i.d. papers were affixed to the largest whatever body part



remained in one piece for the authorities to handle. Moneys and other valuables were placed in the pockets, if any remained, otherwise placed in close proximity of the largest remnants. I wonder how modern kids, the ones carried to and from school in Rolls Royces or just mundane Mercedeses or Cadillacs would have handled the situation. Just a thought.

At the light of the burning city in the dark cold night and at the revolting, jarring sounds of exploding rail cars nearby carrying ammunition, we worked diligently. At one time I did not watch my steps and tripped over what I thought was a rock. Closer examination revealed a gray military steel helmet with a head in it. A German soldier's head. Sorry – *entschuldigen Sie bitte* ----. The body belonging to the soldier was nowhere to be found, must have been torn to shreds by the 2000-pound bomb. The bomb was fused with loving care so sensitively that it would explode at treetop level when touching the branches. This way the air pressure and vacuum + shrapnel would inflict the maximum desired effects. Science is wonderful. So, I gently placed the bloody item on the ground next to the children's bodies. He can do no more harm - nor can anybody do the same to him anymore. Hope the children did not mind.

A beautiful young girl's face haunts me still today - she clutched paper money in her right hand, her parents may have sent her to buy something, but she did not make it. She got caught up in politics. All the people around, including the young girl had their lungs torn out of their chests and were bubbling out their mouths with the bright red oxygenated blood smeared and speckled over their faces. Vacuum is created after the pressure wave expands upon the explosion of the bombs. The unfortunate victims were in a 6 foot deep zigzag trench hiding from the bombs. But the large bomb sucked them out of the trench – they were halfway out on the side lying on their backs. First the pressure kills you, then the vacuum. You can die twice in a second's time. If you are lucky, the shrapnel kill you first, fast. I tried to stuff the lung of the beautiful little girl carefully back into her mouth and wipe her face clean of her blood. I did the best I could. I did not see the results - my tears by now flooded my eyes totally obliterating my vision. Yes, I found out that I am weak. I sat down on a small, unexploded phosphorus incendiary bomb and meditated for awhile. I was then almost 14, but suddenly a grown-up. Yes, I grew up that night - I did not cry ever after upon the sight of such carnage. People can grow up in a hurry if they have to - I learned at least that lesson on that dreadful night.

Only my friends jerking on my shoulders and an exceptionally loud ammunition explosion jarred me back to reality. There may be wounded people around needing first - *and probably the last* - aid if they were *unfortunate* to survive so far. We were trained in administering help using available facilities, which were at that time practically nil, except for our dedication and goodwill toward the less fortunate people. Looking toward the railroad station I saw the most awful - and in its own right - the most spectacular and amazing fireworks. A whole German ammunition train was on fire, car after car exploding as the fire proceeded to engulf them. Must have been hundreds of thousands of ammo, large caliber I assumed, probably cannon projectiles exploding in succession and in groups and with every explosion brightly illuminating the background and our faces which were painted red by the reflection of the burning city and the blood of the victims we handled. The exploding projectiles whizzed by with ominous shrieks and whistles as they flew through the air. The billowing smoke and the smell of destruction lent a very dramatic taste to the scene. "*Lasciate Omni Speranza Voi Q'intrate....*" - "Abandon All Hope, Ye, Who Enter" - Dante comes to my mind. How could he foresee these things painted over Hell's gate, I will never know. Must have been a visionary or a genius or both.

The display was dreadful, overwhelming, exhilarating, surprising, disgusting, horrifying, beautiful. Thought provoking too. I would not forget it for anything. Wish I could. So, I learned at an early age that it is not necessarily all blessing just because it comes from above, also it is not necessary to wait until the grown-ups accept you as a grown-up. You have to prove yourself by the fortitude of your own guts.

I wonder what the reaction of the kids of the present generation would be to such a sight. Probably very negative. "We see and do far more killing and destruction on our computer games and we don't have to put up with the smoke either" - they would probably say. "And we can repeat it every hour, every day as many times as we want! We can indulge in this exciting violence any time we want to! You old-timers, you could not do this! You had to wait at least a few more hours before the wave of the next bombing raid or another day to get treated again." In the face of truth, I surrender. You are right. One thing, though. After the fire ceased, I found a railroad car axle with wheels still attached lodged in the second floor of an apartment house about 1/2 mile away from the railroad station, the force of the explosion propelled it that far. You kids cannot do that with your computer. *Not yet* anyway.

Nowadays we look for outer space, new places, planets, craters on them, and the like. I had a distinct advantage over present day people in that I was allowed to see, hear, experience, and admire craters of fairly large dimensions without going into outer space. The craters came to me, free of charge! What else could you ask for? They were delivered with the most modern and powerful luxury air carriers of the time. They were called B-17s, B-19s, B-25s, and alike. One could place a 3-4 story house in them - I mean in the craters. This remarkable discovery came about what is called the *carpet bombing*. No, we did not get Persian carpets, not even Aladdin's. Bombers in their bellies carried several large bombs - 2000 lb. per bomb, I was told - chained together and the chains acting as leashes, preventing too large gaps between them when deployed, resulting in closely spaced bomb craters, sometimes touching each other. This was *cratering studies local geology experience 101*, the bomb carpet for us. We learned fast though. Understood the significance, implications and all corollary parameters associated with it. This was the city where I grew up (at a variable rate) - as mentioned before. I learned to know many of the streets, houses and even fire hydrants personally, trees along my way to the school and other things. Now, I could look around and where streets used to be and houses stood before, only rubble about 2 feet high maximum. I could look for a mile; the tallest house was no more than 3 feet tall. A lot of empty rooms around. Thousands. We were obviously not Westerners. The magic carpet worked very well.

With two of my Boy Scout colleagues, I set out to further help what we frail young kids could do for our besieged society. The eerie flickering red light of the burning city provided us with the ability to see and perform more mischief. There were numerous unexploded bombs lying around. We tried to classify them by appeal based upon size, shape, etc. Our innate sense of 'HuHu' (Hungarian Humor) never left us. I preferred the bombs which were about 8 inches in diameter, made of steel, and had rounded hemispherical bottoms and no visible ignitors. We collected three of those, stood them vertical, sat on them (on the rounded end!) and ate our sandwiches. The Hungarian name for bomb is - not surprisingly: *bomba*. The 2000-pounder was labeled simply "bomba". This was the real thing. Obviously. The smallest ones, the incendiary ones were filled with phosphorus and on which we sat were called by a long affectionate name spiced with diminutives piled up: *bombimbamboombilinko*, measuring about 2 feet in length and weighing about 100-120 pounds. Kid stuff. It was a bomb however, made a big bo-o-o-m when exploding, the rest is affectionate diminutives. We had some problems with the medium-large ones labeled '*bombikas*' (the sweet little ones) - about 500-pounders. I took out the ignitor from several of the bombs, counting on luck that I would start to turn the fuse in the right direction. It seemed that if the bomb did not hit the ground square, the trigger mechanism would come loose and chances were that it will not explode in our face. Or the bombs were sabotaged by loosely attaching the stuff. In these cases, the mechanisms could be removed with ease. In some types, one had to know which the "good" direction is, or the game could turn sour. Some of my friends who did not know or guess right are no longer with us. We heard the explosions and friends, whom we talked to a few minutes before, were no more. They tried to discharge their ill-conceived duties to society - like me. Well, I am writing these lines, don't I? This we called the

Hungarian Roulette - practiced by still alive demolition experts, madman, suicide candidates and teenagers like us. At that time, we did not think that way, though. I can recommend this game to people having fear of mice, bugs, bees and alike. It can cure all those phobias immediately, effectively, irrevocably, one way or another. You see, I was not afraid of mice (I had some white ones in a shoebox at home, my Mother did not know it until they escaped and were running all around the building multiplying happily), of bugs (several shoeboxes full, until they chewed through and invaded our home), or of bees. Bees can walk on my body anytime without punishment on hot days when my salty sweat pearls on my skin, giving them moisture. One has to be sociable. Bugs must like salt - I wonder if they ever develop high blood pressure. Unlike people, ***they do not attack unless provoked***, however. I forgot the reason why we 13-14 year old kids provoked the bombers and being punished for it. Failing memory, premature Alzheimer's at an early age, no doubt. Or bees are just better, kinder, gentler people.

It happened a few times that those lovely, notorious bombikas exploded ***too late***, (Murphy, were you drunk or sleeping off the whiskey again?) blowing my Boy Scout cap away, so I had to search for it. Had they been exploding a few seconds earlier; I would not have had all those problems later in my life. Now ***that*** I call it frustrating. Our eyes were hurting from the smoke, from the lack of sleep, from the dust - and now, when I wanted some fun, my only cap is gone. I found it later in the red twilight about 20 feet away. I decided that I did not need more bomb fuses to play with at home, it is an inefficient way to handle the game. Why don't we roll the guys down the big craters, which were so very carefully and judiciously provided for us free of charge? If they explode on the way down or at the bottom, the shock wave, the ensuing vacuum, and shrapnel can do no harm, the walls of the crater providing an excellent shield and the damaging air pressure will be deflected upwards. If you manage to withdraw in time, that is. The first one went smoothly. Bombika #1 rolled down the slope beautifully, hitting the bottom and going back to sleep again. Some of the bombs were deliberately delayed not to explode upon impact, this way the population can enjoy the music, the shrapnel serenade for several days to come in random time intervals. Some bombs exploded 4-5 days after their deployment. This feature was carefully provided for us, killing any Red Cross or other first aid entity. We noticed numerous round holes of various sizes in the ground among the rubble, but we did not grasp the significance of this phenomenon until one hole about 500 feet away decided to send fragments and loud noises up in the sky. Right then and there I learned to love surprises. It was one of those timed fuzes. About 20 seconds later things started to fall from the sky. The blessing from above finally arrived - I thought. I became disappointed though, because the exploded jagged-edge shrapnel shower started to come down all around us instead. None of us was hit, so we went back to work. Often time we urinated into those nice round holes in the ground, expressing our gratitude toward the issue.

I fell in love with Bombika #2. She (yes, she!, must have been a female, the dangerous one!) sat unassumingly, so innocently among the rubble, on the bed of a demolished house her friends so carefully and with such precision prepared for her, seemingly in full contentment, the red flickering light of the burning railroad station provided a warm - very warm in fact - and irresistible urge to touch and stroke her at the business end. The detonator was too tight for me to remove. She was cold. I had the hunch not to turn the small propeller on of the fuze. Its function was to arm the bomb when falling. Steel cold. Poor thing, she is dead, I thought. Since I had experience by now to handle corpses, I signaled my buddies to help to roll her toward the closest crater. It is not easy for 14-year-olds or younger to roll a heavy female of this magnitude toward anything, especially through rocks, bricks, pieces of grandfather clocks, stoves, bathtubs, etc. But we did it. At the same time, never underestimate the power of a woman! As we managed finally to roll her to the mouth of the crater, she started down majestically, at an ever increasing velocity pulled by the gravitational force according to the law of physics. So far so good. About 30 feet down,

when my heart started to fill with sorrow for the dead darling, she let out her final sigh! It was loud, forceful, flashy, and unmistakably positive. Instead of filling my heart with sorrow, her last sigh filled my mouth with dirt and dust and blowing my cap away - again. I could not see for minutes until I managed to excavate my eyes from the debris. This was my first serious personal encounter with a female. But I did not learn my lesson from it. I am so glad.

The Allied bombers were fair-and-square about their business. We were provided with the most spectacular and surprising happenings in the daytime too. The day after a heavy bombing which induced fear and phobias in some frail and unstable, unreasonable people was compensated for next day. There must have been psychologists designing the air raids - we are eternally thankful for the loving care extended to us. With the kindest of thoughts, the planes came back next day and just machine-gunned at whatever they judged worthwhile spending their expensive, case-hardened bullets on. This surgical corrective operation removed the slightest psychological aftereffect of the previous day. A perfect cure. Only machine gun fire? What is going on? Are they running out of guts? Or ammunition? Super good feeling. We did it! We defeated them by absorbing all that horror, now they ran out of it! I can recommend this experience to people who get scared too easily of mice.

On one of these occasions, the bombing was reaching my street - previously we moved downtown. Across the street the Germans set up their headquarters thereby inviting disaster for the area. The Allied intelligence must have been gathering information on this and the ensuing bombers tried to place a few loud and flashy spectacular presents on the target. The greeting notes missed the Germans but blew up small hat-shop 2 houses down from us killing everybody in the cellar, peppering the neighborhood with cute little *hot babies* which made not so much noise as heat! They were incendiary bombs about 3 inches in diameter or so and hexagonal in shape. These hot beauties were made of cast iron and the business end was only about 6-7 inches tall. Around the hexagonal container of phosphorus or thermite was fastened a sheet metal sleeve holding a piece of wood stick about 2 feet long at the other end to keep the little ones on course, business end impinging on the target. They had 2 small shiny colorful trigger buttons on the sides near the bottom of the cast iron body, the color presumably was indicative of the inner guts. Our neighbor, a Jewish doctor's house got one of those. I was in charge of seeing the safety of the people in the apartment house we lived in and around us. At the sound of the sirens signaling the impending air attack, I had to run out of the yard and hit a piece of railroad track suspended on a wire with great force making a horrible racket. This was supposed to awaken the tenants and the dead as well. And if this was not enough, I had to ring the bells and/or bang on the doors to make people go down in the concrete reinforced cellar, as the "safe" place. Short of a direct hit, it was reasonably safe though. In addition to this, since I had some experience in handling weapons as such, I undertook the duty of extinguishing fires after the attacks. Civil Defense first class. I had no problem in rendering these little sparkling hot babies-of-bombs harmless. Then I noticed that outside of an apartment house at the end of our street, smoke was billowing out through a small hole in the roof. I had a terribly heavy military-type steel helmet on my head, standard gear for Civil Defense personnel (which I was). My scrawny neck could hardly support my otherwise fairly acceptable head, strapped into that contraption. I shed the helmet (actually I threw it as far as I could) which was very effectively curtailing my activities and set out to investigate the affair. Very wisely, the authorities required that each house or living compound must store a quantity of sand, a shovel and buckets in case fires break out. The quantities were dependent of the size of the dwellings. Knowing this, I headed to find the sand. It was stored in a small enclosed concrete shaft. I hurriedly filled the bucket with sand and darted up the stairs to locate the source of the smoke. I could do this with relative ease because I discarded my helmet; I was in shorts because it was an otherwise beautiful day. It turned out that some people had rolled up their huge expensive Persian carpets and placed them in the attic. This was not uncommon in

those days, people were afraid of losing them in case they had to flee from the place, this way they could get hold of them more readily - the war was not going to well, from the local angle. I managed to extinguish the fire which burned foot diameter holes in the carpet - totally ruining it. Later I searched out the owners and asked them not to smoke in the attic again. I nearly escaped lynching. For a good measure - I thought - I will cover the affected area with one more bucket of sand to prevent any latent heat re-igniting the carpet. We were instructed to do so. The sand was very heavy because it was wet, we had rain on the previous day and the sandbox was open to the sky. As I filled the bucket, all of a sudden I heard a loud puffing noise, and my eyes and mouth were full of hot sand! I am telling you, I love surprises. As it turned out, one of the incendiary bombs fell right into the sand pile and was stopped by hitting the bottom concrete floor and burning happily under the sand unnoticed up to that instant. It took me a few seconds to clear my eyes of the sand and when I opened my eyes, another surprise greeted me: the small concrete enclosure walls were covered with sticky, about 2000 degrees hot brilliantly sparkling white patches of thermite compound slowly flowing down the walls around me. I suffered not a scratch - or in this case - not a speck of hot stuff. I knew then that I was destined to be and stay to be a cool kid. Would this be a challenge to a modern, sheltered youngster who was born in a world full of computers, electronic gadgets, and the like? After I inspected my body and found no damage, grabbed the pale of sand and ran up the stairs whistling, I did the final justice to the already dead thermite fire. Analyzing this phenomenon led me to the conclusion that the hot burning substance was heating up the surrounding sand at a very high rate, forming a molten glass cocoon of enclosed now hard volume which, after further heating could not contain the generated steam pressure anymore and the superheated steam blew up the whole thing. Something similar to a lightning stroke to a tree which can split up the tree trunk, no matter how thick it is. I have seen one of those ex-trees before.

Opposite side to this building where I extinguished the fire stood a remarkably handsome Jewish temple with a flat nave and with its characteristic two towers terminating in the traditional onion-shaped metal gables. It was painted bright yellow in color. I knew this building inside'n-out - I walked by at least twice daily to and from school too. It was in an immaculate shape - until that infamous day. Well, the temple was burning heavily, received a few of the hot babies. Across the street a German officer - a major - and a few others were looking at the fire. The local Fire Department fought valiantly to subdue the fire, but they made it even worse by directing high pressure water on the thermite. The water made the glowing molten metal blow up with hiss and vigor, covering everything with a fountain of fire. It would not have made any difference, no matter what they had done. It was too hot and the firemen were not equipped to handle *this* type of inferno. The upper structure of the building was supported by sturdy steel "I" beams which were dripping down the floor like water creating secondary fires. The molten and sparkling white-hot steel flowed like small rivers, drips of the metal disintegrated into million small white sparklets, igniting everything they came in contact with, it was a miniature lava-flow. The brave German officer from a safe distance across the street smilingly watched me and my small comrade as we, the coward, useless sub-human, half-animal Hungarians dared to go inside the burning building to save what can be saved. Duty to the people first. We were the only two "people" (total nuts) undertaking the task. Our oath commanded us. First I thought the officer was merely enjoying the destruction of a Jewish temple by the American bombers (what a revenge!), enjoying every second of it but as I entered the temple, I realized that it was almost full of furniture! Not just furniture, very expensive furniture. At that instance I realized the rational for the presence of the German officer: these were confiscated furniture formerly belonging to Jews who, after they were collected and dispatched to concentration camps by the Germans, obviously had no more use for them. He was guarding the newly acquired loot. The furniture was now the *property of the Third Reich!*

My little buddy and I managed to complete two turns in saving (saving for who? - but that realization came later) beautiful furniture. On my second tour, I noticed an extraordinarily beautiful large Valencian oval-shaped mirror with at least a 4-inch bevel. I must save this! By this time the flat top building was burning completely around its perimeter. The firemen could not do anything anyway, they were not equipped to handle this new stuff, and they have never seen such a hot burning substance. But in desperation - probably to quiet their consciences because of their inability to handle the situation - the firemen were still trying to douse the fire with the high-pressure water hoses. When they saw that little me and another alike is entering the temple, they directed the edge of their water beam at us to command our attention, screaming at us not to enter. The cold water felt very good and invigorating especially because of the quite high temperature inside radiating at us from all sides of the burning building overheated us, made our skin quite hot too. But we went in anyway. Nobody can tell me what to and what not to do. Germans around or not. We grabbed the very heavy mirror sending my friend in front of me for possibly reducing the probability of disaster for him - in case of the collapsing roof, he will get out first. I took a very short look at the ceiling and screamed to my friend to run. We were carrying the mirror in the horizontal position, running as fast as we could with the very heavy mirror. Fortunately, the temple gates were burned open by now, or maybe the firemen broke them down to have access to the fire with their equipment, so we did not have to waste a single second in maneuvering the mirror out to the open. ***Yes, a single second*** saved my life: as I stepped out through the gate threshold, the whole burning ceiling came down with a terrible roaring crash, throwing a myriad of cinder sparks all around us. None of us got a single speck of burning cinder on our bodies! Drunk ol' Murphy was beaten twice in succession on one day – hey, that good Irish whiskey again! The brave German officer - I never forget his face - looked at us half-animal Hungarians – as they were thinking of us, maybe now he even promoted us now to three-quarter humans in his mind - and smiled. It was written all over him: it is nice to have these half-animal slaves sacrificing their life voluntarily in the interest of the Third Reich! This thought hit me between the eyes at that instant but it was now too late. I wished that I could bring back the saved stuff into the burning temple and leave it there! The German officer should have collected the burned remains of the furniture and send it to his beloved Fuehrer as a gift for his birthday. I almost told him that. But then, as a cowardly act, I decided that I want to live for awhile more.



***René Descartes – 1596 – 1650, France. Jesuit-educated Western philosopher – physicist – physiologist – mathematician – lawyer – soldier, contributed to optics, meteorology, and to the foundation of analytic geometry. Established the cornerstone of a new philosophical direction based upon epistemology, the theory of knowledge, a new way of thinking. Inventor of the 'Cartesian' projection used in geographical maps - did I leave anything out? Despite his Catholic education, he divorced himself from the view of the Church on matters of astronomy and other issues. His motto was to present the issues with clarity and distinctness. I consider him as a forerunner to the foundation of the Constitution of the United States: he clearly separated reason from beliefs.***

**\*\*\* cogito ergo sum \*\*\***





**I took this picture:  
SHUTTLE LAUNCH  
CAPE CANAVERAL,  
FLORIDA, 2002**

### **Náci, You Did Not Do Your Job!**     *(you should be shot!)*

By now I acquired some radio theory and practice as well. After school, I took up radio repair at a shop right near the school, on the same street. The owner, Mr. Röhlich was of German descent, he was a very kind and cordial person and a good businessman too, with a very aggressive and good looking black-haired, black eyed sharp Jewish wife, Eta. We called her affectionately: Etush. They had two adorable young daughters, ages 2 and 4. He was the boss in the store and in the shop; she sat at the cash register and was in charge of the servants. It was a nice clean business selling and repairing radio, photo, and fishing equipment. She was the best cook around, and it showed on both of them, although they were not *as* obese as the good food would suggest. There was a repair shop in the building back in the yard with a dilapidated bed, my headquarters. We had a young helper boy, Ignatius, whom we always called affectionately "Náci" in Hungarian, the accepted nick name for the Ignatius, absolutely no connection to Nazis, although it sounds like. One day I had to fix a radio in a hurry for an important client. After the job was done, I told Náci to deliver it immediately to a certain address. But Náci did something else instead and the radio remained in the shop. When I discovered this, I started looking for him. I ran into the store in front and there he was. Along with a very tall German Major who was at the register paying for his developed film. The conversation between the officer and Etush went on in German-Yiddish style to the consternation of the officer who was seemingly disgusted with this, doing business with a Jewish woman. The officer was apparently trapped by the owner's German name that is the reason he came in. Such is life. Occupational hazard.

As I spotted Náci, I got a bit irritated that he was so derelict in his duty and without thinking, I shouted: "***Náci what are you doing here?!'***" There was a sudden deadly (could have been deadly) silence for the moment. The German officer looked at me with eyes of a wildebeest crossed with a shark before attacking, Etush dropped her jaw and her black eyes opened so big that I never saw before, Mr. Röhlich turned snow white and looked at me with horror. Náci, (and me too) not realizing the severity of the situation and the implications, lightly said that he is on the way to deliver. The German officer furiously threw some money on the counter, grabbed his film and on the way out he looked back from the door for a couple of seconds at every one of us, inspecting our attitude, in succession. His mouth and his facial expression in general



was something to behold. He almost spit but then he must have realized the he was Mr. Master Race and just slammed the door and left. We never saw him thereafter. Wonder why? Sorry, we lost a customer on account of my stupidity. That was not very businesslike for me, but I was inexperienced in the field of politics.\* Mr. Röhlich angrily grabbed me and forcibly shoved me out the store and gave me a stern lecture. Only then did I realize what I said and what really happened. I started sweating and assured Mr. Röhlich that I did not realize what I said at that moment and gave me a severe lecture - never to happen again. I felt bad that through my thoughtlessness I almost put everybody in jeopardy, and we lost a customer maybe for ever. The word Nazi was too new to me then, but I will never forget it, I assure you.

\* See pages 5 and 6 for a treatise about the meaning of the word...

## **MY BOY SCOUT DAYS.**

They started at age 8, the lower age limit. I got a brand-new Scout outfit and was very proud of it. The troop was planning a summer camp and of course, I wanted to go too. A lot of planning and a great deal of anticipation preceded the event. We ended up in a very picturesque area adjacent to a big forest and a very pleasant warm-water lake. Since I was one of the youngest and definitely not the tallest of kids, I got some of the less desirable chores to carry out. I did them with dedication, such as digging a ditch serving as a field latrine, collecting wood in the forest to fuel the fire for cooking, washing, and cleaning potatoes, etc. All was important to the camp; I could see why. It was very educational. The camp lasted 3 weeks and like most children of my age, developed home sickness after a week. My case was not serious at all, I was just missing mother's good food most. Some kids became literally and physically ill and the management had their hands full in trying to alleviate the problem. The homesick individuals were counseled and assured of their safety, also given more chores to get their attention away from self-pity. After the second week we had no problem. Just about then the parents were given a half-day visitation right just to renew the home sickness in some of us. My parents came too, and my mother broke out in tears to see her offspring again after 2 long weeks. I did feel ashamed a little in front of the other boys and the troop leaders, I am not used by now to crying females - I am big enough to care for myself, no need for this women's stuff.

To reach the camp one had to take a narrow-gauge tiny train to the camp. This train was used in connection with mining at a nearby location. It took about an hour and a half on it chugging and rattling along in open flatbed cars on improvised wobbly wooden seats. It was fun for us, I played on my new mouth-organ while traveling, the rest of the kids sang. The parents took it a little harder, but it was a small price to pay for seeing those missed mischievous rascals again. Previously my mother sent me a food package in fear of me starving. The package contained fried chicken and a jar of apricot preserve and some cookies. The jar could not take the long journey on the wacky railroad and broke, spilling the jam all over the chicken, totally impregnating it, shards of glass notwithstanding. I have never in my life eat such a good stuff! I – naively and mistakenly - told this to my mother who immediately wanted to take me home for a medical checkup. I almost fainted just to think of this! After all - I explained - I removed all the glass fragments and my friends also got pieces of the food, see, we are all OK, no reason for the panic. My mother got terrified and started to cry again, trying to convince my father to take me back. He asked me what I wanted to do: 'I stay here until the end!' Father looked at Mom and said, the kid knows what he wants to do, that is all – issue resolved. Mother had to give in. He was a true Army officer.

I had to keep guard that night with another 8-year-old. We were instructed what to do, what not to. We were to be alert and look toward the forest, and not into the remnants of the camp fire which was still going strong. After awhile we got very exhausted and sat down - you guessed: toward the nice warm fire. If you never took a trip in the wilderness at night, you have no idea of the different noises coming from the

dark woods. Frightening noises. Twigs snapping, short snorts of all-kind, somebody or something appear to be running through the woods, etc. We knew there were wild animals around us in the forest: wild bores, deer, for instance. They can be deadly if provoked. The nice warm radiating warmth from the fire took its toll: we fell asleep. It could not have been 5 minutes later, we were wakened up by screams, shouting, weird noises, a wild bugle concert coming from the dark woods. The management with the older guys arranged a simulated attack. We jumped on our feet horrified and tried to get a fix on what happened. Then I saw the whole scheme and blew my whistle signaling danger - a little late, though - the damage was done. We were divided into groups to pursue the alleged "intruders". It was getting to be morning hours when we could return to camp, "capturing" the rascals. We had 1/2 hour to rest. At 6 AM sharp: assembly in front of the flagpole in formation, orders to go to the lake to get cleaned and freshen up, 6:30 - assembly for daily orders, evaluation and results of the raid. I felt quite uneasy of this, knowing that I failed to obey the orders. The fact was mentioned about the "guards" falling asleep, but not by name. This softened the blow somewhat, although everybody knew who the "guards" were.

I never allowed myself to sleep overtake me again when on duty. The shame in front of all the people cured me. Later I learned that management with the older Scouts were watching us intently from their tents when are we going to fall asleep. It happens with precision and with unfailing regularity with first-time campers - I was told later. They almost canceled the raid for another day because they wanted to ketch the guards asleep. I was irritated about this but got a big laugh out of it anyway. Later years the roles reversed, and I was able to reciprocate the procedure to the new young Scouts. This is how one learns. I can never forget that experience. This was in 1938.

At that time uneasiness swept through Europe - rumors circulated about the possibility of a war breaking out. This did not concern me at that time until later when Hitler's troops invaded Poland without warning.

Poles and Hungarians - two completely different ethnic groups and backgrounds - lived peacefully next to each other for more than a thousand years. The two countries had a common border before WWI and have never engaged in hostile activities against each other. The Poles are Slavs, the Hungarians: a race from the Mid-East wandering to the Far-East Orient with some with Old Turcic racial background, with a Hun branch integrated into the society throughout the ages. Rumors of being close relatives to the Finn-Ugric branch are highly exaggerated. Nevertheless, or maybe because of this, they loved and respected each other. Poles were - sometimes during history - governed by Hungarian kings, and vice-versa, Hungarians had Polish kings by desire, not by force. Probably the only two sizable countries in Europe which did not ever fight against each other. Hungary took in about 200.000 Poles fleeing from Hitler's rage. In many cases, Poles gained priority over native Hungarians in obtaining jobs - to show solidarity with them in the best tradition of Hungarian hospitality, they were our guests.

To demonstrate the principle, my father told me an anecdote most likely to be true - from the pre-WWI era. During a routine border patrol by a Hungarian young bushy-tail lieutenant found a Polish and a Hungarian border guard sitting on the ground and leaning against a tree on the Polish-Hungarian border, passing a bottle among themselves and conversing the best they could. They jumped on their feet and saluted the officer in the traditional military manner the moment they saw him. The young officer was outraged upon seeing this unthinkable lack of discipline and in no uncertain manner he chastised the Hungarian guard. The officer's report hit the upper layers of the military and a colonel summoned the lieutenant. The colonel said that the lieutenant did the right thing in noticing the affair, but the Poles were our friends throughout of history, no problem ever surfaced between the two nations and since we both are in peace, it makes no sense to make a big fuss about the incident. Those poor guys out there in the high mountains have no other fun, they see no people for months, we have to allow them a little fun too. They

were not drunk and nobody in his right mind would go to the trouble to sneak across the border at that God forsaken place anyway, there is nothing to guard really. The colonel tore up the report and dismissed the lieutenant. Another military affair closed Hungarian style.

I somehow felt that *communication* will play a big role in the events to come. I could not formulate this feeling but maybe instinctively I intensified my interest in radio communication. As it turned out, I was right about that.

Another way to increase the ability to communicate is to learn languages. This can be of great importance, perceived by many people. I found myself going to German Kindergarten at age 3. My father, who was fluent in Ancient Greek and Latin also, had me start learning Latin at age 8. After the elementary school hours on the way home I had to stop by my Latin teacher, spend an hour with him, then he turned over to his wife who was German, for another hour of instruction - this time in German. 3 times a week. If you are living in a small, powerless, and forsaken country, you better understand what the big boys are talking about in your neighborhood. I found that out in due time during the German, later under the Russian occupation. It helps - believe me. *Communication*. So, radio opened up one more reason to get involved more in the affairs of the world.

As I turned 12, I knew a little about radios and volunteered at the largest radio and electric house in the neighborhood to accept me as an apprentice. I had to gather all my talking power to convince the proprietor to "hire" me. I needed no (and got no) salary or any other compensation than the ability to absorb radio related knowledge. I started "working" at this shop under 2 radio technicians and picked up a lot of skills during that year. I could fix some simpler radios independently, without asking anybody. The owner loved me and encouraged me to continue - of course I was making profit for them for nothing, but this aspect did not bother me at all. I had a home, I could eat every day, I had schooling, I had clothes on my back, what else would I want? Knowledge! My father asked me from time to time, what am I doing in my after-school hours - I just occupy myself with various projects - was my standard answer. I came close but did not lie.

One day my father unexpectedly stopped by at the store to buy something and saw me behind the counter, explaining something to a customer. He was utterly surprised and turned to the owner: what is he doing here? The owner looked at me, his face turned bright red - he knew who my father was but did not know that I have not said a single word about this at home - and smilingly said: he is fixing radios here, didn't you know? He did not know.

As the war was spreading out to all over Europe I started to feel the ominous implications - people going away to fight, get killed, who knows who will win, etc. By this time I have learned enough history to have a faint idea what we are going to be subjected to - restrictions, shootings, etc. This was very disquieting to my soul. I started to feel the gravity of the situation, although I could not pinpoint at that time what was really bothering me about this whole thing.

Then came the last Boy Scout camp before Hungary was overrun by foreign armies (again). We picked a beautiful place in a thick forest, near a small creek and a few hundred yard wide clearing in the mountains. We set up our tents - large blue colored ones each capable of accommodating a dozen kids. The tents were arranged in a semi-circular pattern at the edge of the clearing. In the middle stood a tall flagpole with the tricolor - red-white-green Hungarian flag, *our* Old Glory. At this time the war was in full swing very close to home, so to speak. We experienced numerous flights by British, but mostly American planes at very high up, we saw quite a few air fights with heavy losses on both sides. The older boys were already taken away by the Army (as my brother) and because of this at that time, I believe I was the youngest troop leader in the country at almost 14. I had the responsibility to alert the camp if enemy planes were approaching. I could do this because I have built a 2-tube battery operated portable radio set fitted into a

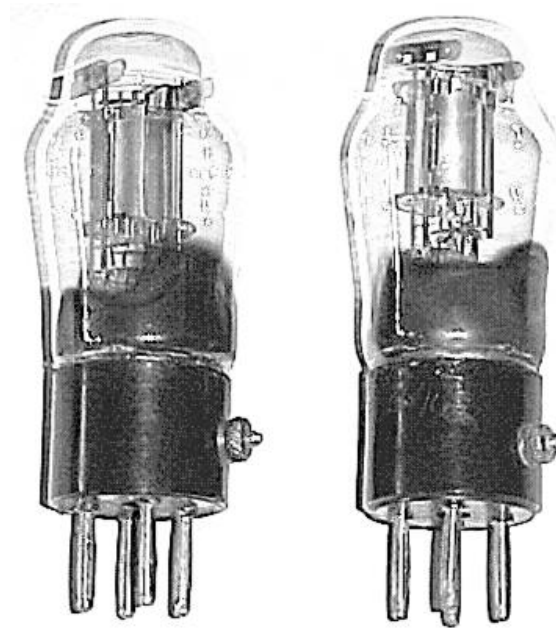
small luggage case. I either designated a boy, or more often I myself monitored the radio transmissions to get the information on the enemy planes. If enemy planes (American, British, Russian) entered Hungary's airspace, the main 120-kilowatt broadcast-band transmitter stopped operating and code words were transmitted instead, in German. The code was secret, but I just happened to know that I know them – *communication*, you know.

One beautiful sunny day about 11 AM I picked up the radio transmission warning for the area we were in. The transmission indicated that a small number of scout planes are in our geographical area. I did not hesitate and with my whistle I ordered an alarm! I trained the boys to immediately drop everything and disperse in the forest upon hearing the fast ti-ti-ti-ti-ti whistle warning signal. This measure was necessary to minimize the casualties should bombing or machine-gun attack occur. Scouts were not supposed to be closer than 50 feet from each other. One day I made a test by sounding the alarm at lunchtime, but waited until they ate most of the food. A couple of the kids did not throw down the stuff in their hands – I ran to them and punched out the stuff from their hands. They were screaming and complaining, but I was louder and ordered them to run into the forest.

The next day I heard the hum of approaching airplanes. 3 American P-38 Lightning long range reconnaissance fighters appeared in a row, swooping down on us, and opening up their machine-guns. I was the last to leave the ship - so to speak - as a responsible captain would do - and was able to jump into my tent and out through the back toward the trees just in time, covering myself in the shadow of the tent. I disappeared behind a thick oak tree and between the tree limbs I could see the planes as they turned around and repeated the machine gun firing 2 more times. A few bullets hit the ground near me about a foot away, throwing dried foliage around in a hysterical swirl - and there was quiet again. (later I was trying to dig up one of those bullets, but the ground was soft, so the bullets were deep down, could not find them). I ordered the boys by shouting in the forest to remain where they were and asked if anybody got injured. No answer. My breath stopped - I called the alarm too late! They either all got killed, or nobody. Fortunately, the latter case prevailed - they were just too scared to be able to utter a single word. I sneaked back to my tent and retrieved the radio among the bullet-ridden tent pieces. The radio was not hit. Guys up there, you missed again! - together with Murphy - what kind of training have you received?! Hey, too much whiskey again? I gave the signal to return to the camp. Then slowly the boys started to emerge from the forest. The little ones smelled a bit funny, but that could be cured easily by a bath in the nearby creek. We spent the rest of the day mending the tents, the temperature in the mountains are quite low in the forest at night and thought that the big holes in the canvas were contrary to the retention of the body heat we generated. At the evening 6 o'clock daily Assembly in front of the flagpole I was able to report that nobody was hurt. I inspected and counted each troop and kid and tent. I got a 'thank you' and a handshake from the commander. They thanked me for saving the lives of the Scouts. For which I said: 'The glory goes to the two type DP-105 vacuum tubes in my radio. They are the heroes; I was only an instrument in the chain of events'. The commanders raised their eyebrows while looking at each other. This guy went berserk due to the pressure of the raid, they thought. "Well," they said, "thank you anyway". Assembly dismissed!



The P-38s  
and  
the DP-105 vacuumtubes, the real Heroes .



### *The Good Old High School Days According to Paul - the Teenager.*

High school was a lot of fun during those war days. Up to 1944 the Hungarian Government allegedly had an agreement with the American Government and the Allied Forces to the effect that if Hungary allows the free passage of the American war planes over her territory, the Americans will not bomb us. This arrangement sounded pretty good at the time and worked very well until March 19, 1944, the day of the German occupation of Hungary. It happened overnight, a small country you know, no weapons, no soldiers, or hardly any. It was easy for them. Until that day both governments, the Hungarian and the American kept their words, we could see American movies, we could listen to the short-wave radio transmissions of any country unpunished, nobody worried about that. Up to that date students - even though many of them were undernourished due to the war demands put on Hungary by the Germans, could study without the fear of being bombed out of existence. We had to feed the very people who forced us into the whole mess, creating a food shortage in a predominantly agricultural country, in the "*food-basket*" of Europe. Is this not always so?

In the school we had war preparation exercises combined with some elementary military training with wooden rifles and wooden hand grenades. Designated teachers were trusted with our advancement in the military art and science. Lot of running around and synchronized marching. To accomplish this, our 10-minute breaks between classes were kept except the 10 o'clock brake which was extended to 20 minutes

daily. Rain or shine. The teacher in command had a sharp sounding whistle in his mouth and gave us commands by intoning alternating short and long signals, similar to the Morse code. At the right signal, we had to drop *instantly* on the ground regardless of what the ground surface looked like. The signal was: dit-dit-dit-dit-dit-dit in rapid succession. One lovely rainy day, during a fast running exercise I was just ready to jump over a puddle, when the dit-dit-dit sounded. It took but a second-and-a-half to position myself off the puddle before dropping. It was too late. The commander noticed this and was rapidly approaching me. He was always smiling but was armed with a piece of steel cable, the one used on motorcycles to activate the front brake. He owned a motorcycle. With a broad smile, he administered three pretty strong lashes to my part which could absorb the most punishment without permanent damage. He asked: 'do you know why the first lash?' I said no. 'The first lash is for not dropping instantly, the second for my rear end protruded too far north - it should have *been flat like a sheet of paper*. The third one because my head was also too high, exposing myself to enemy fire!' (What enemy fire?!). I had to absorb all this without a word or whimpering, that would have initiated more lashes. I believe all-American red-blooded boys would have done the same. I would like to hear from Civil Liberties Union Lawyers about this. I meshed my teeth together and tried to show a happy face. I will show you, you, you.... it did not hurt! He left me smiling as he did smile too, self assured that I will remember this little affair with the steel cable for life, he took off looking for more law-breakers. He was right. With his method of "punishment" he possibly saved my life as it turned out when I was caught between fighting German and Russian armies - *the enemy fire!* Neither of us knew at the time if I would ever put to use the hard and painful learned lesson, but he achieved what he set out to accomplish. God bless you, wherever you are. I would probably shed a drop of tear or two if I could be confronted with him now, thanking him for what he did to and for me. When he reads these lines (from above, or otherwise) I think he will smile once more, looking at that cable with satisfaction. I am certain it was buried with him unless he is still alive. In ancient times Hungarians buried the dead with their important earthly possessions, his horse, his jewelry, his sword. He had no horse but an acceptable modern facsimile of it, a motorcycle, and a motorcycle cable. Otherwise, he was a real Hungarian. He was a Real Teacher. The steel cable was his sword. Professor Solti.

During the regular school hours one of the students had to go to a room outfitted with a radio set and listen to the local broadcast delivered by a powerful 120-kilowatt transmitter. We were not allowed to touch the set in order not to take it off the emergency frequency. We took turns and volunteered heavily in order to escape from the classes. As enemy airplanes entered Hungarian territory, the broadcast ceased with an announcement to stay tuned for further information. The cessation of regular broadcast was devised to remove the enemy planes' ability to navigate on a radio beam, leading them directly and accurately to the Capital. Code words were broadcast in German and Hungarian giving information on the geographical area involved and the type and number of aircraft in action. As certain codes were repeated over the air, we had to report it immediately and the school bell was sounded, letting out the students so they could go home if they did not live too far from the school. The school could not take the responsibility of having students killed there during an air raid. The old school had a cellar but was not large enough to accommodate all of us and was not bomb safe. The cessation of the broadcast, however, did very little if anything to stop or confuse the Allied planes. There is a built-in feature, a natural compass of the country, namely Eastern Europe's largest lake, the 50 miles long *Balaton* only about 70 miles from the Capital city, Budapest. The lake is an elongated body of water, the tip of it points quite accurately to the Capital city. This feature gave the planes the most perfect position and directional information. Indeed, I could watch on clear days the gathering and direction changing of the bombers toward designated targets, sometimes several hundred planes a day. This lake was the most perfect navigational aid, a staging area. Planes assembled and were distributed to different targets by using the lake as an assembly point. Usually they

came from the South or Southwest, from Italian air bases and proceeded to North toward the one time Czechoslovakia, still one country and Poland for bombing runs where German forces were stationed. They flew high enough over the reach of the German 88-millimeter Bofors anti-aircraft cannons and were reasonably safe at that altitude. On some clear days we could see the groups of bombers creating the characteristic white vapor trails, as a consequence of the hot exhaust gases hitting the cold atmosphere and condensing the water vapor. It was a beautiful and terrifying sight simultaneously. We used to count the groups and the planes in them, and for some reason many of the groups consisted of 49 bombers. In times like this the air was filled with a deep murmuring, humming sound, the sound of hundreds of thousands of deadly horsepower gliding overhead. We learned to distinguish between different airplane types just by listening to the sound they emitted. The motors aboard the planes were synchronized to reduce vibration but occasionally we could hear some out-of-sync motors too, giving a wobbling, slowly varying sound as it was fighting the other motors. The pilot of that plane must not have been a musician, for sure.

I did see some breathtaking air battles also. Day-by-day listening to the codes transmitted through the radio, I could break the codes pertaining to the types and numbers of aircraft attacking. When heavy bombing was not anticipated, I got up on the roof of our building and watched the happenings. One air battle was particularly spectacular, as an American P-51 Mustang fighter plane was chasing a German Messerschmitt Me-109 fighter. They were of the same class fighters, somewhat similar in appearance from a distance. What I saw was literally breath-taking. The air was filled with the staccato rhythm of the machine-guns - the German guns were a little faster than the American ones, I could distinguish who is shooting at whom when they were out of sight. I attributed this phenomenon to the possibly larger caliber guns on the American plane. The German plane, in order to avoid the American guns, was wildly zigzagging at treetop level, occasionally taking very sharp turns at large street intersections, for instance right in front of the Jewish temple a few hundred yards away, his wing close to ground, nearly 90 degrees from the horizontal, making sharp turns *in the intersection!* The two planes were flying so low that I could clearly see the pilots' faces, as they turned their heads, etc. I have seen a number of German *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force) flyers in town after the occupation and I even made acquaintance with one by accident in front of our apartment building, which also was a movie house. I spoke fluent German, but I had just a little trouble understanding the slang words. As it turned out, he was an educated young man with excellent manners, Horst, a Viennese Austrian Messerschmitt fighter. He spoke French and English as well and he hated the war. His specialty was night fighting. I fully understood his sentiment about the war, he left his girlfriend behind, and I sympathized with him. The reason I am telling this is, that if one of those pilots flew that Messerschmitt who were familiar with the terrain, I bet they noticed the significance of a negotiable wide street intersection, should a dogfight develop. The wide intersection was just a few houses up the street.

The roar of the motors with a flat-out gas given to them diminished for a minute, just to have the two planes reappear again, this time the P-51 in front. This scene repeated itself three times, every time the "players" changing positions. Then the German pilot got close to the P-51 from the left rear, the American had no choice but make a sharp turn (too late) to avoid getting in-line with the German guns. So did turn the Messerschmitt after him. To the misfortune of the P-51 pilot, he took the wrong turn. Actually, regardless of which direction would have turned, he was in trouble. He ran out of city, got out into the open, removing the possibility of further maneuvering and hiding using the city buildings and terrain features. His biggest mistake was as I saw it, that he forgot to zigzag and flew top speed in a straight line at a very low altitude in front of the Messerschmitt, trying to escape by using maximum power - I could hear the roar of the engine. That turned out to be a fatal mistake. The German bullets traveled faster than his plane at that point he was a sitting duck. For not more than 5 seconds his plane caught fire under



Messerschmitt's machine-gun fire and heavy smoke emanated from the plane. All I could see from my vantage point was that all of a sudden he was no more and about 30 seconds later I saw a thick black column of smoke rising toward the sky from the distant fields. I knew, of course, what happened. A minute later I saw the German plane coasting back to the airfield close to the outskirts of the city, dipping the wings up-and-down, the sign of victory. During all this time I was watching this standing on the roof-top with my Civil Defense gray helmet on, similar to the German military helmet! No wonder, the P-51 pilot swung his plane once in my direction while being chased by the German and fired a few friendly greeting salvos toward me. In his eyes, I could have been a German sharpshooter or something. Rarely, planes were shot down by small caliber gun fire from the ground, most probably hitting the pilot through the canopy window. What an idiot you are, Paul! - talking to myself. Just in time when I sensed trouble by seeing the slight quick maneuver by the P-51 aligning the nose of his plane and his guns with me, I quickly hid behind the heavy thick brick chimney I was holding on to - a few chips of brick flew around me as the well-aimed bullets riddled the chimney, that was the total damage done to me and to the building. I never explained to the building manager why the chimney became chipped.

Oh, those unforgettable *good old* high school days! Any red blooded American kid of my age would have done the same thing, I am sure. Yes, I learned a lot but not necessarily everything from the schoolbooks. I never wore that damned helmet again, however. Hopefully somebody beat that thing into a plowshare, as the Christian Bible wishes.

Late Model Messerschmitt Bf-109G (Gustav) engine: 12-cylinder Daimler-Benz DB-605



**For a B24, it took about 20 minutes from Balaton to Budapest @ 250 mph.**



**the present circumcised HUNGARY**

# The German Occupation *(alea iacta est)*

*There are many humorous things in the world:*

*Among them is the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages* ----- *Mark Twain.*

The night of 1944, March 19 was filled with the noise of muffled heavy vehicle traffic. The heavy and light-tight blinds outside our windows in the second-floor apartment were absorbing much of the noise, so I did not pay to much attention to the occurrence. During the past years, we got used to the sound of columns of military vehicles trundling through the city. This time was different. When we opened our blinds in the morning, I saw three German tanks across the street, their cannons and machine-guns aimed at our windows. First, I could not get a breath of air for almost a minute. With wide-open eyes, I saw German soldiers moving about, some of them occasionally looking up to our windows. My father was a high-ranking officer, the Chief Law Officer of the 2nd Hungarian Army and as such, apparently the Germans did not want to take a chance. Their secret service, the Gestapo must have informed the troop commanders about this. By bad luck, the Germans set up their main command post in the building across the street, which was an abandoned hotel and bath facility years ago, it was not used for many years and was standing empty until now.

My father looked out of the window and was visibly upset - he was very disciplined, always smiling, we could never see any sign of stress on his face. This time he looked very serious. He was used to be picked up by a Hungarian military car each morning at about 7:30. It did not come that day. My father ate his breakfast very calmly, but I could sense that he was working very hard in his head. He got up from the table and looking in my eyes, softly said: 'we do not know what will happen - especially to me. Since your brother was taken by the Army, you have to take care and guard your mother from now on.' He pulled out a drawer, in it was a .25 caliber pistol, a Swedish make that belonged to his father, my grandfather before he died. Father said that I know how to handle it, do not get hot headed, but if I have to, use it as a last resort. The pistol is yours now. As I picked up the weapon, he watched. I checked it out, it had a clip with six bullets in it. I loaded a bullet in the chamber and put the safety lever on. Next to the gun were two more clips, loaded. As I replaced the gun in the drawer, my father told me that we are going to walk to his office. He put on his military belt with his side arm loaded - he checked that. He took my hand and started to his office. The trip lasted for about 20 minutes; we saw a large contingency of German motorized troops on the way. They did not cause any harm to us. Upon arrival at the office building, the Hungarian guard with his submachine-gun saluted my father and told us that a German officer is waiting in the office.

Herr (Mr.) Löffler was a master sergeant, my father's office tender. He was small, slightly fat, and bald, wore golden wire-rim glasses and was Jewish, always smiling. He was - without exception - always pleasant, his Yiddish/German/Hungarian accent gave a unique quality to his speech, and he knew everything and everybody. You could not ask any problem he would not have a comment on, recommendation or solution for.

In my very young years, I remember sitting on his lap many times he would tell me funny stories and try to teach me something. I used to go sometimes to my father's office, actually, I was allowed to go to Herr Löffler only, my father was always very busy in his inner office. Herr Löffler had to announce my presence in those cases.

Entering the room there was Herr Löffler - with a terrified look on his face, snow white. A German officer, a major, about 6 foot 3 or four or more was nervously pacing in the room and stopped as we entered. Herr Löffler trembling, very softly said in Hungarian, of course: "***This*** demanded the keys to the office, tipping his head toward the German. The officer in his most arrogant voice expressed his displeasure about the presence of Jewish Herr Löffler and started to demand the control and the office keys to be turned over to him - in German, of course. My father pulled his pistol out of the holster with the speed of a double-greased lightning and smilingly ordered the German - in German language out of the office. Since I knew the German language, I understood the talks. The big German could not even begin to reach for his gun. Father told Herr Löffler to press the button and two Hungarian guards appeared immediately with their sub-machineguns cocked and aimed at the officer. He got red, blue, white

plus all the national colors of the German flag - maybe in a different order - and took a look at each of us separately, swore something but the two machine gun muzzles rubbing against his uniform did not leave any doubt in his mind that they mean business. He slowly started to raise his hands - do not worry, not too high, he is Super Race - and was removed from the office.

Father called Herr Löffler in his office in my presence and behind closed doors thanked him for his faithful and efficient service throughout the years. Father made it clear that he cannot guarantee safety for him anymore and better think right now, what he wants to do; he will get all the help possible under the circumstances. Herr Löffler's eyes became full of tears, he gave me a last hug and stood there motionless and speechless.

Father called in his chauffeur and gave the order to take Herr Löffler anywhere he wanted to go. Fill up the gas tank and take an extra can of gas too. The driver to keep the trip and destination in total confidentiality, off the records, no paperwork, no trip report to be filed. My father did not want to know where Herr Löffler went. This is to protect everybody in case the Germans start torturing him, he could not tell. A safety precaution. They shook hands and Herr Löffler slowly started out. From the door, he looked back once more - his moist eyes reflected gratitude. We all understood the gravity of the times and this event foreshadowed the bad things to come. We felt this with full intensity under our skins. We never heard of Herr Löffler again.....

I was given the order to walk home but be alert and keep my eyes open, avoid any confrontation at all costs and to comfort my mother by telling her that he may be late tonight - too many things to do in the office. The statement had an ominous twang to it. I wondered on the way home if I will ever see my father again especially after the German officer incident... Will the Gestapo return and take him - possibly questioning him about Herr Löffler's whereabouts? These were disquieting thoughts, but everything was out of our control - the Germans took over finally physically too. The dye was cast.....

As the war was going really bad for the Germans and the front was approaching due to the advancing Russian Red Army, the Germans ordered every able man and woman from 15 years of age up to report to duty with a shovel. The work involved digging tank traps and zigzag trenches for the foot soldiers in the fields against the Russians. My frail mother was to be digging too under a heavy penalty if she did not show up - but the scrawny kid volunteered to do the job instead. The offer was accepted, and we were on our way out to the boonies in the rain. The soil was soak wet, still half frozen and the constant rain during the past few days made digging extraordinarily difficult. First of all, I could hardly push the shovel into the ground with my foot - I had to jump up-and-down on the tool with both legs - I was too light for the job. Finally, I managed to take one shovelful of dirt out of the soil, but now it was so heavy that I had to use all my power to overturn it. The wet soil clung to the shovel like glue. I had to scrape the shovel blade clear of the accumulated dirt with my feet and hands after each try. I had to do it. A German SA (SturmAbteilung, Storm Division) officer with 2 other soldiers were informing us that American fighter planes entered the area, and they love to shoot at everything that looks like worth shooting at. This was to inspire us to dig faster so we could hide in the trenches in case of an attack. As the trench was getting wider and deeper, two German soldiers carrying a trapezoid shaped wooden frame were fitting it into the trench to see if it is big enough to trap the Russian tanks, frequently swearing because the project did not proceed at the speed required. More than halfway through, we could hear aircraft approaching. A few seconds later machine-gun fire erupted. The planes were shooting at us, the Germans were using their sub-machine guns to repel the planes. For about 15 minutes, this mess was going on and then quiet, except the German swear words filled the air. No, no, they did not feel sorry for the killed Hungarians. The precision planned digging operation was delayed for almost a half an hour! We had to work even faster now to make up for the lost time, with less man, woman and child power. A half an hour later German military ambulance cars came and picked up the remainings of the Hungarian ex-ditch diggers who were massacred from above. If somebody tells you that the Allied did not shoot at civilians, he or she is lying.

The way home was probably my most torturous trip - tired, wet from outside and infuriated and disgusted, sweaty from the inside, cold, carrying that damned shovel, which seemed to multiply its weight by every step. I had to take the tool back, it was the shovel assigned to the Civil Defense-ordered sand pile for fire extinguishing operations, which was entrusted to me.

Mother took a look at my bedraggled body (and soul), dirt flowing off my clothes, shoes soaked in the rain and feet half frozen. My hair was in clumps, mixed with dirt. She did not say a thing just lowered her head, softly said:

take a bath; I take care of your clothes. This was her saying thank you for going for her. She would have died I am quite sure if she had to go through this ordeal. That was the night when I decided to get my *own* submachine-gun – which I did, as mentioned before.

Fortunately, German field telephone-installing soldiers were pulling a new line on my street at night. It was dark, very dark, no moon but I could see just a little, despite. It was curfew time, but I paid no attention to that. I could have been shot if discovered, on the other hand, it would have been only a shot in the dark. Big deal. One of the soldiers noticed that on a third floor of the neighboring schoolhouse occupied by German military, a light bulb was burning full brightness. This was in complete violation to the rule that no lights should be visible at night, not to give away a target should an enemy plane fly overhead (a total joke). The soldier took his submachine gun off his shoulder and placed it against a tree trunk and proceeded to investigate the source of the light. He pulled out his service pistol and unceremoniously aimed at the offending bulb. He got it on the second shot through the window glass. The light went out. Also, his ability to see in the dark, after looking into the bright light. From a distance, I could see him searching for his submachine gun. It was too late; I had his weapon.

Next day across the street, on the wall of the German local military Command building (*Orts-kommandantur*) appeared a large bi-lingual yellow placard: “All males from 13 years up must report for military duty.” The reporting days were assigned according to the first letter of the names. It was also stated, that “the military will issue an ID card upon reporting which must be carried on body at all times until departure to a military compound. The militia was given orders to check everybody on the streets and demand the card. In case the card was not produced, the militia was authorized to dismember the 'offending individual' on the spot!”

Could not help but think of Beethoven - his 9th symphony: “...*Alle Menschen werden Brüder...*” – **All people will be brothers.** What happened, Super Master Race? A race, which could produce a Beethoven, a Bach, a Brahms, a Gauss, a Kant, an Einstein, a Röntgen - what a contrast! Why did you guys sunk to the bottom of the sewer - now producing this horrible nightmare and seemingly enjoying it! Do you think you can still win?!

I thought this wonderful, warm German highly civilized gesture of dismembering people on the streets was just a little too much for my stomach. I got acquainted with *my* new toy and checked if all 42 bullets were in the clip. They were. I will *not* report, you can bet your sweet German anatomy on it! Only one person could ever give me orders: my father. I never before or after took order from anyone involuntarily - I have to approve the person first and then, only then will think about and decide at my convenience to obey or not. Guns at my face or not. (What a stubborn, arrogant kid!)

The apartment house we lived in was quite modern at the time, it was heated with a hot water central heating system. The heat was provided by a large boiler in the cellar. The cellar was “bomb-proof” - if you did not get a direct hit, that is. Heavy airtight steel doors were mounted in strategic places in order to be able to seal off certain areas. In one side of the large cellar, the fuel, a black coal mountain was piled up. That was burned in the boiler.

I told Mother that I am going to spend most of my days and nights in the cellar, in case the Germans are looking for me – they must have noticed me in coming-going. We agreed on a code she should scream in case our captors were looking for me and on a code when she would bring food for me, by knocking on the stairwell door before entering. I asked her to make some sandwiches from time-to-time and throw them at me while I was taking on a fighting position. I climbed up the high coal mountain and dug in. The small size coal chips allowed a relatively easy descend into the bowels of Black Mountain. I poised *my* submachine gun at the entrance, just in case some zealous German decides to track me down. The straight long clip of the gun very conveniently held it in the upright position as it was stuck into the coal. I left the safety clip on, guarding against accidental discharge, should I fall sleep (again). I thought the German boots will make enough noise to get me ready in time.

Up to almost to my neck, I was one with the coal. Actually, it was providing me with a comfortable temperature surrounding my body. It proved to be a good insulator against the nasty winter cold outside. Now, I was warming the coal, other times it is the other way around! War produces interesting turns in one's life, rôles can reverse. An assortment of hand-grenades I managed to take from an unguarded Tiger tank, *my* submachine gun and *my* .25 caliber pistol constituted my arsenal. One last bullet reserved for me. You *will not* capture me alive! I positioned the grenades in a handy semi-circular pattern around me in case I have to use them. The handles were sticking out from the coal - business end in the coal - safety caps loosened for fast action. I will *not* join the German Army!

In Hungarian mythology, if a fighter soldier kills his enemy in combat, the defeated one will become his servant shoeshine-boy on the other side. I was heavily counting on this - I never had any German shoeshine boys at my service but this time I did not mind having some! I only had to be sure that I get the other guy first before they get me - I had no intention of becoming a shoeshine boy for a German! From the top of the coal mountain in the dark, I had the strategic advantage. In case of an incident, I did not even have to aim; it was all set up, just pull the trigger.

Six months later I was still coughing up black powder - coal, that is, however, I beat the Germans in their effort to get me into their army or concentration camp and I beat TB as well. Murphy, you lost again!

My father was very busy those days, spending all his time in the office. Sometimes we did not see him for days. I understood the problem and paid a visit daily to his office - *without any I.D.* - to see if he was still alive. By this time lot of German forces were deployed around the area, a short distance away were military barracks - buildings where I used to live and play carelessly. Things sure changed. Now I have to play carefully.

*Father sometimes came home to eat and go right back to the office. He looked worrisome, never before seen this on his face. One of these occasions, he related to me that the Germans are delivering contingencies of men every few days - Jews and others - to be annihilated. They were compressed in overcrowded barracks. A Gestapo officer would deliver the people. Father had to sign the delivery papers, and the Germans considered him as also a massmurder – like they themselves.*

Then a transfiguration took place on his face: he managed to crack a broad smile. I was thoroughly terrified. Did he go out of his mind? - I wondered. He made me swear not to disclose military secrets. I did swear in.

"I had devised a scheme which would guarantee - as much as possible under the circumstances - the integrity of the people delivered to me" - he said. I almost screamed. What? In the omnipresence of the German Army, Gestapo, and all? "Yes" - he said.

Father ordered the captives to be disrobed and bathed, their louse-ridden clothes to be put in a large pile in the middle of the barracks's yard, to be burned later in the presence of the Gestapo. Whatever clothing was available, the men were dressed up and at night were transferred to different barracks in heavily guarded Hungarian military trucks. Next morning - to the amazement of the Gestapo, they were called and urged to deliver the next contingency. Father wanted to have as many people transferred and saved as possible. The ones delivered days before are gone, they do not have to worry about them anymore - the Gestapo was told. Actually, this was not a lie. The Gestapo was asked to witness the burning of the clothes - dead people need no such things.

The Gestapo was very satisfied and impressed that their orders were swiftly carried out without a hitch. Father "earned" the reputation of an obedient slave to the German cause in their eyes. Little did they know. Father said that this was going on now for weeks and by now many hundreds of people were saved from sure death. He again emphasized the importance of not saying anything to anybody - not even to Mother, women talk too much. "In case this affair comes to light, we all be instantly executed, so it is now your interest too, not to talk." My blood felt stopped circulating in my body for a second and then reality set in. I understood the situation perfectly.

This "merry-go-around" was repeated several times. A network was developed to keep track of the location of the groups, which were rotated between barracks. Later the Germans themselves took charge of the issue bypassing the Hungarian system, the trains started to roll toward the Third Reich with new groups - children, women, men, although at that time we did not know anything about this. Could not have done anything about it anyway. The remnants of the one-time Hungarian Army and military equipment were at the Russian front with soldiers mostly slaughtered by now, the few units at home had practically no weapons and ammunition, or training.

The inevitable was coming closer and closer to my town: the stubborn Germans still pursued their lost war with all the desperate vigor they could muster but were unable to repel or even to hold the line for any length of time against the numerically and weapon-wise now superior Russian Red Army which with ever increasing pressure started overtaking the German defense positions. The fight went back-and-forth a few times but finally the Reds were ready to take over the city. My Father got the order to evacuate and move the offices and personnel to one of the western towns of Hungary, close to the Austrian border.

I could not help but think of the ditch digging days - I did all that work for nothing - apparently the Russians did not understand the significance of the ditches and my dedicated efforts. The Germans in their hasty operation apparently forgot to put up signs for the Russians informing them that the trenches supposed to stop them. They were happily crossing them now by bridging them over. It was devastating for me to realize that I was involved in an unsuccessful venture. I suspect to this day, however, that the ditches may have caused a delay in the advancement of the Red Army: the Russians must have had a delightful day looking at those ditches and a laughing spell must have overcome them – from the consumed vodka too, no doubt, from which they did not recover for 2 days while filling in the trenches! I was proud now of my accomplishment: I was able to hold back a whole Red Army possibly for days, practically almost single-handedly!

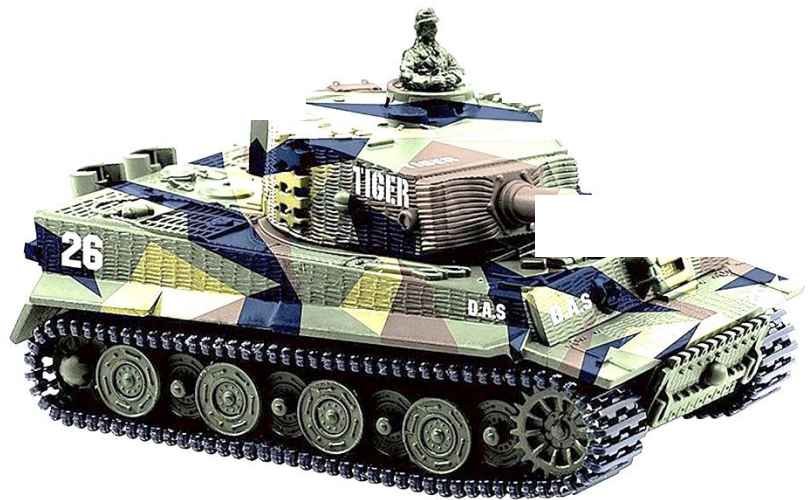


**The seal of the SA:   SturmAbteilung**  
**(Storm Detachment)**

**November 1944 –**  
**me digging traps for**  
**(against?)**  
**the Russian tanks.....**



**GERMAN**  
**‘KING TIGER’**  
**TANK**





## My Affair with the Gestapo

*(moral: pick on somebody who is even more stupid than you are!)*

Age 13+.

One pleasant Sunday morning walking peacefully on the street close to my High School when I noticed some problem in front of a multi-storey apartment building. People milling around, pointing up to a window excitedly. With the curiosity of a well-bred cunning cat, I investigated. I was told that a German soldier is upstairs and is brandishing his service pistol and wants to kill some Jewish people! Now, this is a job for me! Finally, some excitement in these flat, drab sometimes even bombless everyday. Running up the stairs I found an apartment with the door open in view of the German soldier. He was very drunk and was extorting money from an elderly Jewish couple what I did not know at that time. I screamed at the bastard in German to get out but instead, he pointed his Walther service pistol at me. I measured up the situation and seeing that the drunken jerk could not even hold his pistol steady, I started laughing and informed him that his pistol was not loaded. He was seemingly surprised, deflated, and incredulous, with the stupidest look I ever saw he looked at his weapon; he took his eyes off me and kept looking at the weapon for awhile. Then he took out the clip full of bullets and started to count them! He was so inept due to his inebriated condition that he kept dropping the bullets on the floor. I could not believe that somebody could be *this* stupid - lucky for me and for the old couple! When he was finished with the removal of all the bullets and managed to drop everyone on the floor, I told him that the shell in the chamber is spent, useless. Obviously I had no way of knowing whether there was a bullet in the chamber, or not. He angrily, with his teeth mashed together and swearing started jerking on the breech and ejected the last bullet and dropped it on the floor too along with the others. I noticed that there was no gun powder smell in the room, no visible bullet holes in the walls and ceiling, no dead bodies and I felt assured that nobody was physically hurt. In my Boy Scout training manual, it is stated that a good Scout must be observant at all times. (Even today as I drive around, I read every car license plate forward and backward, trying to remember as many of them as I can, make combinations of the letters, etc.). Also, I was already gun-trained by my father. I was trying to live up to the code. Since I knew how many bullets a Walther pistol could hold, I quickly counted the bullets on the floor and was relieved that all bullets were accounted for. I told the jerk to wait, I will pick up the bullets, and he is not in the position to do it without falling on his face. He cheerfully, with the characteristic stupid smile of a drunk - agreed and I picked up the bullets. I almost started to laugh hysterically - **are you really, really this stupid?!** I put all the bullets in my pocket. So, I single-handedly disarmed the drunken Master Race! He now realized what happened and was getting angry and started waving his *empty gun* in front of my nose finally realizing that he was rendered harmless, when I noticed that his right pants' pocket was full of Hungarian money. Dozens of 100 pengö (less than \$20 those days) bills sticking out. By questioning the visibly shaken up old couple, they revealed that that *was* their money. I started screaming at the rat and caught him off balance – psychologically and physically to. My screaming attracted a Hungarian policeman carrying a huge, big, long Mauser 8mm rifle (I used to shoot with one of those) who witnessed when I started to take the money out from his pocket forcibly. After a little shoving, I think I got all the money out – or most of it. I told the policeman who I was, who my father was, what I am doing here and was just in the process returning the extorted money to the owners. My father was a prominent personality, the Chief Law Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hungarian Army, was widely known in town, out of town, also internationally by being a permanent member of the Hungarian Olympic Team (target shooting). Apparently the policeman was aware some of these too. He stood in attention *in front of me waiting to be ordered*. The first time in my life I felt very important As a Boy

Scout, I was given thousands of orders and I always wondered, when will the time come when I, yes **I – I – I** can give orders too to somebody. Anybody. The time had come now in the most surprising and potentially deadly situation, and I grabbed the opportunity. So, I did give an order. I threw the recovered stack of money on the floor for show, but I kept one bill. I smiled at the old couple, assuring them that the ordeal is over; they should not worry any more about this incident. They probably thought that this kid is a thief too, taking advantage of the situation, but what the heck – we survived - \$20 is a good prize for being alive. I put the money in my pocket and **ordered the policeman** to take charge of the gangster and take him to the local beloved **Gestapo** office. I gave my assurance that I will accompany him, and I speak German as he already witnessed, and he will suffer no harm. Yes, I, an unarmed teenager assured the armed policeman! I knew I was right, and this gave me the feeling of being stronger than the whole Nazi Army, their wonderful Gestapo, the German Secret Police included. By this time – people hearing my screaming – came up from the street and other apartments and surrounded the entrance. The mob watched the nonchalant exodus with a wide-eyed stupid glare. The Gestapo office was on Alexander-the-Great Street, just down the street from this encounter, opposite my High School. I had to see that dreadful office with its unassuming sign sticking out of the wall: “**Geheime Staatspolizei**” – State Secretpolice - twice every day – going to and coming from school.

The drunk German had trouble walking in a straight line, so the policeman had to shove him left and right preventing him of wandering off the sidewalk and falling under the wheels of the oncoming cars. At the door of the Gestapo office, as the German turned in the doorway, I gave him a good shove from behind – he fell in the office face down! The arrogant Gestapo sergeant at the desk did not see this. The drunk managed to get up from the floor and the desk sergeant looked at him, me, and the policeman in that order. He asked the drunk what is going on. Before he could muster enough brain power to answer, I started shouting, telling him that this is Hungary, not Germany. This **fact** what he could not contradict (although Hungary became a German colony or something temporarily) caught the desk sergeant psychologically off balance – the first opening round is mine, I thought. Keep on going. I started to yell at the sergeant, telling him what happened, and demanded that the drunk soldier be shot! The fall on the drunken soldier apparently had its effect by making him now a little sober enabling him to deny all bad things, including the money robbery. The desk sergeant looked at me with his steel cold discrediting hateful eyes, saying that nothing **really** happened, implying that I was lying and wanted to put this innocent member of the Super Master Race in jeopardy. He said I should leave at once. I pulled out the bill from my pocket, slammed on the desk and in the strongest screaming voice I could gather, I told him that the bill is from the stack of money he tried to steal, I have a witness in the person of the policeman, and I demanded that the drunk be arrested and be shot right now! The desk sergeant became furious, let out an involuntary growl reminiscent to a hippopotamus which was just shot in the rear – his face turned into a color of an overcooked pumpkin plus all the colors of his country’s flag and pressed a button on his desk. The way he looked at me, I could feel bullets already riddling my body. No doubt, he would have loved to do that to me. But, there was an armed Hungarian policeman present too, who was watching silently and with fear the whole proceedings, not understanding the words but very well the issue. A German guard with his submachine gun dangling on a leather strap appeared and unceremoniously arrested the jerk and led him away. The desk sergeant was visibly disgusted with this episode – a half-animal Hungarian teenager demanding the shooting of a member of **The** Master Race! I was going to spit in his face at this point, but I valued my body fluids far more precious than to be wasted on **that** jerk. Besides, I am just a good-natured, gentle, well behaving, shy, possessing high class teenager. No way. What would I say to my father? I am in the business of spitting – regardless of what or who?

Time was running out for me, I had to hurry to conclude this whole ugly business. So, I had cooked up quickly another plan. I was uneasy for a moment realizing that if the gun of the German drunk was inspected, questions may arise about the missing ammunition. The member of the occupation force, the *Wehrmacht* walking around unprotected among these savages. He may remember now that I took the bullets! If I was caught in the possession of German ammo in the Gestapo office – I thought – that is not so good, could be somewhat injurious to my health. So, I reached in my pocket, clutched the by now nice body warm, shiny smooth bullets and threw them at the desk sergeant! He was totally surprised, he jumped and reached for his weapon. I smiled and informed him that I had no more. He, with wide open eyes, totally demolished, discredited, and humiliated by a low-race slave teenager, froze in a half-up half-down position as he was getting up from his chair, including his arm reaching for his pistol. Since I spoke – screaming actually – to him in *Hochdeutsch*, he did not know who I was. He lost the battle all along and was so furious now that he forgot to ask the #1 question in the book: *who are you?* Maybe somebody who is not worth shooting considering the possible consequences if I turned out to be a dead German citizen! The sergeant was so out of balance, he forgot to search me - #2 rule in the book. I should have filed a complaint with his superiors in this matter, accusing him of being derelict in his duty by not following the military code. But I am just a nice teenager, I would not do anything like *that*.

The policeman and I (internally) cheerfully proceeded to leave the office. The word ‘cheerfully’ may be a bit of a misrepresentation. My stomach temporarily left me, I think. It was a trembling knot shaken by an earthquake of magnitude 9 with full force dangling out there somewhere – that is how I felt. (I was somewhat angry of myself too, that momentarily I lost my absence of mind as well: I should have kept at least one bullet to see, if it fits in *my* Schmeisser German submachine gun with a full clip of 42 bullets hiding under my bed which I took from them on a dark moonless night. This information could have served me well in case I ran out of bullets in *my* machine-gun). I should have asked the Gestapo desk sergeant right then and there to give me back a bullet! Well, it was too late for that. *I have principles*, after all. I had no business going back and trying to undo a deal. A deal is a deal! That would have looked cheap in the eyes of the Master Race. I could not afford that, I have pride too, you know.

If you want to kill me, you have to shoot me in the back in front of witnesses! – went through my head. Taking a lightning-fast last look at the sergeant as we exited – I knew he was very close to do just that. Outside the policeman and I stopped for a moment, absorbed a big deep breath from the fresh, unpolluted environment – how refreshing a single breath can be – and looked at each other. *FREEDOM!* He gave me what was maybe the stiffest military salute I was ever seen or given by anybody. He must have been very happy to survive this episode without a shot being fired – especially in his direction. He stood there on the street in attention, rifle butt on the ground, rifle closely to the body – just as in the book – with his eyes getting wet. I asked him for his name, I told him I would mention this affair and his part in it to my father. I did. We did say good-bye to each other, and he turned one way, I turned the other. I looked back from about 50 paces – I saw the policeman wiping his eyes. The only policeman I ever saw wiping his eyes. Just wonder why? The desk sergeant was not smoking which could have bothered his eyes and I did not tell him a bad joke either! This mystery will never be solved, I reckon.

End of story. What – if anything – would a nice long-haired dope smoking real American boy out of Woodstock have done in my shoes?

Just a short note to this story: The Hungarian police was afraid (with a very good reason) of the Germans and were instructed that – unless they wanted to commit suicide – do not provoke them. They were confined strictly to keep order in the population. If Germans were involved in any way, they had to withdraw and take no action in fear of retaliation. This could have been the reason why the intimidated policeman did not act on his own. But I was not a policeman, just *a nice young, gentle skinny teenager* – I

found out I could give orders to anyone! Even to the feared Gestapo! The Master Race! As far as I am concerned, the whole 2<sup>nd</sup> World War could have been avoided, had they listened to me. I asked some people to arrange for me to see the *Fuehrer* (believe it or not, I did) but this unfortunately (?) was not granted. I would have told him what he *really was* on his own mother tongue. He probably would have gotten a heart attack and have died right then and there! Of course, in that case I would not be here today telling funny stories to you people, but even then it would have been worth trying if you considered the horror and the consequences of the war which could have possibly been avoided. Maybe. Probability of 0.000000000000097 or so – just a number from the sky.

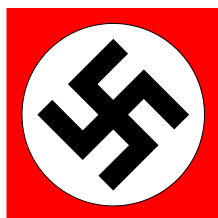
I went back to the old Jewish couple and apologized for taking the \$20 bill from them. I explained that if they want the money back, they should apply at the local Gestapo-run grocery store down the street. I related to them in details the very nice Gestapo desk sergeant who refused to shoot me and the policeman too despite my repeated arrogant provocations. They smiled, understood the pun and the old man wanted to reward me with more money by handing over a stack of paper bills. They probably thought that for not being killed, it was a pretty good deal for 20 bucks – 10 for grandma, 10 for grandpa! Mazl Tov! I declined the kind offer and with a broad smile I ran down the steps – I almost forgot what I wanted to do in the first place before this incident – oh yes, I was scanning the newsstand for radio magazines.

Speaking German has its rewards too – I thought, walking down the boulevard. *Communication*. It may manifest itself in strange ways, but I could sleep very well that night – I gave my first orders and possibly saved lives! I gave orders to the armed Master Race too! At this exact time, I decided that

**nobody, but absolutely nobody will ever be allowed  
to be more arrogant than I am!**

Still today I am living up to this principle. It works. I was occasionally beaten to pulps by some older bad-mannered kids in the school because of this, but still it was worth every punch!

*Oh, those exciting sweet High School years! I am quite sure our morally correct precious youth would have done likewise under the same circumstances.*



The swastika was on the belt buckles of German soldiers in WWII with the owrds: *GOTT MIT UNS* – God is with us.

**Sorry Master Race, you picked the wrong GOD !**

The GESTAPO insignia was in several other places – on the uniform, etc. - lovely and appetizing, is'n it?

***A note:***

The swastika (卐 or 卐) is an ancient **religious and cultural symbol**, predominantly in various Eurasian, as well as some African and American cultures, what was desecrated by Hitler and used for his sick work.



And now my priceless (ackwired it free) MP-40 submachine gun with 32 bullets in the clip. The ownership earlier changed from German-to-Hungarian. I kept it under my bed – just in case.

## Paul's Treatment #1

*(trains always fascinated me -  
at age 5, I wanted to be an engineer -  
now I am one, without really wanting to be one).*

Seeing the devastation of the war and associated horrors - Germans, bombings, etc. my patriotic sense was tickled. To make things worse, my neighbor in the apartment house we lived in was a nice boy who was a military cadet, very proud of being one and tried to influence me to join in. His father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Hungarian artillery, but unfortunately, he died in a long illness. I did not like the idea of joining anything at first and if I am to be perfectly honest, I must confess that I did not like the idea later either. Still do not. However, something had to be done. The grown-ups messed up the whole world; we kids may be able to do something remarkable, even if it involved the Military as a tool. We will use them! Therefore, I went to a physical examination prerequisite to applying to the military school. I did not say anything to my father about this. I barely passed the screening. I was so scrawny and skinny, that a young doctor, who examined me, was horrified, and called an older doctor to consult my condition: 'I hear no heart sounds! How come?' - asked the young doctor. The old one carefully examined me, shrugged his shoulders, and instructed the young one not to worry. He must have thought that I will die soon by myself, so why worry? However, I felt that finally somebody is taking action to pave the road toward a better future of the world.

When papers started to arrive addressed to me from suspicious military places, my father questioned me. I stood in front of him in attention (I had to) and told him the story. I expected a sincere congratulation from him. Instead, he looked up from his paperwork with amazement, slowly shook his head, smiled and slowly, very softly said: ***you are an idiot!*** This was the only time he said anything like this to me. I was totally devastated, shocked, floored. From an Army Colonel? From the Chief Law Officer? From my father? In war time? Yes! It took me a day or two to sort things out and I realized that he was 100% right, as usual. The 'German war' was lost many years ago - I knew it, and everybody with 5 cent worth of brain knew it, so why get involved and voluntarily promote my own defeat? I gave up my short-lived would-be military career immediately. I did not reply to further inquiries coming from the military, perhaps the old doctor thought that I died in the meantime, as he predicted. In place of the military, I suggested to my cadet friend Johnny, that I have some idea about making this war come to an end, or at least assist the process. I explained to him that this is a splendid opportunity to show his military knowledge, although he was a year younger than I was, and I had no clue as to his military acumen. He listened attentively and probably by tickling his ego, he agreed that at 9 PM we will sneak out and go down to the railroad station which was a very important factor in the German scheme of things. It was one of the major ammunition supply routes to fuel the war.

We both carried an adjustable wrench; we did not know the dimensions of the bolts we were about to engage. Tennis shoes were put on. We proceeded down to the station and sniffed around to see which train was guarded by German soldiers - those have the goodies inside! The Germans did not think of this, they gave away the clue! Gone down several times to the station, but no luck. Then we found a train, a nice long one. It was not guarded. We would not waste time treating unguarded items - there is no fun in it, it is too easy and probably worthless. We made trips daily to see the proceedings, finally it paid off... Then one evening, that train ***was*** guarded. The selected train car doors were sealed and guarded by submachine-gun carrying Germans. The train was pushed to a sidetrack and had no engine in front of it at that time. Lying on the ground, we watched the pattern of the German guards as they did their rounds. We were trying to

feel out the guards' method of rendering their services to the Third Reich. We got the system down pat, counting seconds between passages, etc. and on a hand signal from me we parted and lined up ourselves at ground level with two railroad cars. We had to work very-very quietly and constantly monitor the steps of the guards, who very stupidly guarded only one side of the train. I had to bite my lips not to break out in laughter. The guards were on the inner side of the tracks facing the station where the lights were shining (which disabled them to look into the dark and expect to see anything) - we were on the outside, at the edge of the station. From the dark, we could see and hear everything. Slowly and with extreme care, we proceeded to remove the two husky bolts holding the covers of the journal bearings for the axles of several of the railroad freight cars. I always suspected that there is too much precious oil wasted in those bearings and something had to be done about them. Why waste all that expensive oil in thousands of little bearings? We filled the oil reservoir cavities with good fertile Hungarian earth and sand, displacing the wasteful excess oil to promote *our* war effort. Everything, just the best for the *Fuehrer!*

Once I dropped my wrench due to my oily, slippery hands, it made a nasty loud sound in the quiet night when it hit the hard stones around the tracks. The blood literally froze in me - the nearby guard on the other side heard it too. Johnny was looking at me, did not say a thing but was written all over him: you bloody stupid idiot! He was right. We did not want to tie the wrenches to our hands - if we were caught suddenly, we could not have gotten rid of them in time, the convincing evidence of the sabotage. We could hear the guard stopping - the heavy military boots make a screeching sound at every step on the hard stones lining the rail tracks. They did not think of that either! The guard was turning left and right judging from his legs we saw up to the knees looking under the cars and finally slowly started to bend over to see if anything is there on the other side. If I had waited a second or so, I would have looked right at him. In that case, you would not read this story. Fortunately, he spent a couple of seconds to cock his submachine-gun first - a very familiar sound by now, we heard it a few times. However, these 2 seconds gave us the time to jump on top of the slippery axle bearing housings, blocking his view of our legs and holding on to something protruding from the side of the cars, making us invisible from the other side. We have not rehearsed this, but we did it with a perfectly synchronized motion. The instinct of survival. My oily hands were slipping but had to hold on. If I fall off, I will live for about five more seconds maximum. This intriguing thought kept me stuck to that damned ice-cold sharp metal piece whatever it was. My hands were hurting badly, and I felt warm blood dribbling down on my arm in the cold night. With teeth meshed, I held on. About a minute later, we heard the usual steps departing on the stones and to celebrate, we made a promise to each other with Johnny that we would fix up one more car that night, just for the fun of it. And we did. The self-impaired eyesight of the guard, his laziness to investigate further and a little luck saved our necks. Shall I make a complaint to the front office about this negligence? Looking at my hands, I found out that marrying oil and blood can make good friends under appropriate conditions for a good cause. I never thought of this before. Apparently, I was getting to be a philosopher approaching the age of 14. I was getting old. To prevent infection, I had no choice other than to lick and suck my wounds free of oil and dirt. Chicken-paprikash or goulash soup tastes much better, I assure you. First, the machine-gun grease, and now the axle grease! I did not get an infection, however. Somebody is watching out for me - it seems. After a few excursions like this, we decided to test our theory concerning the promotion of *our* war effort and went down to the station several times as plain innocent onlookers. My wounds almost healed by now and we were at ease. We just *had to have* tangible evidence that *our war* is going well. After all, we were just average, run-of-the-mill teenagers, what damage could we impart to the mighty German Army? The guards did not pay too much attention by looking at two innocents, smiling kids. At one occasion earlier I ran into a guard, square in his face - I could not avoid it. Smilingly I greeted him, expressed my devoted sympathy to his duty as a guard, told him that a lot of sabotage can happen and he



should be alert and discharge his duty to the fullest! He forced a contorted grimace on his face and with a stiff German salute, I departed slowly, with sweat erupting on my body even at unexpected places. I did not care to look back what may have awakened his suspicion. He must have thought how nice these kids are - they must be our friends, we just occupied them, and they speak good German already! Good *communication* skills, Paul!

Indeed, on one of those occasions down at the station we noticed that one of the treated trains was being prepared for departure. We memorized the serial numbers of the treated cars, never written them down. We did not want incriminating evidence in our possession if we were caught. Johnny and I made a promise to each other: in case the Germans catch only one of us, we do not know each other. This could lessen the total impact: one of us may get shot, but the other has a chance to stay alive and treat more rail cars. Just for the fun of it.

A flurry of activities surrounded the train - officers with paperwork running up and down, shouting orders, soldiers running in every direction, checking the seals on the doors, etc. These were unmistakable signs of a serious business. From the suspension springs of the cars, we could see that the cars were loaded to the maximum or beyond - the stops were hitting the lower spring travel end, meaning that the sand will be pressed against the bearing walls with a lovely great pressure, carving beautiful miniature grooves in it - for a short period of time anyway. As we watched the preparations from a safe distance in the dark, we could observe that the train was being taxied in and out of different tracks, sometimes going forward, sometimes going backward. I told Johnny that this is wonderful. He looked at me with some concern about my sanity. 'The sand has the chance to penetrate the bearings from both directions as the axles turn in both directions thereby increasing the probability of success in half time or so, I explained.' He hesitated to give an opinion, just smiled. I do not think physics was his strong point. Even if it was not so, it sounded good and *very* scientific. Finally, the train with two locomotives hooked up to it started rolling majestically out of the station. About a half mile to the northeast was a long curve ahead. Bravo, I said! Johnny's expression on his face was now a curious one: how long can I say these things unpunished? I smiled. I think Johnny assumed that the nervous load on me by the past few days started to show up. 'The sand has a chance to penetrate the bearings even more Johnny, because of the side thrust induced movement developing at the bearing sides by such turns. Centrifugal force, Johnny!' No answer just an incredulous look. The long train picked up speed and was going by now about 40-45 miles per hour. Those Germans were sure in a big hurry! Due to the very heavy load, we could hear the locomotive wheels slip occasionally and start to spin at a high speed, losing traction to the tracks. In cases like that, the steam has to be throttled back a bit to re-establish traction - earlier I wanted to be a train engineer, remember? - I knew this. We could see now only the red stoplight hanging on the back of the last car, when a series of ear-shattering screeches hit our ears. The locomotive wheels started to spin like tops and the whole train came to a halt. We innocently and curiously approached the dead train, observing this episode. Gosh, this is terrible, what could have happened? The German guards were jumping off the train shouting and swearing. Big commotion ensued and a few minutes later an extra locomotive arrived to help out, but it was not easy for them. It was a single track at that point, with no possibility to shove some of the cars onto a different track. You see, we selected the cars to undergo treatment *at the center of the long train!* They had to disassemble the whole train, pushing-shoving each car on both ends to find out which bearing froze up. We could see screaming and cursing German soldiers touching each bearing housing to detect the giveaway clue: heat. They had their hands soaked in oil too! The train did not leave that night. *Paul's treatment #1 worked!* We never found out what happened - if anything - to the German guards. Actually, this was an internal affair of the Third Reich; we had absolutely no business putting our noses in this matter. As far as we were concerned,

this could have been a perfect evening, but a sour note slightly poisoned the atmosphere: Johnny and I were bitterly arguing, whose treatment caused the first bearing screech!

I was very happy to be able to teach the Master Race a few things. I missed my profession; I should have been a professional Master-Race Teacher. I always maintained – even today - that the dissemination of knowledge should be free. To live up to this principle, we did not charge anything for our invaluable services rendered to the Third Reich. You learn as you go along in life. This overturns the notion that old dogs can not learn new tricks, and Germans were supposed to be highly intelligent. One thing they quickly learned was: beneficial results can be obtained if the trains were heavily guarded from *both sides* from now on. The fast-learning Germans noticed that only the outer bearings were affected and removed the opportunity for pleasure from these two teenagers. I do not know what these nasty adults will do next to dampen the happiness of the promising youth at hand. Civil Liberties Union, alleged protectors of civil rights - where were you? I think any high society TV-fed spoiled kid would have felt and done the same way we did. I am sure.

## **INSERT TREATMENT #1**

### **Paul's Treatment #2**

#### **Second encounter with the KGB**

*(first glimpse on things to come in the "Worker's Paradise")*

During the continuing saga of the raiding *liberators*, one day two soldiers shoved up, ordered my father in the room of the two soldier women and was ordered to disrobe. They must have been KGB. I witnessed the whole thing through the left open door. They were interested in my father's legs. As it turned out, they were instructed to examine the suspect's legs for hair formation. Many officers wore tight military boots. Under the boots, the hair on the legs do not grow, or to a much lesser degree. My father did not pass the test and was led away. We looked on with horror, we did not know (only guessed) what is going to happen to him. I tried to contact the KGB officer we got to know, the one who possibly can thank his life to me, but he was nowhere to be found. A few days later came a slimy KGB-associated character who spoke Hungarian and with a simian grin on his disgusting face he related that my father was arrested by him for investigation, no reasons given. He would not reveal my father's whereabouts or his expected fate. Horrified, we sat at the kitchen table with my mother, and she started to cry. She looked at me and said: looks like you are the only thing I have now. My brother was taken in the army by the Germans, and we did not hear from him for a long time. We considered the possibility of being killed in the war.

As Slimy, the KGB-man left, I very cautiously followed him from a great distance to evade detection to see where he is going. He went to the place where we used to go to eat - the one time officer's mess hall at the butcher's residence. This helped me in assessing the possible rescue efforts if the situation warrants it, since I knew the place inside-n-out. There was a Russian guard at the entrance gate now with a machine-gun. After waiting awhile, I proceeded to stroll in the direction of the entrance. I stopped by the guard and addressed him asking "how are you?" in Russian. He was saying something, but I did not listen - I wanted to pick up as much impression of the place as I could, which I knew before, and which was now under new management. Bundi, the Hungarian Komondor dog with his only eye left and with a few bloody holes in his side after the Russians machine-gunned him - started to wag his tail upon noticing me. I had to distract the guard from this sight too before he could make an association between me and Bundi. That would have

meant that I am familiar with him, the guard dog of the place, the former mess hall of the enemy officers. I walked by several times a day for two days, so the guard will not suspect me if he finds me loitering around. I had a hunch that my father is somewhere there nearby. I always spoke very loud to the guard - almost shouting - Russian style - in order that if my father is nearby, he could hear me and recognize my voice. On the second day as I was loitering around, I heard a "*pssss*" sound from the cellar. The cellar had very small windows about a foot from ground level blocked by an iron grid. I stood in line with the window I heard the noise emanating from and turned my back to it. The reason for this was to dispel the guard's suspicion of making a possible contact with the captive below. He did not know who I was, nor who my father was. I suspected that my father is trying to give me a signal to listen. I was right. He must have seen me now clearly from below, from the depth of the dark jail cell and with a very soft voice said to me that he is OK and does not know how long he has to stay there. He said that he knew Slimy, he was in the Hungarian Army previously and committed a common crime - theft of government property, as I remember - for which he got a court martial and a prison sentence with a dishonorable discharge. Father told me his present and his past name, for reference in case he disappears. Slimy changed his befouled name, to leave his stinky past behind and must have joined the KGB, becoming a Comrade to similar criminal KGB men. I firmly believe that the KGB was the only organization which would accept a bastard like him. Probably not even the French Foreign Legion. He was in "good" company. He has now the power to hatefully destroy people without remorse or consequences or without any evidence - a standard method in Communism. Now he is revenging that prison stay, *his* crime, and taking it out on *my* father. I asked around if people had contact with this individual. Several people revealed that Slimy showed up at their door at 2 a.m. and took people away forcibly, with the aid of Russian soldiers. They never heard from the family members again after that. Typical KGB operation.

I had to invent some way to be able to *communicate* with my father without arousing much suspicion. Think fast, kid! I went back to the guard who stood at a 30-35 feet distance from the cellar window on the side of the building at the gate and tried to induce him to sing or whistle some Russian songs, I wanted to befriend him. I asked him if he spoke some Hungarian - he denied. I felt now safe, and I started to whistle - remembering the affair with the Russian officer before - and finally he caught on and started whistling too terribly off-key what did not bother my finely tuned musical ears whatsoever. This was what I was after. I established *communication*, even at a somewhat elementary level. It was good for a starter. I saw Comrade Slimy KGB leave an hour ago, I hid from his sight so he could not combine my presence with my father's location and was confident that nobody around understood Hungarian in that Russian-occupied building at the moment. I started singing very loud - what the guard thought was a Hungarian folk song - but actually I was singing to my father below that I will bring some food for him daily. The nicest Hungarian folk song I ever sang! I felt responsible for giving Father all the support possible under the circumstances, including a psychological one. I hoped to combine physical food with soul-food.

I've learned the value of misinformation and disinformation by projecting a false image - by necessity - at my early age. The same trick was used by Jack Ruby (at the Texas police station), the killer of Oswald who was accused of the assassination of President Kennedy. I did the trick in 1945, however, quite a few years earlier than Jack Ruby did. I did not know Ruby before; how come he copied me?! In my case I call this applied psychology inspired by the desire to survive. This operation was a bit riskier than it seems now from the distance of time, because if they had caught me, I could have kissed good-bye to my freedom and also I would have put my father in an even more serious position. At the *exact right time*, in a fraction of a second, I had to aim the CARE package accurately down the hatch, avoiding the iron grid as well. If I hit the grid, the package would most probably have bounced back onto the street in full view of the guard. That would have been disastrous especially with the note I placed in it. Well, I aimed right as it turned out,

I was lucky. Since the guard got accustomed to me by now for days, he became less suspicious of me, and I was able to distract him for a moment each time which was just enough for me to throw the package down the cellar window. In my diversionary act, I would point up the sky in the opposite direction from the cellar window and asking the guard about Russian airplanes and such. He would look in the direction I pointed at and then say that the war is dead now - *voynah kaput!* - and airplanes are not needed any more. The next day I repeated the same routine asking about tanks. The guard must have considered his misfortune to get hooked up with such an idiot retarded Hungarian teenager - after all, he kept telling me that the war was over already, no more raids, shooting, bombing and alike are necessary, but I came back always asking the same *stupid questions* about war equipment. This process of thinking of me as an ignorant idiot in my opinion helped to reduce any residual suspicion in his mind of being dangerous. Who is afraid of an idiot? An idiot is an idiot, has no knowledge or memory of anything, that is why he is an idiot, and he is just a stupid unarmed scrawny, young, weak kid anyway, he can not carry out a series of actions requiring planning, logic, knowledge, power and guts, he is an unlikely candidate for sabotage. How could an idiot outfox the Mighty Glorious Red Army? No way. But I rendered the guard's mind ineffective. During these little diversions the food went down the window with our notes included. Master Race #2 and Murphy was defeated again - for the time being, anyway. *Communication, miscommunication, information, disinformation, misinformation.* Amen.

A week later Slimy disappeared and father was allowed to return to us. What happened to Slimy, nobody knew. Maybe his shady past caught up with him or his KGB bosses were dissatisfied with his performance. At any rate, life returned to "normal". We made plans to return to the town we lived before.

### On the Way Home.....

The train ride was something out of an aggravated nightmare. All what was left of our belongings was packed into a large wicker basket. With a great deal of involvement, we were able to arrange for this luggage to be transported to the railroad station. The train was scheduled to leave the next day, who knows when. Two trains were launched weekly, freight cars. We were sleeping alternately on and near the luggage in the cold night near the tracks. A band of rowdy Russian soldiers came at night just as I fell asleep, shoving me off the luggage and cutting the rope with their bayonets. They wanted to take our last remnants of our previous life. I started to scream from the top of my lounge, hurtling the most terrible obscenities at them in Russian, heavily quoting their mothers, for which they started laughing, except one, who grabbed his bayonet tighter and menacingly looked at me. By now I was not afraid, I spat at the Liberator, the other soldiers started to laugh even more. It was a circus production, thinking of this in retrospect. A couple of young Hungarian muscle man came to our aid and after a short shoving and screaming match, the soldiers left to ransack someone else's property. Needless to say, we were afraid to go to sleep after this episode.

The train came next day in the afternoon. We ate our sandwiches by then, but had no appetite anyway, despite the skimpy meals in the past few months. The railroad cars consisted entirely of cattle transport cars with the unmistakable evidence left behind. Not as much the smell, but the number and the demeanor of the people was the problem. The war transformed some of them into a senseless, merciless bunch of decrepit animals.

There was a mad rush to occupy the cars, everybody shoving, screaming, pushing, swearing, etc. to get on the very high wagons. All cars of the long train were filled up in seconds and the next train was scheduled two days later, so we had to get on no matter what. The country was just awakening from the

war-caused trauma and using scarce means, one had to be satisfied with what was available at the moment. Finally, with a great deal of negotiations, threatening and all aspects of philosophical warfare applied, we were able to force our way into a car, shoving "people" all around to make room for the three for us and for the luggage. The people-luggage assemblage was piled up all the way to the top of the car. I was able to have a place eked out on top of our luggage which was on top of two more layers of things. I was lucky to be so skinny and able to float to the top of this incredible mess, all the way to the top. I just knew someday I will end up at high places. I had to be careful not to stretch my appendices or my head. Between my head and the car ceiling was only about a 6-inch clearance.

The train was idling for many more hours before finally started to move. Going "home", I thought - I was always an optimist. Actually, the train was going back-and-forth on different tracks to pick up more cars. After several hours the train slowly - very, very slowly - started to pull out of the station. The night was uneventful except that after about midnight (we had no watches left, we had to give them happily to our gracious Communist Liberators at gun point) the whole pile of luggage mountain shifted after a sudden braking of the train, and I was buried now under the mess. I started to call for help in the pitch dark wagon, but nobody came - nobody heard me yelling. The mountain of stuff absorbed my weak voice among the rickety-clack of the wheel noise.

I fell to sleep anyway, totally exhausted. I had enough air to breathe through the crevices of the different size and shape objects piled up on top of me. The train came to a stop, and I heard people speaking. It was morning. I opened my eyes but could see nothing, I was under the crashing weight of the junk pile in the dark. Father and Mother started to look for me and finally found me halfway between the ceiling and floor, in the midst of the huge luggage mountain. They told me to get out, but I could not move my legs or arms, they were totally numb. The crushing pressure of the load on me and the cold stopped the blood circulation in my appendages. With the help of some bystanders, I was excavated from under the junk and was laid on the floor between the legs of the people. It took a good half hour when I started to regain the feel in my body accompanied by excruciating pain as the blood started to flow again in my arms and legs. For another hour charley horse sensation took over the affected parts, the tactile feeling returned to my limbs, and I was like new again.

My parents continued the trip to the Capital to my grandmother's house. I got off at Székesfehérvár (White Castle Seat – of the previous kings) where we lived before. I carried a very heavy suitcase with some of my tools and miscellaneous *radio related items*. I was able to save some stuff Mr. Röhlich gave me for safe keeping. I was just barely able to take the load to the Catholic church, where the old priest took up his office and home. The building we lived in before across from the church was gone. Heavy bombing took the life of everybody in the apartments, apparently only the priest stayed alive. Good praying, priest. Connections, connections. He recognized me and graciously allowed me to leave the heavy stuff there with him temporarily.

I walked to see what happened to Mr. Röhlich and family. They were pleasantly surprised of my appearance and asked where I lived. My status must have been written all over me, because Etush told me automatically that I can stay in the repair shop in the yard until further arrangements can be made. There is some radio repair need occasionally, life begun to pick up a bit now. The Germans, before exiting the country at Russian gun points, confiscated all radios from people they did not trust, predominantly from Jews. The remaining radios were confiscated by the Communists under Russian supervision. Everybody had to carry the radios to a designated place under martial law conditions. Serious business. The population was not entitled to know what is going on in the world. People surrendering the radios were given a worthless piece of paper simply stating that a radio was delivered to a designated collection point. Later, when the Communist Party was openly organized, the "good Comrades", the trusted Party members

were given priority to select the radio they wanted. In Communism everything belongs to the people. *The Communist People*. So, nobody else had radios. Some people had the guts to resist the Nazis as well as the Communists and hid their radios, sometimes several of them. Now was the time to open the treasure chests and make a profit on the hidden items. Radios were sold at 3-4 times their value - the law of supply-and-demand became obvious even in the now Communist dominated country.

Mr. Röhlich took trips to the Capital to pick up connections - he could have sold thousands of sets, but production just begun to start, sets and especially vacuum tubes, the essential parts of the radios those days were even more scarce. We had mostly Russian soldier customers who became suddenly Capitalists by "owning" (a bad word in the Socialist Paradise) a stolen radio. Half the times they did not pay, they left with the repaired set, shaking their guns in front of our noses. We had to put up with this, had no other choice. Some paid with a bottle of booze. What the heck, it is better than nothing. Some enterprising people collected all the good and bad vacuum tubes they could and incorporated them into self made sets. Sometimes out of 8 tubes in the set, only 3 of them were active. The other 5 were just plugged in as dummies but they were able to sell the radios to the Russians as an 8-tube machine! First I did not understand what was going on, but I caught on fast after the first such a set was brought in for repair.

The only Hungarian radio station was 50 miles away in the Capital city and was operating with very little emergency power at that time. Consequently, the simpler sets did not perform well, just barely picking up the station. This was a general situation throughout Europe, especially Eastern Europe at that time, right after the war. I had to make profit for the firm to earn my position and by thinking a bit, I came up with a reasonable solution: from a left-over German military radio, I took a vacuum tube and built a small box mounted under the repair bench. In it was an amplifier I built for that purpose, strengthening the signals going into the sets. The Russians left satisfied with the "repaired" sets, but some of them brought them back - they were lousy performers in the military barracks! I told them that they needed a much larger antenna than they had. Of course, I did not know how big antennas they had.

A few weeks later, after I situated myself as a radio repairman, my parents came down with the luxury cattle-train to see what was left of our apartment we lived in before we had to leave it. As it turned out the apartment received a cannon projectile, it burst through two walls and graciously exploded. It came through what used to be my room, just clearing the bed. If I had been there at that time, perhaps I would write now with one arm and eye. The new Communist regime gave the apartment to a Communist Comrade who was extremely unfriendly to us when we asked him to give us back some items. So almost all of our property was gone. Thank you Adolf, Franklin, Joe & Co.

I was now 15 and had to pay attention to my education. Only one middle school was open in town, in the building of the previous elementary school where the German soldier shot out the light bulb. The School Board recruited all the teachers they could who remained in town and managed to survive.

I learned with a sad sorrow that my previous principal, Dr. Willer, an extremely intelligent and kind professor, an Oxford graduate, was killed in the war. He was drafted as foot soldier and was traveling in a military car which was blown away by the Russians. Everybody died in the car. The teaching corps now was composed from several schools, state, religious, etc. We had a mixed teaching force, but they were all excellent, I owe a great deal of thanks to them.

I announced my desire to enroll in the class. They thought I was joking, they plainly laughed in my face: it is now May, the school is out in June, there is no way I could get in, there is a requirement of minimum school days to be attended to, I had no tuition fee, etc. I was *only about 3 months short*, wait till next year, I was told. Thanks a lot. Before, I was one day short, now one year short. Just never get it right. I had to draw upon my applied psychology experiences learned in the war, and with a little after-hour cajoling and sweet talk, I was allowed to start the class. Free. I have not had single penny, I got paid by



food and bed for my radio repairs. I had no books, not even a notebook but carried a pencil I borrowed from the shop, however, just in case. One cannot just show up at the Learning Institution without proper tools. It is like showing up in battle without a gun. What would the enemy think if they discovered this?! I have been in the war up to my chin, I know. The subjects taught had to be stored between the ears at first presentation, that is all as far as I was concerned. A few minutes before classes, I borrowed the books from the kids who had them and with a furious pace I read through the lessons for that day, every day. Apparently this hastily contrived system worked because I got a certificate of completion at the end of the school year. Murphy again, the School Board again and other factors again were defeated once more.

The summer came and I could now devote more time to repairing radios at the Röhlich shop. I gained more experience in art and was getting quite comfortable with it. I could fix any radio regardless of the make or type. But the summer school vacation came to an end, and I had to think of my education again.

In 1946 the economic situation was still very poor, but things started to look promising. A tremendously optimistic attitude took over and people began to rebuild not only their life but the Country as a whole. We did free voluntary work after school or work to get started on the *right foot* (in a now leftist country), so to speak. One of the projects was to build a large sport stadium, and it was completed. People performed heavy physical work - moving building materials, sand, concrete, etc. in wheelbarrows, shoveling, etc. Doctors, engineers, students, office clerks' side-by-side toiled to remove the rubble of demolished buildings by the bombings and fighting, to build new structures. Everybody wanted to erase the remnants and the bad memories of the terrible war. There were 7 beautiful bridges in Budapest, connecting the one-time separate cities - Buda and Pest - together. The two cities were united in the 18-hundreds. On the left side is Buda, the hilly area, many of the pre-war millionaires had their mansions there. Pest is flat, the larger part with industry. The Germans, in their desperate effort to thwart the Russian Army advancement, blew up all seven bridges. Who cares, they were not their ones! One of the bridges, the Margaret bridge actually went down prematurely accidentally. It was reported that a short circuit in the German-installed electrical fuze system interaction with a gas pipe caused the explosion. Just about 1 minute before this happened, my father wanted to travel in the streetcar from Buda to Pest. He was in the streetcar, when he noticed a very good officer friend of his walking by he has not seen in many years. Father stepped off the already moving electric train to meet him. As they greeted each other, a terrible explosion rocked the air: the bridge exploded; cars, streetcars, pedestrians included. All went down in the Danube river in seconds, killing nearly everyone on the bridge.

I moved to join my parents in my grandmother's house in Budapest, the Capital of Hungary and registered in the local (the only one in the district) high school run by Catholic priests, the order of the Norbertines. It was originally a French order and the only tangible evidence of this was that the French language was taught. At that time the school system required to teach Latin from year 1 to graduation at year 8, German from the third year up and either Italian or French from the 5th year. Hungarians did not count "grades" in the schools, but years. Elementary school 4 years, middle school 8 years, University 4-5-6... depending on the subject selected. Of course, Hungarian literature and grammar was continuously taught from year 1 in the elementary schools up. These were compulsory classes, as math, history, or any other subject. In the previous year I selected Italian because it was closer in its grammar and pronunciation to Latin, which I already had for 7 years. Since I had no books then, Italian seemed to be the logical choice.

I started my new school. The teachers - we called them professors, with a good reason - were of a mixed group, consisting mostly of priests but a fair percentage of civilians too. Our principal was a priest, University professor as well as a Doctor of Philosophy. One of our teachers had 3 Ph.D.-s, one from Switzerland. He was fluent in 7 languages and as a pastime, he made translations of the Holy Books into

different tongues. I can speak of those professors with the utmost respect. They were very strict but very human at the same time, a happy combination. We had to wear our school's official cap (I still have it!), uniforms were out of the question - most of us could not have afforded it.

In this year 1946 an inflationary trend started. The pre-war money, the 'pengö' was still used and it had eroded in an ever-accelerating pace. First the prices went up 5-10 percent per month, later much faster. In one year, inflation took an upturn hard to imagine. The money became less valuable than the paper it was printed on. At the end of this upward spiral, the paper bill had no space to print all the zeros on them! We figured in millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions and sextillions! The Communist dominated government allowed this, actually helped to create this condition to strip people of their little wealth they managed to preserve during and after the war. All people and businesses too were to go completely broke with empty stomachs, this way the people become willing servants to the will of the government. We did not realize this at that time.

In order to accommodate the zeros on the bills, the government declared that the paper money will now be called "mil-pengö" as such which meant the division by a million, or 6 zeroes. This saved 6 zeroes on the face of the bill. The situation became so bad at the end that the money lost 50% of its 'value' *in one hour*. Working people were paid once, later twice daily and were allowed to leave the factories to buy what they could find in the shops among the ever faster depleting merchandise inventory. One had to buy immediately what could be found in the shops, whether needed the items or not. Never in my life have I seen so many running people on the streets. After the purchase people exchanged the goods in front of the businesses on the streets by bartering to end up with the merchandise they needed. Sometimes 3 or 4 transactions were necessary to allow one to take possession of the wanted item. People openly shouting what they had and what they wanted - a scene of something like a miniature version of the stock market floor. Everybody was tuned to the radio which announced the devaluation hourly by stating the new decreased 'value' of the money. I have seen people carrying money in large wheelbarrows to the store. The whole pile could buy a package of cigarettes. Merchants converted their ever faster depleting merchandise storage facilities for storing money. I have seen merchants piling up the worthless money with pitchforks in a large room filled with the stuff all the way up to the ceiling! Going to the bank involved large trucks filled with junk. Many times, the wind blew paper bills off the overloaded trucks, nobody bent down to pick up the stuff. By picking up the money, they would have lost more time than the money was worth, considering the hourly drop in the purchasing power. The different denominations were printed in all different colors of the rainbow. People were unable to keep up with the money changes, not to mention the large figures. "How much is that lamp in the widow" - "50 times 30 ", sextillion50quadrillion70trillion25 billion15million!" Nobody counted the thousands anymore. During the pronunciation of "one thousand", the money already lost a significant percentage of its value, so why bother? Instead of counting 21 zeros, for instance the merchant said: I want 150 blues, 20 greens and 15 yellow ones. Color blind people had to ask somebody else to sort out the price. One hour later: 300 blues, 40 greens and 30 yellow ones for the same merchandise. The situation became so bizarre that merchants did not count the money anymore. The time spent counting would have been a loss for them. So, they asked the customers to put up a stack of money let say, 3 inches thick. By shaking the stack, different colors became visible - the i.d. for the denominations. If the merchant determined in a second or so that the color combination was adequate, a deal was made. The number of one sextillion is written as: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. Only 24 zeros after the 1! The value of one sextillion "mil-dollars": 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 Just 30 zeros. (In Europe the US billion is called "milliard", the billion is 3 zeros more than in the US). Scientists are lazy by nature, and they don't like to write all those zeros (a zero means "nothing", anyway) so they annotate the 30-zero number in its Exponential form:  $10e30$ . This is a shorter and more elegant

way to do business, although I doubt that non-scientists would have appreciated this notation. Traditions, you know. A stack of those 30-zeros could buy a package of cigarettes, a.m. At 4 p.m. the same stuff would have cost several large stacks of those. Can you imagine, if you wanted to buy a house, for instance at the end of the day?

At the very end of this bizarre nightmare so much money was necessary to purchase anything at all, that the merchants had to set up large scales and the money was accepted by the kilos or by the wheelbarrow loads. A short inspection of the money pile to see that several colors were represented in it and the verdict came: 15 kilos - about 33 pounds! Or: 3 wheelbarrows! The money was piled on the scale, money falling on the floor left and right, and the scale was read. A kilo more or less made no difference whatsoever, the deal was accepted. The time to negotiate the deal would have cost more to the seller than the loss of the trash money difference. Since factory production in those days were limited just to very essential items, toilet paper was not available in the stores. The government figured that enough junk money is around to fill the gaps, so to speak. Indeed, those paper bills were used for sanitary purposes. Occasionally in public places like in restaurants, the toilets were furnished with fresh money stacks daily in lieu of toilet paper. People could and did use them in lacking other paper. The interesting observation was made, that after each use of the toilet, the paper stack grew instead of decreasing! People got tired of carrying the paper load and while sitting in the rest room, the money lost half of its value already! They unloaded the excess weight in the form of the money. At the end of the day, the restaurant owners had to remove the accumulated excess paper stacks. Extra income, totally worthless.

Black market flourished in earnest. Large squares were converted into marketplaces, lending room to a virtually inexhaustible variety of merchandise to be bartered. A pair of used socks for 2 packages of cigarettes, a sparrow in a cage painted yellow to look like a canary (I almost bought it, but rain came and the color dripped off the poor bird) for 5 pack of cigarettes, etc., etc. Using this marketing scheme, I was able to collect a number of leftover German military radio gear dirt cheap.

The food shortage and the crazy inflation made life extremely difficult. Sometimes we did not see bread for a week or two. I tried to put my radio repair skills to use, but people either had no radio, no money to pay, or no food for bartering. So, it became obvious that I can not do it alone. On one Saturday I got on the cattle-express and went down to see Mr. Röhlich to see if anything could be done. He welcomed the opportunity to employ me again - so did I. On problem, though: I was going to school 6 days a week. In Europe, you go to school every day except Sunday. So, I did the best I could under the circumstances: Saturday 12 o'clock the school was out, I had to run very fast to the station about 3 miles away to catch the 12:20 train. The trip lasted about 1-1/2 to 3 hours, dependent on the engineer's mood and other unchangeable factors. Then a 45-minute fast walk to the shop. Between 5 and 6 p.m. I was already fixing radios most of the time. Being a good businessman, the boss accumulated so many broken radios that I could not fix them all in one session. I worked the whole night, no sleep. Then I went to bed about midnight Sunday, had a few hours of rest and ran to catch the 5:30 train. School started at 8:00 a.m. sharp. A one-minute tardiness earned an automatic audit with the principal. Too many of those and you were out of the school. No excuses accepted - the way it should be.

In the fall the weather is not too bad, just cool. But now we were entering winter. The temperature occasionally drops to 30-40 below and it gets somewhat inconvenient. Especially if you do not have warm clothing. My only clothes were a pair of short pants, a German silk short sleeve military shirt made for the German Africa Corps (to keep them cool!), a belt, 2 (wow, I am a Capitalist!) pairs of socks, one pair of shoes, no gloves. Often times the train was so full that I could get a place only outside of the train standing or sitting on the bumpers, steps, between the cars, watching not to get my feet or other body parts between the steel bumpers. Sometimes I fell asleep due to hunger and exhaustion plus lack of sleep, but some good

willing workers always put their feet out to hold me in place and keep me from falling off the train. One time while sitting on the bottom step of the wagon holding on to the cold steel guard, I fell asleep. Fortunately, a man noticed this who was standing a step higher. He kept me from falling off the train by putting his foot under my chin and pressing my head against other person's legs standing next to me. When the train stopped at the station and I had to get off, people woke me up in that position. I noticed immediately that my only pair of shoes were damaged by thoughtlessly allowing my feet to dangle off the step I was sitting on, dragging them on the ground while the train was moving. I wanted to get off, but my fingers were frozen to the steel. I had to forcibly remove my hand from the guard as the train started to pull out of the station, leaving a chunk of my skin on it. Since we lived right near the railroad station, I ran home, wrapped a rag around my blood-soaked hand and off I went to school. I had to run actually not to be late. I did not feel too much pain, my hands were still numb from the cold, besides I had no time for self-pity, life is too fast for that. I never got a cold from these trips. I think even the flu bugs froze solid and died in my body from the cold. Running is good for you; it keeps one in shape, and it is less likely will you fall in sleep while running. In the school my girl classmates seeing the hastily contrived bloody bandage asked what happened. Just got into a little fight - was the answer. The fight to survive. What a macho! they probably thought. My payment for each weekend of work was a loaf of very much appreciated bread, I had to pay for the train tickets myself. That came out of my saved budget by fixing radios here-and-there.

I felt responsible to provide food for my parents who were not in a position to provide at that time. I carried the loaf strapped to my body in order to prevent it from falling off in case I fell asleep. I was trying to pay back just a little something for the parental love they gave me for all these years.

Summer vacation came and it was time for relaxation. I spent as much time as possible on the river, the Danube, Europe's largest river which flowed majestically behind our house, fortunately separated by the elevated railroad tracks. The Danube had a habit of overflowing its groove cut out tens of thousands of years ago especially at the end of the winter when the snow and ice started to melt. Hungary lies inland from oceans, and such does not enjoy the moderating effect of a large body of water on the temperature. Water as such is a wonderful fluid unless one has to drink it. The river usually froze over about a foot thick and one could walk across it to the other side unpunished, provided one could avoid breaking the ice in a 50 foot zone near the shores where the ice was much thinner. When the melting of ice and snow happened suddenly by a rapid temperature change, the ground water came up and inundated our cellar. This did not create too big of a problem, we anticipated this and removed water sensitive objects beforehand. The water rose usually about 5-6 feet in the cellar but did not do any harm, my German grandfather, who was a builder, architect, restaurant owner, stone mine owner, chicken and goose hatchery owner, first public bath facility owner on the Danube River, sawmill owner and general entrepreneur designed the house with traditional German precision to withstand the elements. The over 2 feet thick stone walls of the house were well insulated to withstand the natural and unnatural elements as well. I consider the shelling of our house with cannon projectiles unnatural, although we got to use this during the war. The projectiles left a pockmark on the outside walls, chipping the stone a bit, that is all. The cannonballs were deflected unless they were aimed at 90 degrees at the wall. We had a very large yard, so the tanks did not have a chance to shoot at that angle from the outside. When springtime arrived, we called the fire department which for a fee happily sucked out the water from the cellar with their powerful pumps. A few weeks later the cellar was reasonably dry, ready for storage again.

*We had to look at these and more day-after-day*



### *New School – New friends - some good, some bad.*

Among my new acquaintances in my new location in grandmother's house, I found a boy of my age who lived next door and was also heavily involved in radio! Mike and I ended up in the same class in the school and became very good friends; we took up a twin seat in the back of the classroom, sitting on the same bench next to each other. Even these days if I visit the Old Country, the first thing I do is to call Mike and we go out for lunch, recounting the things we did together.

Mike's father was a top man in the electric company and such we could get some discarded material from time-to-time for our radio use. In our free time, we spent our time tinkering with radios. Fixing some and building some to our entertainment. In the school, we were able to get the use of an unused room to further our hobby. I formed a Student Physics Circle, I elected myself president and now we could put a sign on the door officially to that effect warning people not to enter without prior permission on account of the lingering electrical danger within. Partial disinformation – the girls stopped by sometimes to have a chat in the intermissions. Mike and I decided to build a simple experiment demonstrating the principle of radar. In 1946, the Hungarian government did not have any radars as yet (why should they) and we thought it would have an educational value in such an undertaking. The experiment consisted of a short-wave transmitter we built from German war material, a wave reflector consisting of an electric phonograph motor with an aluminum plate attached to its shaft and a small device we built with a meter visible for the detection of the arrived wave. We arranged the system such that the transmitter was located along one of the walls of the room, the phonograph motor with the rotating metal plate at an adjacent wall and the detector on a third wall. The radio wave beam was directed toward the rotating plate and any time plate moved into the proper position, the needle of the instrument on the other wall would swing, indicating that the wave arrived via the reflecting surface. This was the proof of the radar principle and this impressed the

girls and more importantly the professors. From here on Mike and I had a pretty much free hand in dealing with the time we spent in the classrooms.

On one occasion one of the teachers became ill and was replaced by another who had not taught our class before. I did not know this, and I made the bad decision to go back to class after about 6 weeks of not attending. The professor was utterly surprised to see a new face in the classroom and suggested that I leave, being in the wrong class. It took me some fast thinking and a long explanation for him to accept me as one of the regulars in the class. That was a close call and I decided that I will be more careful in the future and stay away from trouble, meaning the classroom. I was very careful in the French class. At the commencement of the school year, I advised the French professor that I was studying (?) Italian formerly and prefer that language over French. He was visibly shaken by this revelation; his face turned redder than before, giving a testimony of his sentiment toward me. His appearance presented an interesting contrast between his red face and the white habit he wore with a light blue belt, the *cingulus*, being a Norbertine priest. He got his French degree in Switzerland or in France and French was his favorite subject. Deep down I must have insulted him with my statement concerning French. To my dismay, he also thought Latin was also compulsory. He took out his disgust by putting heavy pressure on me in Latin. Typical of me, I decided that I will not stand this *arrogance*. I waited for him to enter the room for the French instruction. We all had to stand up upon a professor entering and greet him in unison or just stand until he signaled to sit down. Teachers were required to sign a very large format book placed on the teacher's desk before every instruction, confirming the students' attendance as well. I was patiently waiting for him to perform the ceremony, then with my heavy shoes started to march out the door, slamming my feet on the floor military style. I bowed at the door and exited. He was so surprised and infuriated at first that said nothing just looked at me with eyes that were hard to describe. On one occasion about halfway in the school year he gave me a stern warning: 'I hope you are getting pretty good in Italian by now - the year is coming to an end soon and you have to produce a certificate testifying to the acquired knowledge in Italian.' I smiled and assured him that all matters were in good hands. I did not lie because I did not say that I am studying Italian instead of French that would have been a lie. I simply took to the river for a little midday swim during the French instructions. I found those swimming exercises particularly refreshing, satisfying and invigorating. I never attended an Italian class, I knew too much of the stuff anyway, I rationalized. Nothing personal, of course, I did not have any grudge against the French language. If it suits them, who is to say. To validate this statement, I undertook a little French language at home though, to somewhat ease my conscience: I took one of those wooden pinchers my mother used to put on the washed clothes hanging outside to dry on a rope and applied it to my nose. First it hurt a little, but I got used to it after about 15 minutes when all the blood was squeezed out of my nose and numbness set in. I could pronounce now the "French nasals" with ease. I always maintained that one has to endure inconveniences and sacrifices in the pursuit of higher learning if one wants it to make it in this world.

Then the school year was coming to an end and my professor called me in his room after the school hours. The priests lived in an adjacent section of the school building, each had one room. The principal had two rooms. The professor asked me to produce the certificate attesting my advances in the Italian language. With the most natural and indifferent voice, I asked what kind of paper he really wanted, I never heard of it. He was totally surprised by my answer, looked at me with a bit of hate, then without a word, his face went through an interesting transformation. It was a case study in psycho-physiology. In 30 seconds, his face changed from severe to neutral, mild, pleasant, smiling. At the end he started laughing so loud that I looked behind my back to see if something funny showed up there. It didn't. He was laughing at me and his tears moistened his eyes. He threw himself back in his chair, still laughing. I was slowly edging



toward the door - I did not want to be accused of making my French professor insane. Then he came to and said smiling, wiping his tears out of his eyes: "Mr. Lukas, you either bring the certificate to me at 8 a.m. sharp tomorrow morning, or you will take a French test a week from today in the presence of other judges in the room. No monkey business this time. In case you can not demonstrate an average grade consisting of the 2 years of French material you missed, I will recommend your rejection for a higher class and may have to repeat the whole year! You will recite without problem the French National Anthem, the Marseilles, with all its verses plus at least one other poem, like the one in the book by Victor Hugo. It is up to you. I will allow you one mistake per subject. If you make two mistakes in the same text or exhibit a lack of acceptable vocabulary, the test is over immediately. Correct punctuation and pronunciation is also a must. Good luck, goodbye!"

Now *that* is a challenge! I remembered Mark Twain's wise evaluation in this matter I quoted earlier, which is - 'all you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure'. I added *arrogance*. I have read Twain at an early age in Hungarian translation; he grabbed my imagination with his witty and incisive insight into things. 'I will never let you down, Mark' - became my motto. Did not I learn enough German, Russian and Italian in a hurry to get by? This guy will not get the best of me, I swear. The disgust between the professor and myself was mutual and now demonstrable in terms of nastiness.

The next week was something out of a real-time nightmare. First, I borrowed Mike's books, French grammar, and dictionary and all, with his barely readable notes included. I bought a notebook designed to be a handwritten dictionary. School was out now; students were allowed a week to prepare for the finals. I had exactly  $7 \times 24 = 168$  hours to learn the stuff. Even if it takes an hour away from French learning to figure out the odds, I wanted to see if this task is possible at all. I counted the pages of all printed matter, made tables and calculations to see how fast I have to absorb the material, how many minutes I can spend on a page. To make the story short, I slept maybe 3-4 hours a day in one hour segments, nights included. I filled my notebook and hand-dictionary full of words. Since French is a Latin derivative language, I made associations between the French, Latin and Italian words if it was possible, this way it stuck better to my battered brain.

I learned French grammar, poems, words, idioms, numerals - and yes, some words conducive to tender feelings between genders. This priest professor was quite openly partial to the girls in all the classes he taught. The first thing he did at the beginning of the instructions was to walk to the benches where the girls sat and smilingly ask them if they had a good time last evening, cracking somewhat slippery jokes, etc. This was known to everybody, including his teacher colleagues. If all fails, as a last resort I can quote a few appropriate lines pertaining to love and women. If *that* fails, nothing helps.

Then the time came. I had to appear at 10 a.m. sharp in his room. I dressed very casually and comfortably, in shorts (*arrogance, defiance*) and a sport shirt. I carried a few items required and I knocked on the door and opened it. To my utmost surprise, 4 of the most beautiful girls from a class lower than mine were sitting in the back of the room and as I entered, they greeted me with a big smile. This guy knew that it was almost impossible to learn all that stuff, so I would burn up in the presence of those girls, spreading the news of my annihilation with all the details of how stupid I was! However, this scene also presented a different side too (*the Rubik cube?*) what he possibly did not consider: if I am doing reasonably well, he cannot make me repeat the year, I have (maybe not completely unbiased) witnesses and many of the girls hated his guts anyway because of his slippery jokes and innuendos. This instantly became clear to me, and my confidence increased by a great leap! The professor did not count on that, he thought that I would be so uptight, intimidated, and scared that I would fail for sure. That is what he wanted, to get even with me. I had news for him. I greeted the girls by throwing kisses to them, laughing

loudly, looking at the professor and thanked him for the illustrious assemblage of beautiful 'judges'. Seeing this, that I was not only not embarrassed but elated, he became now serious. It was written all over him that he was even more disgusted with me than before. - First round is mine - I thought. Keep him wondering.

First the Marseilles, the French National Anthem. I recounted it flawlessly. The girls behind me made some funny noises, giggling. The professor looked at me, wrinkled his forehead for a second, and then started questioning the grammar. The questions were elementary, but I made one mistake. His eyes started glowing with the fire of revenge - "one more mistake and you are out" - he informed me cheerfully. Then he asked for my handwritten dictionary that was compulsory in any language class in the schools. The stuff sticks better if you write it down yourself. He asked me about 50 words randomly selecting from the dictionary, I failed one. OK, just one more mistake from the dictionary..... - he did not finish the sentence; everybody knew what that meant. I spent now about an hour answering his questions. He started to look at me with disgusted admiration - how did this jerk manage to learn all this stuff in one week? He had a conversation with the girls who all were laughing. The girls gave me some encouraging words –go-go-go-Pali!. So far so good, I have gotten this far. It would be now more difficult for him to reject me, the girls witnessed my knowledge, and I told the professor that the reason I failed some of the questions because I had spent an inordinate amount of time in perfecting my pronunciation, especially the 'French Nasals'. I gave him a demonstration by pinching my nose with my fingers and turned around toward one of the girls: *je t'aime!* - I love you! in the muffled pinched nasal. The whole scene became now a circus production, not an academic endeavor - everybody was laughing, the girls threw kisses at me, the professor was amazed. I took over the rôle of the Ringmaster. He did not anticipate such an *arrogance*, making fun of the French language, his cherished taboo, on top of my neglect in studying his favorite language, and now, creating a pandemonium!

I wanted to avoid further questioning, especially the Victor Hugo poem because I could not remember the beginning of the third line from the end. I practiced, practiced, and practiced. I had a mental block, most of the time I got stuck. I hoped that he would forget about the poem, but he did not. This poem was a very sad one. The title was: '*Après la bataille*' – After The Fight. He described his father as a soldier in a fight where he was mortally wounded – asking for water in his fever: '*aboir, aboir, par pitié*' - etc. Thinking back to my father's fate in WW I where he was pronounced dead due to his serious wound – one of his lungs was shot away, buried alive but by some miracle, under a stack of dead bodies, one of his soldiers noticed a twitch of his finger: he is still alive, take him back to the hospital! The hospital, which was blown away by a Russian bomb, consisted of the following: 1- doctor, 1- 4-pint bottle of iodine, 1- pocketknife. The doctor operated on my father, he survived. Deep down I sympathized with Victor Hugo. When the scene was restored to relative sanity, he said: 'You are a son of a gun, but I could see that you tried. I do not know how you did it, but you did it, I am somewhat amazed. 'If you recount the Hugo poem without a hitch, I let you pass - no errors with correct pronunciation and punctuation!'

I thought, this is it. I went through this torture for over 2 hours now and three lines from the end he will throw me out. I was trying to remember desperately the line now in question, but I drew a blank. Think fast kid, do something! I started the poem, really slowly, meticulously pronouncing the words hoping that in stretching time and by a little luck, I will be able to remember the line. The professor looked at me attentively, mentally criticizing every word, every punctuation, I could see that on his face. He was still trying to find something wrong. As I was reaching the critical point - still blank - I dramatically raised my arms, turned toward the sky, turned halfway toward the girls and very emphatically came to the critical line. I was gasping for seconds - maybe I will remember. The prof. seeing my theatrical performance (and

perhaps afraid of another embarrassment for him), stood up from his chair smiling: enough, enough! - I see you know the stuff, - congratulations! He shook hands with me, the girls broke out in screaming, one of them gave me hug - I believe the one I told I love her in French, everybody was happy. I thanked him for his effort to save my neck, from losing a year. He was shaking his head and said that he could not imagine that I can learn all the stuff plus the poems too – 2 years of French! Little did he know how meager my French knowledge was and how close I came to a disaster. I headed toward the door when he said: some day I may even like you! Phew - that was close!! Mark Twain was right, and Murphy apparently does not understand French, he is Irish, he should switch over to a good French cognac! On the way to the beach people were looking at me with curious eyes as I could not help but singing loudly, recounting the memorized verses of the Marseilles: *Allons Enfants de la Patrie, le Jour de Gloire est arrivé!....* Indeed.

*P.S.: I usually visit the Old Country yearly. Once a month, the ol'boys – my old classmates convene in the very school we enjoyed our youth. Two of my professors were still alive as of 2004: my class-boss and he, the French/Latin teacher. He mostly forgot the affair between us way back then, so I translated this chapter and printed it for him, for this year's meeting. Last year I gave them each a mint-quality uncirculated US silver dollar, what they have not seen before, accompanied with diplomas of honor and appreciation for their relentless effort to teach us. The meetings are very cordial, some wine and some bits of crakes are provided to refresh the memories of the ever-decreasing number of us. The French teacher was so taken by my action that he said: "you extended my life by 10 years!" He could not imagine that such thing can happen – especially from a rascal he despised before. He hugged me and almost cried. C' est la vie! Indeed, his forecast came true – he likes me now!*

## **Electrician / Plasterer Paul**

The High School we attended was in a deplorable condition. Run down, filthy, stinky, not very conducive for learning. No wonder, because the building was used as a Russian military hospital and just to give you some idea of the cultural level of our Liberators, I describe the condition we found upon the departure of the Russians from the school: almost all windows and doors were removed, including the window frames and door jambs, filth, defecation everywhere, obscene graffiti and on the filthy and bullet hole-ridden walls, the electric system in shambles too. Wiring ripped out of the walls, some wires still dangling wildly. Russian culture, firsthand. In Europe, the electric wiring is in metal conduits fitted into grooves cut in the brick, stone or concrete walls, put there permanently by applying mortar over them, and painted over. The conduits were ripped out of the walls, sometimes pieces of the walls included. Mike and I inspected the main switch, fuse panel, and found the fuses all bypassed. This explained burned out wiring the civilized Liberators left behind. On the fuse panel of the main building, one of the fuses was bypassed by a Russian bayonet! It was too long to fit under the fasteners, so they broke it in half and bolted it in the piece as fuse! I actually have seen the doors, windows, ripped out doorjambs and window frames loaded on the Russian trucks by the Liberator soldiers. The Socialist Fatherland needed those items. Or they have never seen a door or window before. Your guess is as good as mine. Civilization Communist style.

Since Mike's father was high up in the electric company, we were able to obtain free materials: conduits, wires, hardware, etc. from which we two rebuilt the school's electrical system. It took us to the whole vacation period, about two months every day, Sundays included. No Sabbath either. We felt that education is important, and the Communist government will not help the Catholic school, so somebody should take up the challenge. We did. I wonder about those cases here in the US, where students commit

the vandalism on their schools without the help of the Russian military and now the taxpayers (I) have to pick up the bill. Why? - on both counts. Those individuals should be sent to rebuild schools they and their comrades vandalized to learn the value of work. (By the way, this is exactly what the Russians do to their vandals). In electrical engineering, this process is called 'negative feedback'. The clear sound of your hi-fi equipment is based on the same principle. If it works for the radio, it should work for the kids too. The more vandalism, the more counteracting effort by the same individuals. In this way, you will end up with a rebuilt school and with students who learned to appreciate work instead of destruction. Of course, this is not 'politically correct' in our days, the student's civil rights and his/her 'self-esteem' would be injured. On the other hand, apparently the taxpayer's rights are not violated when they have to pay for the senseless vandalism. Leave it to the ACLU, they will solve the problem for sure.

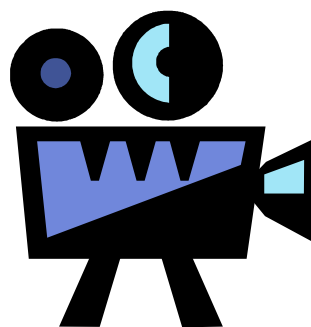
The wooden boards supporting the students' coat hangers were gone too. We fixed that too, why not. Had to chisel large holes in the concrete (was not easy, I tell you) and providing strong anchor arrangements we cemented the items in place. After the paint job the classroom looked first class. The principal was pleasantly surprised that we did this without even asking us, he was very appreciative of our efforts. The school had absolutely no money to contract somebody to do the job – and we knew this.

As the new school year started, Mike and I decided that we should have a little more fun, the absence from classes became a habit, it created no more excitement since we could get away with it. Our respected principal asked us which subject we despise most: he will call us out for conferences. And he did at several occasions. Our Latin professor was embarrassed, knowing what is going on, but he was powerless against the orders of the principal.

Mike and I decided that we would set up a movie house in the school. The principal was somewhat foreign to this innovation but using our rendered services to the school *as a capital*, he finally agreed, and we got a large unused room on the top floor.

Due to the courtesy of Mike's father and the Electric Company, we had a metal frame constructed and anchored to the wall, upon which we placed the 16-millimeter sound movie projector we were able to rent from a willing individual. We applied a fresh coat of white paint over the opposite wall as a screen and the installation was ready.

Then the money question came up. Renting the films, the projector, electricity, repairs, etc. Who has the money, that was the question. We did not, for sure. In order to get things under way we drafted a very official looking letter with our newly founded name as letterhead. The name had to do with Student Education in Socialism, a fashionable slogan those days. The first donor (not surprisingly) was the Electric Company with a nice sum of money. We went from company-to-company, soliciting funds.



## Visiting the Legation of the 'Capitalist Swines'

***'Kapitalistichesky Swinyi!' (Capitalist pigs) -  
that means you my friends, as the Communists called Americans.***

In the meantime, I joined the American Legation's Library in Budapest. Those days there was no Embassy yet in Budapest. The Russians were paranoid (still are) about letting the guys who pulled them out of the mess during the war coming in and just opening up an Embassy! It took many more years of diplomacy to accomplish that. I could read the latest news around the world there, listen to the fashionable jazz from America on the latest American phonograph records which were strictly forbidden at that time in the Worker's Paradise, loan American books and magazines. And yes, films too.

I was several times arrested by the KGB-operated plain-clothed police watching people like me coming out of the American Library. At one evening walking out of the building with a large roll of American magazines under my arm; "Life" and similar, I heard a sharp whistle sound behind me in the dark. I continued to walk as I did not hear it. Then I heard somebody running after me. The detective who was hiding behind a tree before angrily confronted me and emphatically asked why I did not stop on the whistle. 'What whistle? - I asked innocently. "This one!" he shouted at me pointing to his noisemaker. 'People do not whistle at me like a dog! Do you stop dogs too, are you a dog catcher?' The detective was even more furious now. So furious in fact that he had to take deep breath before he could continue. He was not used and prepared for this treatment from a subjugated slave. This behavior was not taught at the KGB schools. People should have been intimidated to the point that in confessing the 'crime' they would expect mercy. But that is the only thing the KGB does not know. I knew this psychological trick and have not fallen for it. Too bad for him. I not only did not get scared, but also confronted him with a simple fact he could not refute - I am not a dog! - screaming at him. He asked me for my I.D. booklet, which has to be with one at all times in Communism otherwise stiff penalty will be levied against the criminal lawbreaker. I calmly said that a lot of Capitalist enemies are lurking in this town, and I will refuse to identify myself to him unless he can prove to me that he is not an "imperialist spy" - as the Communists used to describe their enemies, predominantly Americans. I said this so calmly and innocently that he did not know what to do for a while. He produced his ID, flashed it in front of my nose not more than a half second and was ready for the next question. But *I* was not. I grabbed his ID out of his hands, I started to scream at him, called him an imperialist dog why is he afraid to let me know his name, is he covering up his imperialist fascist past? I told him that I wanted to see his ID under the city light. And I did. I walked under the next streetlight and meticulously examined the document. I remembered his name and ID number for a long time. I returned the document to the totally deflated and humiliated furious KGB cop. With a gesture of grandeur now, I produced my ID and stuck it under his nose. You see, I did not refuse to let the police know who I was, you have no grounds now to take me downtown. Right yes, grounds no. I fortunately had my American Library ID card put deep in my pant's pocket before leaving the Legation building. I kept track of this piece of paper in my mind in case I was to be taken by the police, I could drop it unnoticed so it would not incriminate me if searched. One has to think of a lot of things in the wonderful world of the 'Worker's Paradise'. He asked me where I was. 'I came from a friend of mine'. (I really had a friend nearby, but I did not want to get him involved - I wanted to keep him as a friend.) 'What is his name?' 'None of your business! This is a free Socialist Country, as written in the Socialist Constitution (I had no idea as to whether there was one or not) the workers have the right to talk to their Socialist friends, building Socialism together without being harassed!'. I wish I had a color camera at hand and taking a picture of this pitiful jerk. A behavior like this, their own garbage thrown back at them is not listed in their manual as an expected answer from a criminal under questioning. In the 'Worker's Paradise' of course you are

automatically guilty, no proof necessary, until you find a way out of the mess one-way or other. I have chosen the other. Since they have very little or no brain (otherwise they would not have been KGB hoodlum), I used their favorite slogans against themselves, an unexpected turn of events in the life of a KGB cop! They are powerless at that point in view of the onlooking pedestrians, they cannot arrest someone because he is loudly praising the very system they work for. So, he put forth his last argument: 'I saw you coming out of the American Library!' 'You are mistaken, goodbye' - I turned around and started walking fast. He started after me but stopped and began a sentence to tell me something, all I heard him saying politely 'please do not go there again' or something to that effect - but I was now down the street quite a way, whistling. This idiot was so outraged upon my unexpected fearless and arrogant behavior - far exceeding his - that he forgot to ask me about the magazines under my arm! They were all American magazines, all he had to do is to look at them, all my rhetoric would have been in vain. But he was dumb. You see, I told you arrogance works! Even Murphy has better taste than to get involved with the KGB.

### **Movies forward, movies backward.**

We started playing American war movies borrowed from the Legation, documentaries depicting scenes from the American life, democratic elections, etc. We did some tricks to have a little more fun and to entice the kids to come back later too. In some war scenes where cannons, tanks and other toys were shooting at the enemy, we would suddenly reverse the film and all the bullets and smoke would rush back into the cannons. Then we stopped the film for a second and I would ask the kids through the PA system as to whether they wanted to change the outcome of the 2nd World War. After the laughter and some wise cracks, we continued. We took in some money, but sometimes the turnout was less than enough to maintain the operation. We needed more money. We had to give some money to the school, which was broke to compensate for the electricity we used, for instance. As a last resort, we went to the local Communist mayor, a total jerk, and asked him for money. He first did not want to hear about that, and threatened to make trouble for us because we operated without a permit. We recounted Russian history by telling him that when the Russian Revolution broke out in 1917, those Comrades had no permit either from the Zar! Yet the Great Revolution was a complete success, nevertheless. He could not counter that and gave in, finally we got a little money out of him. We convinced him of the paramount importance of educating the youth in our wonderful new system, Socialism (to the opposite philosophy, of course, but obviously he did not know that). 'Only the enemies of Socialism would keep the promising youth, the future of Socialism ignorant' we sounded. He could not resist that either - he could not afford to be called the enemy of Socialism, the very system which put him in power. Mike and I left happily with the money, playing American films with Communist help was appreciated. The mayor probably never found out what he was giving Communist Government money for, or if he did, he kept quiet about it with a very good reason. We had him coming or going.

Our principal felt a bit uneasy of our unconventional operations. By law, we were not allowed to collect admission, so we posted a well-known ploy: 'Donations accepted'. We asked two of our extremely large size powerful classmates to aid us in collecting the otherwise minimal admission fee. If somebody did not want to pay, just stand in front of the person and talk to him at length, extolling the importance in maintaining such a noble establishment and at the same time holding up traffic. Peer pressure will do the rest. It worked. These two mountains could not be bypassed, they covered the door opening with their large bodies. In return, they had eternal and irrevocable rights to see any picture free anytime. A win-win-



win-win-lose proposition. Win for us, win for the kids who attended, win for the enterprising spirit, win for propagating democratic ideas, and lose for Socialism. That is the way it was planned.

## **A CLOSE CALL WITH THE HUNGARIAN POLICE**

*(criminal juveniles operating movie house without permit -  
showing forbidden American Capitalist films!)*

So, we had some money coming in. To please our principal, we decided to explore the possibility of obtaining an official permit for the movie house. Mike and I went to Police Headquarters and found out who is in charge of the permits. It was a shifty-eyed unpleasant looking motor mouth police lieutenant colonel with a disgustingly arrogant attitude. It nearly approached mine. Unfair competition, I thought. We started to explain that we would like to get a permit for our operating movie house. He asked questions like: how many firemen are on duty at the presentations; what is the capacity of the room; how far is the projector from next fire hydrant; what flame-retardants are being used; what is the safety arrangement of the emergency exit; when were the premises safety inspected last; size of the emergency light; etc. etc. By talking to us, he gave us a large package of official forms to be filled out, the application questionnaire, listing all what he said and a lot more. Mike and I looked at each other simultaneously, the decision was made in a thousandth of a second, without saying a word: get the heck out of here before they arrest us! We accepted the papers and started to leave. The Lt. Colonel suddenly woke up from his talking spell, made us turn around and asked: did you say you are operating the movie house since when?! His voice was menacing. He was staring at us like criminals (we were, in fact) with his distrusting piercing police eyes for a while, not even blinking. Then I calmly said that the whole thing is just a possible future plan, he must have misunderstood the whole thing, we just wanted to find out what to do in case we decide to start a movie house because ***we did not want to break the law***, and if the process of obtaining a permit is ***this*** involved and complicated, we are just going to forget the whole thing! (getting a permit, that is). I returned the questionnaire to the officer, and we walked away. In leaving, I took a glance behind my back: the officer was still staring at us motionless holding the returned paperwork in his hands. Then we accelerated our steps and left in a hurry before he woke up more and asked which school we were from. But he forgot that, now we did not have to worry about a surprise police on-the-scene investigation. Again, we almost fallen victims of trying to do the 'right' thing. Mike and I swore to each other - that was the last time this would happen – to be nice to the Communist authorities.....



**“THE BREAD STARTS HERE” - thank you Comrade!**  
**A typical Communist propaganda placard.**

### **“Free” Elections In Socialism.**

1946 - the Great War (was not so great for us) ended just a year ago, the government declared free elections. Hungary, a traditional essentially agricultural country, the 'Bread Basket of Europe', as some people called her was facing a new challenge: what life should be in the coming years. Several political parties were listed on the election sheet and the 'Small Holder's

Party', mostly farmers but a large percentage of intellectuals represented in it too came in with an overwhelming majority, about 65% or so. The Socialists got the next largest percentage, the Communist Party less than about 5%.

This infuriated the Russian backed government and the KGB started to show its real color. The leaders of the opposition parties (opposition to the Communist Party) disappeared one-by-one in nightly raids - nobody ever heard from them again. The functionaries of these parties were labeled as fascists, American lackeys, reactionaries, Western spies, enemies of the Worker's Class, enemies of progress, enemies of the Socialist Order, kulaks\* and a few dozen more nonsense. A concentrated smear campaign of horrendous magnitude engulfed the population - day and night the radio (was no TV yet) and the Communist press in concert with all the Party organs saturated the air inescapably. A half hour before the work begun each day (6 days a week), the workers were forced to attend (and were not paid for the time) a half hour political brainwashing to discredit the majority party and its members. Widely publicized court trials based on nonsense false accusations - no proof needed - eliminated the rest of the opposition parties and their remaining members. Communists took over the country; all higher offices were given to Party members to oversee the progress of Communism. Nightly people disappeared by the tens of thousands, intimidating the rest of the population.

Then the new 'free election' was announced in 1948. The communist Party came in with about a 95% majority. Since I became 'eligible' to vote that year, I was expected to vote too. The polls were open until the evening hours and one hour before closing, a police officer with a bayonet-affixed rifle kicked in the door and rudely screamed at me that I did not vote! I had to accompany him to the polling place in front of him, bayonet and all.

In the large gymnasium of the nearby school where the polling place was arranged sat 5 'people': the mayor, an officer in uniform and 3 other flunkies, one woman amongst them, all Communists, obviously. They asked my name and found it in a huge book on the table before them. They told me to sit down on a chair in front of them and the questioning began, alternating between the participants. They wanted to find out about my political views. Then the officer asked me, who the 'Hungarian' government head was. I said the wrong name, I did not know that. I could name most of the cabinet members of the US, England, West Germany, France, etc. But not the local bastard's. (After this episode, I asked several of my friends about the top Commie dog, they did not know it either but could enumerate all the Western officials.) A complete mental block took over me. They chastised me and tried to remind me of the name of the top Commie. I could not name him. The panel members looked at each other in disbelief, shaking their heads and handed me the 'ballot' consisting of an envelope and a piece of paper about 3-1/2-by-4 inches. The paper had the color of a used toilet paper, brown and rough. On it was a very faint print enumerating the top 'candidates', a quarter inch diameter circle to put the pencil cross in to vote for them. A text informed the populace that in case one wanted his/her own candidate, the two names for which space was provided with a 1/16 inch diameter faint circle, in which the pencil cross should be put. In addition, the instruction said that the center of the cross has to be exactly at the center of the circle. 2 small booths were provided with a light curtain to assure 'privacy', while the officials were looking on, watching every move.

I picked up the papers and reading it slowly proceeded toward the booth. In the dark booth was a 5-watt bulb, high up overhead and a pencil stub with a broken lead. I immediately understood what was going on: the Commies did not provide the means allowing modification of the 'ballot'. Writing in it was out of the question. I had perfect vision but could only barely see the print. Realizing the situation, I decided to trick them into the idea that I am a 'good comrade!' It was impossible to vote against them. Spending not more than one second in the booth, I darted out and placed the ballot in the envelope in front of them. The officer instructed me that I am entitled to 'privacy' and clicked the stopwatch in his hand, halting the time

measurement I was going to spend in the booth! They knew that under the adverse conditions it would take maybe a minute or two to vote against the Commies, the time spent in the polling booth would be introduced as evidence in the big book! I told them in a loud voice that I despise anyone who is even just thinking of voting against the Great Communist Socialist system!

The jerks were so surprised and overpowered by my unexpected behavior that the fat officer stood up, congratulated me and we shook hands. This response was not included in the Communist manual. Idiots. I washed my hands twice upon returning home.

The trick must have worked because they did not bother me for a while; little did they know what lie within. Voice of America in the ensuing programs on short wave analyzed the 'election' results. Some cars of the American Legation followed several truckloads of Communist youth clad in uniform to successive polling places, some Communist groups voted over 23 times! The secret of the Communist election victory!

\* a 'kulak' is a farmer with some property - they were called *"the exploiters of the Working Class"*.

## 'Pictures of an Exhibition'

Collection from the public 'Statue Park' near Budapest



*a little nose job  
never hurts*



*disgusting  
moron*



*a good use for Comrade Lenin's overturned statue – his hand like Napoleon's, another mass murderer*

***The Communists were nice guys – they tortured and murdered 'only' over 100-million people... Is that the reason why was Stalin called "Uncle Joe" by Americans?***

### **Neglect by Russian Guards Creates Problems** (for themselves of course, with me around)

These 'Russian Liberator' guards were just as derelict in their duties as their buddies, the 'German Liberators'. (We had the honor to see the bellies of the American Liberators – thousands of them – gliding overhead). The similarity does not stop here, nevertheless: both the Germans and Russians liberated us from our *freedom*, from our peace, from our life, which was far more civilized before they 'liberated' us. The war was over and life went on from now on under the watchful eyes of the Russian army, the Russian KGB and their collaborating so called 'Hungarian' friends, the AVO. AVO (or AVH) in Hungarian is the same abbreviation as KGB in Russian with the same meaning. There is nothing Hungarian of being a Communist thug. The AVH was organized as a chapter of the KGB and was always under their supervision, it was a carbon copy of the Russian organization, and therefore it was one and the same rotten disgusting murderer bunch. I just call them KGB, a more widely known name. At the conclusion of the war in Hungary in the spring of 1945 and the consecutive months, the Communist domination was not as obvious as it became later. The KGB was organizing quietly just to crash down on our people with the full force of total terror later. We did suspect that not much good was in the future for us, but we could not imagine the horrors that were going to happen to us later.

In an effort to gather all weapons from the hands of the population, the government declared martial law and under heavy penalty forced all people to surrender their weapons to the authorities, no questions asked - except your name in the books, incriminating yourself later if they decide to do so. Just bring them in, because later death penalty will be the punishment for those who fail to comply. The disarming of the population begun. Besides, a few accidental shootings, weapon crimes were not happening, at least not to the degree where one could hear about them.

The authorities built a temporary wooden shack on the main square of the district I was living in and designated that as the weapon and ammunition storage for the surrendered material. It was situated in a couple of hundred feet from the local police station, which was manned by both Russian and Hungarian police. In front of the police department, both Russian and Hungarian police guards were watching simultaneously what they could see from their posts. They could see the wooden shack, but only the back of it! The entrance door with a simple latch and padlock on it was on the opposite side, facing away from the police eyes. Just as dumb as their Nazi friends. Who learned it from whom? Of course, I and a few of



my young teenager friends immediately discovered this and one night by surprise most of the stuff disappeared, even a heavy machine gun with a load of ammunition. About 100 pounds of dynamite (TNT = trinitrotoluene) in the shape of bar soaps, detonating caps, ignitor cord, rifles and pistols, bullets included. We found a box of German 'egg-grenades' which were what their name depicted - egg shaped gray colored nice little hand grenades. They were of relatively low destructive power potential, one had to aim very accurately to do damage to people. We knew this and enjoyed the prospect of throwing those things at designated targets. We planned to go out of the city to the open deserted areas and have fun shooting, throwing at beer bottles, and alike. We found some land mines too, but left them alone. Those could be dangerous, you know.

Next day, when the authorities discovered the near empty shack, they became panicky. Police were questioning everybody in sight and started to raid homes suspected of harboring young terrorists, like us. One of the kids got scared, his nerves gave out and spilled to the police. The culprits were rounded up with the weapons and ammunition and were brought to the police department for questioning. They did not beat us this time, but were subjected to stern warnings, scary tactics to the effect that if this happens again, we will be in real trouble. We were taken to the police station basement and had to clean the whole building. Washing the stone floors with cold water was not exactly a ball, but we had to do it for most of the day under police supervision with a few good, aimed kicks in the shins and other places if we slowed down. We were released on the third day with stern warnings again. Apparently, it took them days to speculate what to do with us. The stinky police station needed, I mean really needed cleaning, and so free young teenager slave labor did the trick for them. We returned home as if nothing has happened. Fortunately, the TNT and the hand grenades were hidden from the police, so we did not lose them all. If we did, I could not have forgiven myself for being so negligent like our Russian teachers were.

Behind the police station on the main square was an elevated railroad track. Actually, two sets of them. Beyond that flew the Danube River, a pretty big body of water. Along the shore, Hungarian slave labor for the Germans provided zigzag trenches for the stubborn defense forces, which prolonged the war maybe not longer than an hour. The Russians must have been seasoned by now of the sight of such desperate German measures and probably did not laugh more than an hour. You cannot shoot while laughing.

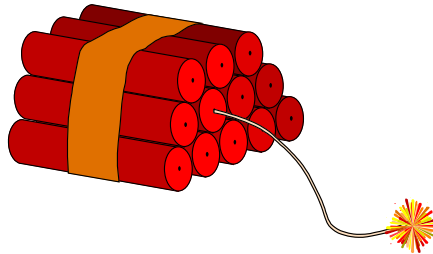
The summer was now in full force, beautiful warm days provided us with the pleasure of congregating on the river shore and taking long swims in the gray water. I will not ever know why some dreamers called this the '*Blue Danube*'. It is anything but blue. Murky, full of sand, one cannot see more than a foot or two underwater, which, by the way, is a good security measure for the fish, they cannot be seen at any appreciable distance. Then a Russian fleet of ships arrived which took up a haven on the opposite shore from us, on an island in the river. They purposely discharged their bilge water right in the river, making it a living and dying hell. Swimming became impossible, a tenuous film of oil covered the water surface with millions of large black tar clumps floating everywhere. Once I tried to swim in this stinky inferno but could not avoid a large blob of tar from landing on my head as I was coming out of the water. I had to cut my hair completely, it was ruined. The tar precipitated on the shores; it was not even possible to take a stroll with your girlfriend in the evening. The oil film on the water surface effectively choked the fish to death by the billions by depriving them of oxygen, consequently the shores were covered with oil-soaked dead rotting fish to the ankle and deeper. The stench was unbearable. This went on almost all the summer that year. A perfect example of the Russian high civilization Communist style with a total disregard or care for man and Nature. Just hold on to power. '*The New Marxian Men*' as they liked to call themselves.

As the ships ran out of bilge water, the poor tortured river miraculously started to recover, swimming and fishing became possible again. We had a group of close friends who were in daily contact with each

other and participating in every possible mischief there was invented before. If not, we invented some new ones ourselves. We had a few girls in the group, and they were highly respected for what they were. Simply girls. Willie, one of the kids in the group highly resembled me and we used to exchange driver licenses to see if the cops can pick up on this. They never could, they were too dumb and had no sense of observation. Willie and I were probably the wildest ones in the group, but the others did not lag behind much either. We even took up motorcycle racing in the same sport club the same time. Some people called us *Castor & Pollux*, the inseparable twins of bygone age mythology.

*I know the taste of the watermelon, which has been honestly come by  
and I know the taste of watermelon, which has been acquired by art.  
Both taste good but the experienced know which tastes best. ---- Mark Twain.*

We had to find a use for all that good stuff hidden from the police. Even an ingot of gold is totally useless unless a rôle is found for it. About five of us got together in a beautiful sunny day and decided to go fishing. The girls were alerted of the impending supply of fish arriving later, they volunteered to cook them. Willie and I picked up a few of the bar soap size German TNT packages with the detonator caps and



fuze cords and proceeded to the shore. All we needed now is a box of matches to get the cord burning and three or so more kids waiting to jump in the water to bring out the fish.

Willie and I alternately throwing a few of those nice loud packages in the water. As the dynamite exploded under water, it sent a gush of water straight up about 50 feet high accompanied with a sharp bang. As the last bang happened, the kids in waiting on shore now jumped in the water and started collecting the fish, which came to the surface. On most part the fish were not dead only stunned and floated up the surface. We had to work fast, the river proceeds at a speed of about 3 feet per second, the Russian guards about the same speed or slightly faster across the railroad tracks in our direction. As we collected the bounty, we jumped into the zigzag trenches provided for us by the thoughtful Germans with their traditional foresight and started to run away from the anticipated Russians and their machine-guns. It is impossible to catch somebody in the trenches - the Russian soldiers with their guns cocked had to follow the zigzag with caution, they did not know what to expect. This slowed them down to the point where we were already eating the delicious fresh stunned and by now fried fish while the *New Marxian Super Race* was still searching for what they thought was the enemy Nazi underground, stunned too by the unsuccessful search. Nothing, but nothing tastes so good than stunned *fish á la Willie&Paul* accompanied by a glass of cold beer in a hot summer afternoon while the army is busy protecting you! *That* is the way it should be.

After we had a good time with the fish supper, we just *had* to go back and see what happened. The intelligent Super Race was still searching for the Nazi culprits swearing heavily and running back-and-forth with their machine-guns. Not surprisingly (to us), they found nothing and nobody. Now *that* is a great deal of trouble for the searchers - their bosses expected them to show up with some suspects whether they were involved or not. As we approached them, they were screaming at us, we could not quite



understand what, but was not friendly. We shouted a few calming words toward them by cursing the Nazis. That softened them up a bit to the point that they let their guns down and motioned us to clear the area, pointing to the zigzag trenches. To our surprise, they apparently wanted to *save us* from the noisemaker Nazis. We shook our heads in disbelief and left, but we had to withhold our screaming laughter until we were out of range of the Russian guns.

The previous episode was repeated haphazardly at different times of the days - we did not want to give the impression of the Super Race that they are facing a systematic fishing scheme. We let them guess when the next TNT concert would commence. Regretfully, we were running out of fishing hooks and bait - TNT, that is, and more importantly the fuze cords. We had to use shorter and shorter pieces of the cord clamped into the detonator caps and secured with a bite on them with our teeth. That meant that the 'bar soap' had to be thrown immediately into the water, the delay provided by the cord was getting shorter and shorter. One extra second delay in throwing and the hand comes off with a bang, possibly the eyes too. The thrower had to hold the armed bar soap over one shoulder with one hand, another kid had to put the match head against the free end of the cord and strike the match, igniting it. Immediately a command "*go*" was given by the ignitor kid as he verified the lit fuse, and the fishing package was thrown without delay. This problem became so bad that only about 2 seconds were available to throw and allow the stuff to sink at least a few inches into the water. That meant also that the soap could not be thrown in the deeper waters where the larger fish were, just did not have enough time for the soap to sink that far down. So, we had to be satisfied with smaller fish, using more explosives. My sense of efficiency was deeply hurt. Might as well, we ran out of both the TNT and fuze anyway. By the end of our supply, the Russians were absolutely furious. They doubled, then tripled their guards to ketch those Nazis. They would stage military rituals daily near the zigzag trench area in hope to chase away the bad spirits or find them. We enjoyed seeing the military in action, especially for nothing. The Russians finally made us happy.

So, finally we were out of TNT and all. We had to invent some new entertainment. This came on one beautiful, peaceful sunny morning between Willie and me. We decided to test our one-time accurate and now - due to peace times - fading grenade throwing skills. We gathered up a few dozen of the '*German gray hard-boiled eggs*', put them into our rucksacks and headed for the outdoors. The trip involved traveling several streetcar lines for about hour and a half. We always stood outside the coach interiors, this time too, right behind the driver. There was some kind of Communist holiday, I believe it was Uncle Joe Stalin's birthday, (his parents should have gone to the movies instead of getting in bed that night) for which occasion we invented a few political jokes. At one point the driver could not take any more and in fear that the KGB will overhear this - and then we all go to jail and worse. He turned around and menacingly screaming at us he was ready to kick us out of the moving car. We had a good laugh at this, remarking '*that* would make a big noise!' He of course did not know what was in that sentence - and in the rucksacks! We shut up and so did he. At the last stop we got off very quickly before he was getting ideas about reporting the incident to the omnipresent KGB.

We lit up a cigarette and started to walk into the wilderness. About an hour later we came upon a clearing in a forested area. We sat down a bit to hammer out the details of the proceedings by the help of another set of cigarettes. We agreed to the following: we will separate and set up battle posts about 110 yards - 100 meters apart. We will build stone barriers around us laid out in circles with 15 feet radii. The object was to throw the eggs as close to the outside perimeter of the stone circles as possible, but not inside. A grenade landing inside the stone circle would invoke a penalty for the thrower by giving up one egg and throwing it to the other side into the hands (without being armed, of course) of the victim. We found this a very equitable arrangement: if one of us transgresses, the other side can take an equal

punishment against the transgressor with one more egg. Very democratic. It was about time we learned about democracy, we were supposed to be living in one, Russian Communist style, of course.

With available resources - sharp stones and fingers, digging a hole or holes in the stony ground were allowed to accommodate our heads if we desired to do so. We thought it was desirable. All this to be accomplished in 20 minutes because regardless of the degree of preparedness, the grenade throwing will commence without warning at the passage of the preparation time - in exactly 20 minutes. Watches were synchronized to the second and we tossed a coin to determine who will start first. Except for the last round, a 3-second delay was agreed upon between alternate grenade throwing to prevent two grenades accidentally hitting each other in the air and thus rendering the irreplaceable ammunition useless; they would explode out of range. And that creates no excitement.

We divided the eggs equally and took position in the center of our 4-5 inch tall respective 'protecting' stone barrier markers. I had to start the war game. I threw the first egg, which landed at least 3 feet away from his stone circle. Willie was amused and related that I am losing my touch or just getting too old for the job. He remarked that I was almost a year older than he was. He also said that if this keeps repeating, we might as well go home, he did not want to get involved with beginners and landed an egg one foot from my stones. I remarked that as far as beginners are concerned, he, the young one is not much better either.

These eggs made a sharp noise upon detonation and if one was a few feet away, they were relatively harmless. The Germans apparently invented these toys to scare kids away from oncoming trucks. A few metal shrapnel flew around by but that was to be expected. I apologized to Willie for my sloppy aiming and assured him to improve as we go along. The game was nearing to the end, by the time we perfected our throws to fall within four or so inches of the stones, we already spent all but two eggs each. I thought I will prove to Willie that I am not a sissy. I threw the penultimate egg so close that it actually landed on the top of one of the stones of his circle. The explosion split the rock and sprayed Willie with small fragments of stone. He said something not very pleasant, but laughed loudly and threw his. He was a good shot too - he replicated my shot exactly. A small rock fragment or two had hit my side gently but was no harm done. And then we counted 1-2-3 and threw the last ones at the same time. We were trying to hit each other's in the air. They barely touched mid-air, slightly rubbing at each other, deflecting both slightly but they landed still within specifications. If deflected properly, the eggs could have landed right in our faces - we knew that. But without this finale, the whole exercise would have been flat. Like an opera ending in a flat, off-keynote. I was quite musical in nature and did not want to take chances like that. Neither of us suffered even a scratch, we had some ringing ears for a while, however. The cigarette at the conclusion of this kids-game tasted good as we shook hands. This was a testimony of complete trust in each other. We *knew* that we will not harm each other, we *trusted* our skills, it was a tacit agreement without saying a word about it before. Then we picked up a few of the metal shrapnel to show to the rest of the kids back home what they look like after. They all knew what they looked like before. Some of the less inspired unimaginative kids in our group were frowning a bit on this accomplishment, but the girls liked it and listened with awe. We were trying to distance ourselves from those timid kids - who need listless total cowards! It may become contagious! The girls said we were nuts but said this with the sweetest of smiles. We gained a little bit of a macho image I think, but now that has become a habit. In the evening about 15 of us friends gathered in our favorite place, a coffee/ice-cream/booze parlor, recanting the whole affair. Willie implied that I was a coward - the first throw went way out of the range-of-pleasure for which I replied to have him remember the last hit with the stone fragments. We all had a good laugh, the kids asking what our next excitement would be. We assured them that we will never run out of splendid, spectacular, inspiring, nerve-calming and educational ideas like this one.



*Anti-personnel fragmentation  
grenade*

*The anti-tank  
weapon  
“Panzerfaust”  
or “  
tank-fist”*



*(my ) German Model 24 hand  
grenade(s) – the types I had  
on top of the coal heap  
mentioned earlier*



## **Life (and Death) on the Blue Danube** *(no comment - dead don't talk)*

On of the great pleasures in summertime was to congregate at the beach with our friends, boys and girls too - enjoying ourselves. Our greater circle of friends added up to about 25-30 people including numbers of older kids too - a doctor, some businessmen and so on. We were all tuned together and without exception, had a good sense of humor. We could not tolerate sour faces among us. One of the favorite places at the shore was a bombed-out freight barge; its cargo was a full load of cement. The cement was packed in 55 pound or so paper bags. The ship received a well-aimed bomb cutting it nearly in half, but not quite. The bomb made a large hole in the hull and the top surface had a large gaping hole in it. The barge was thrown halfway to the shore, sitting there with the buckled hull, exposing the already hardened concrete bags. The concrete will solidify under water too, the paper bags were dissolved and washed away buy now, exposing the smooth, solid, rock-hard material. We used to bask in the sun lying on the warm half-inch thick top steel plate. One section of this plate where the bomb hit was a freely dangling piece, which we used as a springboard trampoline. Underneath the murky waters were very sharp torn up pieces of the metal structure. We, expert swimmers explored the dangers lurking below and established an exact spot where one could jump in the river without touching the nasty stuff. We did that with regularity, no one of us ever was tangled up in the underwater metal coffin.

One day a strongly built kid about 16-17 years old came down to the barge and arrogantly demanded that we allow him to jump. The place is for everybody - he instructed us. His demand was immediately denied with the remark that if one does not know the way, sure death will ensue. He started to proceed to jump, despite the fact that we tried forcibly to dissuade him of doing so. He became violent and started to fight, throwing punches at us. We withdrew and told him that he is now on his own. This macho jerk jumped, and we were looking on with the hope that he will avoid the trap. The springy steel was split at an angle with respect to the water flow what he did not observe. He jumped and for sure, he was thrown off course in mid-air by his body mass toward the inside of the jagged edges of the metal hull. We jumped up and watched....one....two....three....four seconds - nothing. Then we saw blood bubbling up the surface. Three of us immediately jumped in the water but there was nothing to be done. Visibility under the water was practically zero, we tried to feel him out but we were unsuccessful. The strong water flow most

probably shoved him inside the underwater hull, his wet coffin cavity after he slashed his body and head to shreds. We were disgusted with this whole episode and felt some guilt - we should have him knocked out - but this was now too late. On the other hand, he voluntarily withdrew his stupid belligerent genes from circulation what could have been a boon to humanity. We never found out who he was.

## **More Life and Death and KGB on the Danube**

*(and an almost prisoner kid).*

My brother acquired a lightweight kayak, which gave me *freedom* to roam around in the River at my will. Correction: almost at my will. There was a time when the No. 1 Communist Army became mad at the No. 2 Communist Army: the Russians got into an altercation with Broz Tito, the Communist dictator of Yugoslavia at that time before it broke up recently, over some theoretical questions as to how to torture their subjects more efficiently. Comrade Tito became everything but gentleman - he never was anyway, besides in the Communist system there are no gentlemen, only Comrades - and the Russian propaganda against their Yugoslav mass murderer Comrade was something to behold: imperialist chained-dog, America-lackey, bloody fascist gangster undermining the Socialist Cause, brutal murderer (in that the Russians were absolutely correct, but look, who is talking - mass murderers of 100 million or so people!) labels were attached to Tito overnight.

It just happened on a sunny calm day that I decided to take a trip on the river. I was paddling against the current and after awhile I decided to go home. Then I spotted a Yugoslav ship going at a good clip down flow. The ship made large waves but in the middle of the wake, there was peace - but only for a short time. The drag of the wake made it unnecessary for me to paddle, it took me along. The man on the ship seeing this started to yell at me on Serbian language from high above, vehemently throwing his arm to the side, pointing to something. I did not know at that point what was the matter with that Serb: was he afraid of me overtaking his huge ship, hitting it and sinking it with my kayak? The answer to my question came suddenly: a speedboat with three uniformed KGB jerks in it was approaching me with top speed, their guns and a mounted heavy machine-gun pointed at me. I must have threatened the existence of Communism with my kayak and paddle, I think. That did not bother me at all; finally, something familiar is happening again and I know how to handle it. They almost rammed me and in no uncertain terms, they told me that I was under arrest - demanding my I.D. I started to laugh so loudly and vigorously that I almost lost my paddle to the river. I was in a short g-string bath trunk, nothing else. I told them that I could not endanger the integrity of that important document issued by our Socialist government in the Worker's Paradise by letting it get wet or worse. That is the reason I do not have it with me. Stupid blank expressions on all three of them. They came close and inspected the empty kayak, holding on to it. They started to scream at me, demanding a 'secret paper note' the Yugoslav allegedly handed over to me. I started to laugh now with an almost hysterical voice. The rear end of the ship - obviously an empty unloaded cargo vessel - was at least 25 feet or possibly higher over my head. ***'What do you mean handed over?'*** I asked still laughing, pointing over my head at the sky. These bastards wanted me to admit to something what did not happen to impress their bosses in a hope to get a promotion. They must have seen that no paper was given or thrown to me. The ship was now a great distance away. 'Ask the guy on the ship what was on the paper' I replied - 'hope you speak his language!' They were getting very angry and hurdled all kinds of unmentionable things at me in addition to 'Capitalist, Fascist, Imperialist, America-sympathizer' (well, they got something right, anyway), and similar. For a couple of minutes of churning down the river they were having a conference among themselves to decide what to do with me, holding on

to my boat still. I got impatient to see such incompetence and wanted to complain about that, but instead I leaned back on my seat and asked if I could go to sleep now. Their faces got red from anger and were waving their guns in front of my nose. Very impressive maybe for some, but not to *this* kid. I knew it then that I had them. I leaned back on my seat with closed eyes. Finally, they let me go with a very stern warning that next time they will shoot me. Don't you say - what is new under Communism?

The filling out of a report documenting my execution if it happened would have caused more hardship to those KGB agents than it was worth, considering that many of them could not read or write. This *fact* must have helped tremendously with the outcome of their decision to release me. In this regard, many jokes were born instantly. One typical Hungarian joke goes like this after the Communist government decided that a single policeman is exposed to danger due to the hostility toward them (with a very good reason) by the population and for this reason two policemen to patrol together, the number was increased to three later:

**Question:** 'why are two policemen patrolling the streets instead of one?'

**Answer:** 'one of them can read, the other can write'.

**Question:** 'then why is the third one there too behind them?'

**Answer:** 'he keeps an eye on those two intellectuals!'

If you think this is a joke, you are wrong. I have seen police trying to give me a traffic ticket fighting the letters, looking into his notebook at the alphabet several times after 'carving' single letters on the paper. But they were Communist Comrades. This happened with a high Communist official too, a Cabinet Member who simply could not write his name. He was also known to be an alcoholic and drunken most of the time. He used to show up drunk in Parliament and fall asleep. He put crosses on the official documents; somebody had to sign them for him! Wonderful civilization Russian style. The Russians liberated us from the burden of having to learn to write. Or to read. On *their* inspired Cabinet level at least.

So, I started to paddle home, against the current. On the shore two small kids ages seven or so were yelling their lung out toward me. First, I did not pay much attention, they were too far to understand them, but the kids were getting hysterical. I paddled closer to them where I was informed that a third kid, their friend of the same age was swimming in the water and suddenly disappeared - they pointed to the spot. This happened while I was held up by the KGB. I tried to calculate the probable location by now of the drowning kid, paddled fast a few hundred yards and jumped in the water. I was an excellent swimmer, underwater too but the murky water did not yield his body. The probability of finding him was far worse than finding the proverbial needle in the haystack.

That liar who started to call the river 'Blue Danube' should be lynched and look for that kid himself (herself?). Maybe he (she) was just drunk or color blind. The river starts in Germany (where else), goes through Austria and brushing against Slovakia, scraping off all the pollution, flowing through big cities before arriving in Hungary. I don't know what those three do to it, (I think it is better not knowing) but by the time we get it, it is full of silt and other things in a murky grayish soup and only a constant dredging can keep it navigable.

I could hold my breath for more than 90 seconds without coming up for air, but any further search was useless. The young kid had drowned and probably swept away a half mile or more by now. I had to give up searching after about ten minutes; my kayak (my brother's kayak!) was now separated from me by about 300 yards. It took me a fast and exhausting swim to catch up with it. Sadly, and exhausted I climbed aboard and paddled back to the small kids. They told me the drowned kid's name, but I did not know the family. I ordered the kids to go directly to the police and to his parents immediately and tell what

happened. I was very sad the whole day; this episode ruined the delightful encounter with the KGB. Stupid kids doing stupid things. Not because some ‘grown-ups’ are smarter. Look at the writer!

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**More Blue Danube Stories**  
*(hey big barge, scratch my back on Pass Over!)*

Blue what? It became a custom for our group of teens to swim in the middle of the river and catch the barges pulled by a slow ship. The barges were loaded full of gravel dredged up from the riverbed to make it navigable. Even so, in draught years in certain areas the ship bottom sometimes rubs against the sand and silt due to the low water level. The sand and gravel was used in construction and were shipped north, against the water flow. The ships usually pulled four large barges - two and two side-by-sides on two towlines. Occasionally I saw six and even eight barges in tow. The top edge of the loaded barges protruded out of the water only about 6-8 inches so we could climb aboard and have a ball traveling upstream for a few miles. On each barge was a guy whose job was to pump the accumulated water out of the bottom of the hull with a hand-operated lever. It was strenuous work, but it had to be done. It made the load lighter to pull as the water from within was removed.

First we met with a great deal of hostility by the pumpers, they were kicking and deliberately stepping on our hands as we tried to get aboard. But we were able to make a deal: if we are allowed to get on, one of us will pump for them. Now that deal they could not refuse! As we boarded the barges, one of us took over the pumping chores and the pump guy happily lit a cigarette and seemingly enjoyed himself. This went on all summer. We would go up a few miles with the ship toward the north, toward downtown Budapest and then just jump in the water and float down between the bridges and other ships. This was, of course, strictly forbidden. We liked to jump in the river across the KGB buildings. Seeing this horrendous crime against the safety of the Socialist Government, they would send a speedboat out to punish us, but we would scatter in different directions, swim a minute or more under water, and enjoying making monkeys out of the puffed-up overzealous paranoid-armed Communist jerks, members of the T&D (*Torture and Death*) department. On one occasion, I almost got caught in the propeller of one of those speedboats, but I had the presence of mind to grab the side of the boat and let me be dragged along at high speed for minutes. They were zigzagging, wondering where I was. They almost gave up thinking that I drowned, until one of them looked back and noticed me. Two of the bastards reached for me to be pulled on board but I was alert and let the boat go kicking the side to get me away from the propeller and I went deep under water and came up 200 yards from them. I gave them a friendly signal with my hand and ducked again under water. The embarrassed idiots tried to ketch me, actually wanted to run me down but after a wild and futile chase they had to give up defeated - I outmaneuvered them under water. I could see the bubbly water cocktail stirred up by the propeller overhead and swim in the opposite direction. I turned ‘*Murky Danube*’ to my advantage; it protected my body with *its* opaque body from being seen and from being captured. Forgave to the River for being called blue. Murphy, Murphy, you are not a boatman!

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**The Little Young Wine-Maker, Me – *in vino veritas!***

Between High School and University studies, I took up a clerk’s job in a wine producing company. It was a top or probably the best wine cellar in the country with absolute experts at the helm, mostly producing wine and champagne for export. Actually, my mother worked there a long time before, in her bachelor years as a German-Hungarian corresponding secretary. Through her connections I was hired. I learned a lot there about wine and the managers wanted to make me into a wine expert. Frankly, I much



rather enjoyed the other end of the spectrum - I have absolutely no objection to the wine theory, however. They gave me books to study from their library, sent me down the cellar to learn from the cellar-meister, a kind and very knowledgeable and cooperating quiet person, a super-expert in wine.

Once a year before graduation the local Enology Institute - a wine school - visited us with the graduating class to transplant theory into practice, to get the graduating students acquainted with different wines. The process involved the tasting and judging of an assortment of wines in different stages of processing while the professor and our cellar-meister would explain details about the wines and processes. It just happens that the visiting time each year is at the end of June when Hungary usually enjoys some very hot summer days. Such was the case when I witnessed the graduating class not so pleasant graduating experience.

The wine tasting process started with a short introduction in the cellar by the cellar-meister and small tasting glasses were handed out to each of the students, to the professor and to me too. The professor warned the students from overindulging in the stuff because they will taste at least 15 different wines. He explained the proper tasting procedure: fill the glass 1 finger high, slosh the wine around to get an idea of its **body**, its viscosity and oiliness, note how much time it takes for the wine to clear the side of the glass after sloshing; hold the glass to the light to judge its color, slosh again under the nose, take 3-4 nose samples to have the olfactory sensors properly register the scent analyzing its aromatic and acid components; then take a sip and slosh it back and forth in your mouth. After about 5-10 seconds spit it out and if necessary, repeat the whole thing. Form a chemical picture in your mind of the sensed data and try to remember them associating the data with each wine. So much for the theory.

Real wine tasters do not swallow the wine just taste it. That is the reason it is called **wine-tasting** and not **wine-drinking**. The latter is a completely different matter, somewhat more to my liking. If you drink the wine, it renders your taste buds inoperative as far as the ability to judge the consecutive wines is concerned. Even if not swallowing, pros eat a slice of apple between samples and wait a few minutes to restore the taste buds to a neutral state, removing the bias left by the pervious sample.

I took part in the wine demonstration and did as instructed. But the students, that was a different matter. They, without exception, all drank the booze. I can understand, science or not, the temptation was just too overwhelming for the poor students to be able to abstain from swallowing the excellent tasting first class fluids.

A good wine cellar is one, which is dug into a mountainside, deep tunnels cut into the ground. This winery had one of the best locations, the limestone tunnels held the temperature between about 3-4 degrees Fahrenheit independent of the outside temperature which in Hungary can fluctuate from 40 below in the winter to 100+ degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. Holding the temperature constant or nearly so is of paramount importance in making good wine. Large temperature changes in the life of the wine will ruin its salient features and are to be avoided. A good cellar holds the temperature inside approximately 17-18 degrees Celsius. If all optimum criteria are met - lime stonewall; deep tunnels; proper humidity; constant temperature - a greenish-black mold will grow on the walls. Smoking is absolutely forbidden. If you see and smell this mold in the tunnel, chances are they are making good wine there. The mold feeds upon the wine fumes. Of course, a lot of other factors are also controlling the quality of the end-product, but these are the basic prerequisites.

As the 2 hour demonstration was nearing the end, the cellar-meister smilingly advised me: why don't you leave the cellar and just stand in front of the entrance. I followed his orders and got curious why he said this to me. The answer did not wait too long: as the students were from the nice cool cellar in a **very good mood**, the hot outside temperature hit them with the force of a tornado. It took but 5 seconds before they turned white, their eyes popped out and were running to the outside wall of the cellar. Without

exception, all 25 or so students returned the wine to the earth, wherefrom the wine came from the first place. They felt miserable, most of them with a brain-splitting headache, they were walking all around the place like zombies to find shade, but there was no shade in the open cellar yard. Some of them sat down on the ground holding their heads between their knees and meditating - no doubt on the wisdom of not listening to their professor.

I felt sorry for them but at the same time, I found the situation funny. The professor softly remarked that students should listen and heed their teacher's words at all times. He probably did not tell them on purpose the possible consequences of swallowing the 15 wine samples and getting out under the hot sun thereafter. He said this was the last lesson he was giving them before graduation, and he felt sure that the students would remember this experience in their upcoming career in the wine business. I am sure too. It is not nice to see a drunk professional.

After the group left with the smiling professor and the sick students, the cellar-meister asked me if I would be willing to help to clean up the mess. I happily picked up the water hose and in a few minutes, the whole yard returned to normal again. A judiciously placed drainage channel took all that one time good wine and gracefully presented it to the sewer rats as a gift of the firm and the Enology Institute. There must have been some happy four-legged rats around for a day! I was always an animal lover.



*I like grapes in all  
possible forms, shapes,  
colors, and  
configurations*

*- fermented or not –*

*The fluid version  
provides some added  
happiness .....*

*On physical and  
psychological grounds  
too.....*

## **Salmonella vs. Paul the Kid.**

*(guess, who won the match)*

In my spare time in addition to playing soccer, swimming in a team, playing water polo, running, I took on boxing in a nearby school gymnasium. I was still a lightweight skinny guy and I needed a little more muscle on my frame. Things were going right until I met my match in the person of a very muscular and agile gypsy kid. No, his name was *not* Salmonella. Actually, this was not a match at all; he was an order of magnitude better than I ever was. I do not want to go into details what he made out of me, a comparison between me and a monkey would do injustice to the monkey. In the third round, I must have been dreaming for a second and had forgotten to cover my precious face with my gloves and the well deserved punishment came with lightning speed: he administered a punch to my nose I still imagine to feel. My nose cartilage separated, and blood was gushing out both of my nostrils with such intensity that I could not breathe only through my mouth. The blood covered my body, it was flowing down my chest in the form of a 5-inch-wide river. The referee wanted to stop the fight, but I did not. He finally forcibly twisted my arms behind my back and declared that the fight is over. By this time, the blood was soaking my legs too.

So, the lop-sided fight was stopped, and I was heading toward the washroom. My former opponent was accompanying me there, heavily apologizing for his punch. I got irritated by him turning into a liberal jellybean and told him that he was better, that is all - there is absolutely no need for apologies. This was simply an occupational hazard. Just because the Ref. stopped us, it does not mean that we cannot continue outside the ring - I said. He looked at me with disbelief - do you want more? - and started laughing as I was washing the Red River off my body. It took awhile until the blood flow subsided. I had to push my head all the way back to make it harder for the blood to come out, pinching my nose French style, my friend held my head. The gypsy kid stayed with me all this time, finally we gave a hog to each other - see you next time! Now that is much better. I told him he is my friend from now on. He grinned and left. This I call sportsmanship.

The girls were amused by my red-blue-black-yellow swollen bulbous nose next day on the beach. If I ever establish a country, those will be the national colors on the flag - in that order. Got into a fight again, haven't you? Yeah. My macho image now was reaching its absolute peak. Even my friends were admiring the spectacular display of colors. They just called me BNP - ***Bulb-Nose-Paul***. They all commented on the condition of my nose - let's face it, it was rearranged, and I have to live with it throughout my life.

Then, due to the Communist rule, I was removed from my employment in the former Capitalist company and was transferred to a 'nationalized' (robbed out by the government) large wine establishment under heavy government supervision, full of Communists. The top manager was a half-literate (or worse) loudmouth big fat Communist, his name was not Salmonella either, but a German name. Throughout the history of Hungary, a lot of Germans came and settled in the country. His ancestors were probably those, I am quite sure not as stupid and malicious as he was, however. Conversations with him amounted to a yelling contest with slogans and grandstanding to show his non-existent knowledge. Among other things, I was put in charge of keeping track of the hundreds of wine barrels coming and going. I faced a mountain of tickets dumped on my desk he could not decipher for a month. He, with his boisterous voice arrogantly told me to get things in order by next week. I made a list by taking the data off the tickets, made a table of statistical data, and in an hour, all barrels were accounted for, showing their whereabouts, their conditions, etc. I leaned back on my chair and enjoyed myself.

All of a sudden, like tornado the jerk kicks down the door and start yelling at me: what is the matter with you, why are you not working? The job must be ready by next week! Why don't put your feet on the

desk American style? For which I calmly said: *that* can be helped - and put my feet on the desk. The jerk was grasping for breath seeing this unexpected reaction of mine.

I told him that the job is done, all barrels are in place, no problem. Over my shoulder, I handed him a sheet of paper listing the items and very quietly remarked that I have an advantage over him: I can read. This sent him in orbit, cursing and puffing, running toward the door. Finally, he stopped at the door and said that I did a good job. The first time I heard him talk softly. Thank you. Maybe some day you will get civilized. Communists need not read, they are Communists, they can tell with words who should be punished.

Then he was kicked. Kicked up or down, I was not interested to find out. He was replaced by *C.W.*, a Communist Weasel, still not Salmonella, on top of his (also) German name he was hard of hearing too. Once he asked me to fix his ailing radio and I did. I asked for a fair value of my extra curricular activity. He immediately became totally deaf, not just hard of hearing. He never paid me. He was a 'good Commie'.

Since nobody was able to communicate with him, he was removed and an obnoxious, belligerent, unsuffisticated, also German-named Comrade was installed. Nobody liked this new idiot, not even the workers in the wine cellar. I put in a few good words in the upper echelons of the Party, delineating his total ineptness for the job. *He can't even control me!* – I exclaimed. He would come in the office, throw a bunch of paper on my desk demanding immediate attention to the subject. A few times I told him that I am working on another problem now which cannot wait, and the item will be taken care of in due time. He started to irritate me with his boorish behavior. Everybody hated him, for a good reason.

On the 15th time, I got mad and jumped up from my chair with such energy that my desk overturned with all the papers on it almost falling on his feet. He jumped and got white and told me to calm down. I started to scream at him, resenting his attitude and told him to go into the central store of the company and bring two sets of boxing gloves. He asked me why. *'Because I am going to beat you up and this is the only way I can do it without the police taking me downtown!'* A complete silence descended in the room, all office workers with wide open eyes were alternately looking at him and me. They were scared of the possible repercussions by the Communist Party, expected to see the KGB in a short time in the office.

The jerk tried to calm me down by smiling and dissuaded me from carrying out my threat. I was unmoved by his efforts and told him with a pathos that the time for the match is tomorrow 1200 hours sharp during the lunch break on the yard. Better, get the gloves by then. The rumor spread like wildfire, or faster. In 5 minutes, the whole place was informed. I could tell this because I detected a wide smile on people's faces, even on people who never smiled.

The time was almost 1200 noon, and the jerk came without the gloves. He wanted to avoid the open confrontation, Communist style. I told him that I would have to beat him up without the gloves but that hurt more. Finally, he went to his office and brought the gloves. We put on our gloves and assumed the typical standoff position between boxing opponents. All the office workers and the blue collar cellar workers were present, some people came from other cellars too to see this unprecedented event. There were approximately 60-70 people, all smiling, waiting for the outcome of the match.

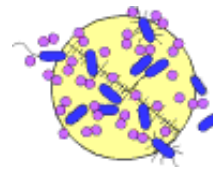
As we stood in the yard facing each other, he asked me how to do boxing, he never did that. My fair play attitude put me in jeopardy for a second because I started to instruct him of the proper feet positions and combat motions; he - Communist style - unexpectedly punched my previously broken nose. My nose was totally healed (and broken) and did not cause any pain or damage. The workers booed. I smiled, lifted my arms, and asked him if he had prepared his last will. He managed to force a desperate grin on his face and the fight began. A few exploratory punches, no big excitement. It became clear to me that he was lying; he must have done some boxing before judging from his punches and defensive reactions. Good!

This became a real challenge now! As the fight went on, I received encouragement from the workers: ***get him! get him!*** Don't you worry my fellow workers. After about 3 minutes, he asked for a recess. Why not. He was getting tired and started to take off his gloves. I shouted at him, ordering him to put his gloves back on. The workers too were loud and vocal in supporting me. This cowardly trashy Communist wanted to defuse me by walking away undefeated. His ego must have been deeply hurt just to face me – an American-sympathizer reactionary despicable anti-Communist slave in front of the workers on equal terms, he saw the ***'handwriting on the wall'***. Communists never fight on equal terms, always want the upper hand and attack unexpectedly.

The crowd started to clap their hands, yelling to continue. I pulled off some soft punches and the time was now ripe: one big left-hander and he went down the dearth. He had a hard time getting up, but I waited patiently. He was getting desperate and now he ***had to*** continue. A few more soft ones and then a left jab, a right one and a left hook. It was a pleasure to hear the enthused workers clap, yell and scream; goood-goood-goood! He fell on his face on the stone pavement with blood pouring out the side of his mouth and nose. He slowly got up and wanted to slither away. Then I yelled at him: Demmel! He turned back and then he received his last for the day from me, Communist style. I learn fast. After all, he is a Commie, isn't he? My gloves were covered with Communist blood - I never dreamed to be in that position and it did not bother me at all. As he slowly managed to get up from the ground, I took off the gloves and threw them at him as he slowly staggered away physically, mentally, ***communistically*** (this is a new word) defeated.

Comrade Manager went right home and did not show up for three days. It must have taken that long for him before he regained a human-like shape again. He should not have resented blood, it is red, the color of his allegiance. I received a standing ovation from all the workers - they were all standing anyway. In the cellar I had to visit on business, several sampling glasses with the best wines in them were waiting for me. Smiling workers shook hands with me, many just smiled. Their frustration against the Communist manager as well as against the Communist system itself came to the surface. Although not a single word was indicative of this sentiment (in fear of the KGB), I felt it in my guts. Any office I went to, men and women wanted to shake hands with me. One guy asked me for my autograph! Gladly. ***"The Communist Beater!"*** Became a miniature Hollywood-style star without wanting to be in the Communist Worker's Paradise. And ***that*** is something!

When he returned to the workplace - his head still somewhat swollen - the manager had to come in my office to do business with me. He held a stack of papers in his hand and was waiting patiently in front of my desk, saying nothing. He looked like somebody who went through the washing machine at high speed three times in a row. The thought went through my head that maybe he became mute due to the punishment I mated out to him. Did I hit him that hard? I looked up from my work and went back to my papers again. Occasionally I looked up, then down. You humiliated me time and time again you bastard, it is my turn now. After 5 minutes, he was getting on my nerves. Without a word, silently he still stood in front with humility I never seen on a Communist before. Without looking up from my papers, I asked: 'What do you want?' 'I would like to ask you to look at these - pointing to the papers in his hand - if you have time. ***"I would like to ask you....if you have time..."*** wow! What a difference a few good, aimed punches can make! I looked up from my work now and told him smiling to throw them on the corner of my desk, in due time I will take care of the issues. He thanked me and quietly left. ***He thanked me!*** He has never done that before - maybe in his entire life! Do we have another Communist on our hands who is making a stride to become human? Arrogance works, Murphy doesn't.



## **Salmonella vs. Paul - the Final Round.**

It was a September-end rainy day. I had contracted a terrible flu and it went to my stomach as well. My nose was running like an unstoppable river, anything I ate came right out. Needless to say, I felt miserable, my sinuses were swollen to the point I felt my head grow to twice its size. The office was cold, the Communist Comrades decided that in order to save fuel, people must endure a few more weeks unlike the soft Capitalists before heating could commence. In addition to this disaster, the top Commies decided to send somebody to some meeting of the Worker's Union as an observer. Nobody was around and after they discovered that I could read, I became the logical choice in their eyes. Not in mine. The management wanted me to join the Communist Party; they needed a few who could write too. This was very flattering, but no, thank you. Overall, I had to go. To ease my suffering a bit I went down the cellar and drank two large glasses of juice from a huge vat containing the crushed grape. The grape was in its first stage of fermentation, very sweet with a tinge of bite due to the natural process of developing carbon dioxide.

I got on the streetcar and went downtown. The boring meeting was a typical Communist phenomenon with its boisterous prefabricated slogans and the rest of the nonsense. I got home at about 11 P.M. and went to bed immediately without eating - I could not swallow a single bite. Communism on top of flu – double jeopardy, a bad mixture. Next morning, I went to work but had to go home, I became desperately ill. My headache, runny nose, diarrhea, fever, hunger, disgust with the whole system. I fell in bed and slept to 12 o'clock next day. Mother sent for the doctor who came next day. Yeah, this is Communism. If you die in-between, too bad, you had bad luck. Maybe you were a Capitalist too.... If you get sick, do it on an approved schedule by the Communist Party. The doctor was a small middle-aged man with a very deep voice and a good sense of dry humor. I knew him; he was my High School professor teaching hygiene. He said I had probably food poisoning. He described some pills and said to call him if I get worse. In Socialism, one is entitled to call only the designated doctor in the district in which one lives. If the doctor is too busy, he will come when he can, or want to. End of story.

I got worse, so bad in fact, that I thought this is the end. I fell in a coma - I knew what was going on around me but the voices appeared to come from a distant tunnel, muffled. My fever reached a point where the blood is about to coagulate and stop flowing. This heat wave was alternating with a sensation of freezing cold. The pattern repeated itself 7-8 times a day, wearing out the already frail system. In one minute, I was ready to burn up, in the next I was shivering in my cold sweat. This went on for more than a week, and then the doctor's presence was demanded by my mother. He came and drew blood from my arm saying that by the next day we will know what is wrong.

Next morning the doctor burst in my room and said that I have to go the hospital immediately. **Salmonella!** This is the bug, which causes typhoid fever, frequently found on/in unwashed fruit, crushed grape, etc. **Crushed grape!** Normally in a healthy individual, the stomach acid takes care of the salmonella bacteria as it did in the past, but in my decrepit weak condition, the bugs had a field day! I drank that stuff before in large quantities and in the worst case a little one-day diarrhea set in, nothing more. At the end, the bugs die for sure when you do, but this is not much of conciliation for all the trouble one has to go through until then. Father was notified who told Mother that he is coming with the ambulance car. He was still in the Army and he and his family was entitled to receive the "benefit" of treatments in a military hospital.

The military ambulance came, and I was on the way to the hospital with a great deal of siren screaming accompaniment. It bothered my ears terribly. At the hospital gate, I had to leave the car and was admitted.



The administration soldier summoned two aids and a stretcher; I was so weak by now that I had great difficulty walking. I have not had a bit of food in my mouth now for over a week.

The two soldiers came with the stretcher, and I was put on it. After the first five steps of the carriers, they dumped me off the stretcher! My father became angry and with his colonel's authority, he admonished them. The two stood there in an approximate attention position, but they could not do better. One of them, the shorter one had a broken arm in a cast; the taller one was just recovering with a broken leg! They hurt a lot, but this is life in the Socialist Paradise. That was the reason they dumped me, accidentally. I managed to get up with all my power used and slowly proceed toward the assigned building on foot. The two wanted to help me by assisting with their arms under mine, but I politely declined. I had enough already from the military. I was assigned to the top floor, of course. It appeared that Murphy is getting his way. I ended up in a room with 11 soldiers; my bed was at the end of the room, the farthest away from the door, #12 - of course. Murphy! I collapsed in the bed and fell asleep; I was totally exhausted by the effort of walking.

I woke up to the shaking and yelling of a sizable military nurse - she had the voice of a cracked oil barrel. She brought a tray full of food, soup with blobs and things in it, large clumps of other things, dry bread, etc. She told me that I have to eat this immediately. My doctor said that I should not eat anything, but pureed soft stuff, my bowels have the consistency of a wet newspaper ready to burst open at the smallest crumb of bread and alike. I fortunately (not fortunately for Murphy) remembered that in my coma and told the nurse that I refuse to eat anything! She started to scream at me, this is a *military* hospital (sure is!), threatening me with the chief doctor, the colonel, and with who knows what. I told her to put the tray on the windowsill, I will eat it later - of course, I will not. She left with her military soul hurt and I fell asleep again. Not more than 3 minutes later she kicked in the door, ran to me and with the excitement of announcing the start of World War Three, she asked me if I ate anything from the food. I shook my head, she grabbed the tray and left. She came back and announced that I was in the wrong building! It was the department for recuperating soldiers from stomach operation! Hurrah Socialism!

I had to dress up and with the help of a nurse, I was slowly transferred on a wheelchair to the correct address. I learned next day from my assigned very good-looking young, giggling nurse that because I was now in a very contagious state all 11 soldiers in the big room were transferred to another place until the room could be decontaminated from my salmonella companions. I discovered that Murphy worked for the Socialist hospital system - he did a mighty fine job of it this time!

Time passed slowly, I was getting weaker and weaker, they gave me absolutely no food whatsoever, but the filtered juice of one lemon per day. I could ask for another, but that was the maximum. The first 10 days I could get up and wash myself a bit, but the following days I grew so weak that I could not get out of the bed anymore. In trying to wash myself, I collapsed near the bed and took me about an hour to manage to get back on it. This exercise made me so exhausted that I could hardly breathe. 3 days later, I could not even sit up; I was losing all my physical power slowly. I was in a sort of suspended animation with a coma, but I could very accurately gage from day to day my deterioration, nevertheless.

Then something very unpleasant happened. My left hip joint got inflamed due to the constant pressure on it - I had hardly any flesh left on my body. The pain was absolutely unbearable. My nurse, the good-looking one related to me that before I came, a young 23-year-old strong young lieutenant died on the same bed in the same illness. After she said that, she realized that she should not have said this to me, a dying patient. She heavily apologized and I assured her that I do not care, I will not die. She ran out the room embarrassed. Two days later, my right hip joints suffered the same fate. The pain was now so intense that I just looked at the ceiling with my teeth mashed. I, despite my coma-ridden body realized that I cannot just lie in one position on my back in danger of water accumulating in my lungs and then in 2 days

at the very maximum I will be dead due to lung inflammation. Pneumonia collapsed lungs in this state is 100% deadly. My sweet little nurse told me, that is what happened to the guy who died before me. He gave up the fight to live, lying there motionless allowing the water to accumulate in his lungs. Sleeping was out of the question except for some short naps between attempts to turn slowly around, 24 hours a day. To turn from my back to one side took about 20-30 minutes, I had to brace one foot under the other a quarter of an inch at the time to cut down on the incredible pain. 5-10 minutes rest and continue to turn.

I was examined most of the time by a colonel doctor, the department head, moving my legs creating an indescribable wave of pain. He said laughingly that I could swear as loud as I can, it will not bother him. I did. He smiled more. He said that I am now at the point of crisis and the next day they are going to take me for x-rays to see if both of my legs have to be amputated, or just one! Good-bye, soccer player. I told them that that is out of the question, and I would rather die than consent to such barbarism. They smiled and left. This sick guy does not know what he is talking about. We doctors know better what is good for him!

The next day 3 doctors showed up, including the colonel - they were all army officers. They manipulated my legs and put me on a gurney to be taken to the x-ray department. I told them that I would purposely fall off the gurney when they were not watching, the x-rays cannot do me any good, but give them the excuse to make me into an invalid vegetable. I started screaming, although I think my voice was now a just a soft squeak. The doctors withdrew to the corner of the room for a conference. 5 minutes later, they told me that I could stay in my room, no x-rays and they would return next day to see if I am still alive. Have it my way - they said. My nurse almost cried when she heard this. I had a good rapport with that female, she took good care of me, and sometimes she came in telling her entire life story, staying beyond her official hours. She was single. As I looked at her - even in this miserable condition - I saw possibilities after I got out of the hospital. She sensed that, although no word was ever exchanged between us concerning this issue. I still felt a want in my body. The medics tortured me back in bed and I thought I defeated Murphy in a small way temporarily.

My body was now so weak and skinny that I closely resembled to those unfortunate Nazi victims found in the concentration camps after the war. I could not even raise my arms anymore. Turning in the bed took now 5-6 times as long, but I was doing it constantly. I had to; I determined to do it, period. For about two weeks now, I have received a series of injections daily. To be exact, 6 penicillin shots 100 thousand units per shot, one huge pain killer shot and on Mondays in addition another huge amount of liver extract shot. I still got only one lemon juice per day, after almost two months in the hospital. The doctors did not want to take a chance of allowing me to swallow particulate matter like a piece of breadcrumb, tearing open my guts. The injection-administering doctors were at the crossroads of a medical puzzle: where to give the next shot? They used to give the shots into one of my sides with the help of the nurse who turned and held me in the proper position. The doctor's problem was to find a virgin spot, even just a tiny one where no injections were given before. That became at this point impossible. A very nice old gentle doctor who was usually on the night shift had the worst of luck with me. About 8 out of 10 times he broke the needle in my body by hitting my hipbone. He was very apologetic and very sincere; he was disturbed by his inability to handle me without causing extra pain. A two-way occupational hazard, I thought. Any time this happened, he had to excavate the broken off needle from my body. It was not pleasant, but the pain in my joints were so severe that it masked the needle pain, and the needle affair became just an ordinary thing one has to put up with when in the Socialist hospital. They did not force me to go to the hospital; I was asking to be taken in. That is how life works, I learned. So far so good if that is the word. Murphy was put on hold for awhile.

My mother occasionally came to visit me and through the window, I could see her crying. That hurt me just as much as my legs. It stirred me up. She brought in my wristwatch and sent it through the official channels. It was a good old friend; we went through a lot of trouble together in the past. The nurse put it on

my left wrist; it slid all the way back to my elbow despite using the last notch on the watchband. Popeye complex. I told Father not to bring Mother anymore. I need no crying females around in my condition. Father completely understood me. I could hardly talk now, the nurse had to go to the window and repeat my words. Mother wanted to send in the clergy to console me. I told her that is a signal to give up. I refuse to participate in this shady suicide practice, and I will not give up but will surely die in disgust if she forces this upon me. I am consoling myself, free of that. Heaven and hell is right here, there, and everywhere, depending on what you make it into. I made it into hell; I will get out of it myself. That was my last lecture for her. I could not talk any more; I was at the end of my diminishing physical power reservoir. Only the physical one. My father took her away and she was not taken anymore to see me. Father somewhat concerned but smiling as always - I trust you; I know you will pull through - he said. Now *that* is the proper talk between men.

Next morning the chief physician, the big colonel came in my room shortly, for about 10 seconds. He wanted to see if I was still alive. He noticed that I managed to pass the crisis, shook his shoulders, grinned and left. The nice nurse came and washed my body with a wet towel. The cool water felt good after the sweaty night trying to turn in the bed. She became surprised to find an unmistakable sign of life on my body. She told me with glowing eyes that I will get food today. Closing my eyes, I saw a big pot of beef stew with all the condiments. My mouth would have watered if I had enough moisture in my body. I waited patiently, I had no choice anyway, I could hardly move my fingers, lacking energy. Then she came and brought a plate of ground and filtered cooked spinach. She had to spoon-feed me; I could not even hold my desiccated head straight on my neck. The food tasted strange after months of fasting on the juice of one lemon per day. My head started to clear up and the symptoms of the coma were diminishing noticeably each consecutive day. Murphy was failing miserably. Shame on you.

After a week with twice a day of spinach, I started to come to life. I could move my hands first, then my arms. It was a triumphant feeling. I wanted to whistle in happiness but that was yet weeks away - my lips were so dry they could have been used as sandpaper. The colonel showed up and asked how I was. I told him I could not feel better. He grinned and asked me if I liked wine. This question stuck me as a bit strange, but to be on the safe side, I said yes. 'Then tell you father to send in couple of bottles.' First, I thought he was joking, but he was not. He explained that wine is a natural food, it has no particles in it (watch the cork!) and the alcohol in it will help disinfect the digestive tract. I started to forgive the colonel for the tortures he inflicted upon me by twisting my terribly aching legs. I told the nurse to relay this message with full force to my father the next time he comes to see me through the window. Father brought the wine - one shotglass of the stuff made me totally drunk - my aching hips felt better too after a treatment. I was still considered contagious. In about 2 weeks, the nurse told me that she would take blood from me to see if all the salmonella bacteria were gone from my body. 3 blood tests are necessary separated by 10 days or so and if all three are negative, I can go home. Now that was good news. She produced a syringe and tried to find one of my vessels in my right arm. I purposely said vessels, *not* blood vessels. Finally, she located one and thrust the needle in. I watched the proceedings as her face as it turned white - she could not draw a single drop of blood, I had hardly any left! Trying to measure my blood pressure would have automatically invoked the undertaker, so it was not attempted. She was trying different spots for about 15 minutes, puncturing me all over my arm. No blood. With disbelief, she withdrew the needle and told me that we have to wait at least another week. Till this day, a spot on my arm testifies of the ordeal I went through.

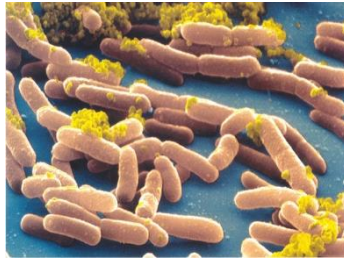
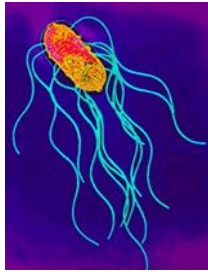
I received a set of earphones I could (actually the nurse) plug into the wall receptacle and now I could hear the local radio station. It was a delight after months spent in the quiet. Interestingly, the first thing I heard was the Victory March from Aida. A welcome symbolism - synchronicity? - thank you 'Joe Green'

Giuseppe Verdi! Carl Jung would call this synchronicity. I conquered the salmonella / Murphy combination.

The spinach and some additional soft food, not to forget the wine now did the trick; I was getting a little stronger every day. A half glass of wine made me quite drunk and happy in my weakened condition, but I was not planning to race my motorbike for a while. While sober, the nurse finally managed to squeeze 2 drops of blood out of me for the blood tests each time. I passed all three tests; all were negative signaling the time to leave the contagious department and transfer to the recovery section for 12 patients. I was getting stronger and with the help of a cane, I was able to get out of bed now and take short trips in the hallway. My inflamed joints still hurt but this was the price for the stupidity of drinking bacteria – and for survival.

Eventually I was discharged from the hospital. The first thing of order was to write a letter to that nice young nurse - she really appreciated it, etc. My hair was very long - apparently, the hair grows no matter what. We called a barber to cut the hair although this was totally unnecessary as it turned out. A week later, my hair started falling out. I could grab a whole bunch and it came out without resistance or feeling anything. My head looked like a smooth melon, not a strand of hair remained. I did not mind, I never liked to comb anyway. Murphy, you failed again miserably!

**sexy  
Salmo**



The lovely bugs -  
they are not  
hotdogs with  
mustard on .....  
**they are killers!**

*( they tried hard, but it did not work – even Murphy failed - I am still alive! )*

## WORKING IN ELECTRONICS AGAIN

As I was getting stronger, I could walk longer. I pushed myself to get the old strength back again. My dark brown hair started to grow with vigor - still hope that one day I will look normal again. Going back to the winery was out of the question. I was looking for something more suitable work for me. By chance, (of course) I met an old acquaintance of mine, a guy I went to the same High School with. He was 2 years older and worked for a small electronic firm. I applied and was accepted. This small company was owned by two engineers and was designing radio equipment for the Hungarian Armed Forces. We made the prototypes, which, if accepted by the Army, were then turned over to a large factory for production. One of the owners was an excellent salesman; the other was a brilliant electrical engineer. To complete the holy trinity, the chief engineer was a good engineer too, if and when he was sober. His alcoholism escalated to the point that he lost his very good-looking wife, all his money and more. He used to sell his personal items to us employees, sometimes he was able to buy them back, but most of the time not. We were paid on the first of each month, but he sometimes came to us and asked for a loan on the fifth or 10th. He was a man with a great humor, but he did not see his ridiculous life stile. I still have one of his beautiful German made slide rule as a payment for a loan, made especially for electrical engineers.

It was nice to work there, and I did not know that the woman who lived next door would be my wife some day. Without the least of cynicism, considering the outcome of that relationship, I should have

changed my job and move to the opposite end of town. One day, in the company of two uniformed KGB soldiers and a host of other Communists entered the premises. An old, white-haired heavysset man announced that in the name of the Socialist Government he “nationalized” the company and automatically impounded the finances. In the passage of 1 second, the owners had nothing, the government had everything. We were quite upset about this but there was nothing to do about it unless one wanted to end up downtown in a KGB prison cell or worse if there is such thing. The accompanying two machine-gun toting KGB soldiers looked at us with hate - the Capitalist pigs, the enemy.

We stood there speechless and the old man with his Communist Party pin on his lapel ordered us to go back to work. You are working now for the Socialist Government. We all knew that this was going to happen; it was only a matter of time before the Communists would “legally” ransack the whole country under the color of “nationalizing”.

Comrade Weber (another German name), the white-haired man was an electrician before joining the Communist Party. He became the company Communist Party Secretary, a lord of man and beast. He was delegated to us to oversee the progress in becoming subdued and robbed of our *freedom*, money and free choices. No one could change jobs; the government knows best what is good for you: work very hard for little money, keep your mouth shut and praise Communism. We found out later that Comrade Weber’s son was shot to death by the Russians. Did he want to save himself from the same fate maybe that is why he joined the Party? Will never know.

But Comrade Weber did not attend our place all the time. He was going around and nationalizing other companies left and right. Mostly left. His temporary replacement was a young idiot with a father high in the Party. He had not much schooling, but he and his dad were faithful Commies. And *that* is what counted. The jerk would come to us to learn electronics but that was a total waste of time, he could not grasp even simple concepts, except Communism.

One afternoon he was in a good mood and came to us in the laboratory. Without saying a single word, he pulled out his semi-automatic pistol from his trousers back pocket, unceremoniously leveled at a window and fired. The 38-caliber bullet pierced the windowpane shattering it and the bullet landed somewhere else. Two of us present were astonished and started to laugh. He too and said that he just wanted to see if the thing worked in case he was attacked. Not completely unfounded fear, the Communists knew people hated them.

We workers did not like this idiot around, he was too dangerous. So, we reported it to Comrade Weber who came the next day bewildered and had a long private conversation with him. Shortly after the jerk was removed by the Party and Comrade Weber assumed his earned position in the ivory tower.

As time passed, Comrade Weber became a little less stern and spent some time talking to us, the younger employees. First we were suspicious of the change in attitude, but we decided to play the game - we had no other choice anyway. He became friendly in time and related to us that he sees his son in us, the one killed by the Russians. He would not go into detail why that happened, it was too painful for him. But we picked up a psychological, natural resentment component in him in connection with Communism.

While officially he was very proper, carrying the Communist Party ideology, enforcing it and advertising it on compulsory meetings as well, he was found to be quite a delight in talking to us, telling jokes and listening to them. We tried some political jokes on him, but he turned serious and shook his head, advising us to keep quiet. I bet he was laughing at the jokes at home in his privacy.

We kids used to play tricks on each other and two of us decided that one of our friend, a very nervous and irritable character, a constantly complaining type of an individual needed a little cooling off in a hot summer day. To accomplish this, we rigged a can of water on the top of the doorframe in such a way that

as he enters the room through the door, it will spill water on his head. The nervous guy left the room for a short time, so we set up the trap. A couple of minutes later the door opened and Communist Party Secretary Comrade Weber got a nice chilling reception on his white head instead! He was first quite surprised of the *cold* reception, but understood the joke and started to laugh, wiping himself dry. We were somewhat concerned about the consequences, but we explained to him that the water was not meant for him, but for our nervous college. His eyes lit up and insisted to rig the door again, he wanted to see the results himself. And he did. Our friend as he entered, got his cooling for the day, and went bunkers - started to scream, curse, ran out of the room and did not return for an hour until dried up - as projected. Comrade Weber laughed until his tears came out. He shook his head and called us *“devil’s babies”* from now on. In return we called him now *‘Uncle Weber’* - not of this ‘Comrade’ business. He liked it.

The owners of the factory - and this very seldom happened in Communism - were allowed to stay with the firm but they lost their titles. A small penalty to pay for staying alive and not be beaten up or worse by Communist thugs in the KGB cells, as this happened to some factory owners who objected to the robbery. Both bosses were recognized as being tops in the business and that helped the decision to leave them on the job. The Communists badly needed expertise and production. The two engineers were the promoters of the business supervised by the Communist Party in the person of Comrade Weber, the Party Secretary and if anything had gone wrong as far as the Communist interests were concerned, these two would have been called saboteurs, American spies, Capitalist collaborators, reactionaries, enemies and exploiters of the ‘Socialist Worker’s Class’ and a host of other disgusting demeaning labels, paving the road to a kangaroo trial to be widely publicized.

In the Communist system if you were accused of having committed a crime against the State (saying the wrong thing overheard by a Communist for example), the Party would assign a Communist ‘lawyer’ to ‘defend’ you at the trial. In most cases presenting evidence of the alleged ‘crime’ was not necessary, that is merely a degenerate Capitalist concept. Once the State decides to prosecute you, you are automatically and irrevocably guilty unless proven innocent, which of course was made impossible by the kangaroo court system. No matter what you did in trying to defend yourself, you were found guilty. In serious cases, your State-assigned ‘defense attorney’, a Communist thug, *your own attorney would demand the death sentence for you* for the alleged crime against the Worker’s Paradise - which was carried out with pleasure, regardless of being innocent or not. Many thousands of innocent people were executed this way as examples to show the rest of the population what happens if you do not like the Communist system and dare to voice your opinion. “The beating will continue until the moral improves” principle. Our family lost our house built by my architect German grandfather, including apartments and the adjacent very large yard with fruit trees, shrubs and industrial buildings on it. No compensation was given to us whatsoever. We voiced our opinion that this confiscation is unfair, for which remark we were threatened with a jail sentence, since we were now the enemies of the working class. We owned something, we were independent to a degree as far as housing was concerned, we charged money for tenancy, independence must be abolished - it is the greatest danger to a dictatorial system. That is why the intelligentsia of the Russian occupied countries was annihilated as it happened in Russia proper as well after the Communist regime took over, intelligent people are able to think independently of the Communist doctrine. You are not entitled even to *think independently*. Never mind that we worked like hell just to subsist on our meager salaries, and we were workers too, we became enemies of the workers - and by this definition, to ourselves as well. We often asked ourselves jokingly: Charlie, why did you become all of a sudden your own enemy?



This was life in the Socialist Worker's Paradise. Possession of more than about 2-3 pounds of flour or sugar earned you a trial, a stiff sentence, beating, labeled according to the 'Communist standards' plus you were now a **kulak** too. You are hoarding food and taking it away from the workers, sucking their blood! In Russia the 'kulak' label meant a rich farmer who by the definition of the Communist doctrine is automatically hoarding the food and exploiting his employees, he is a criminal. He is now a thief, an enemy of the 'working class' by 'sucking their blood'. He, of course may be a worker himself, but that little detail don't let bother you, the State simply did not like his joke or remark concerning the Communist system which operates on the principle of intimidation by setting examples regardless of the innocence of the people involved. The beating will continue until morale improves. All it took if one did not like his neighbor is to report him to the KGB of being a kulak, or American friend. No proof necessary that would just slow down the implementation of the 'Socialist Justice'. The KGB would come in the night and break down the door of the accused 'kulak' with all property confiscated, taking pictures of the crime scene and publishing it next day in the Communist paper, showing all 2 pounds of sugar, scattered around in the apartment by the police! For more sugar, the family would be put in a concentration camp, you can guess the rest. Then a 'good Communist Comrade' would be put in the now deserted apartment. Some comrades sniffed out nice places they wanted to occupy and purposely used this system to gain possession of apartments, houses and the goodies within. In the Communist system the severe housing shortage is permanent - it is made so by design. Privacy is a premium in the Communist system and is undesirable. In privacy, people can do things and talk freely that the State cannot control. People, young married couples had to wait 6-10 years or more to be able to get an apartment of their own even with connections to the Party. Couples with children had a slight advantage, maybe a year or two in getting to their places. Until then they had to live with their parents or relatives. The boy went to the house of his parents, the girl to hers for the night. At the same time the Communist bosses were living in total luxury in secluded places guarded by the KGB, and which used to belong to rich Hungarians before the 'Liberation'. In the Communist system everybody is equal. Except for a few, who are more equal. In the daytime - after work, they could of course 'freely' date! What a beautiful Paradise forced upon us by the Three Stooges: Franky, Winny, and Joey! (Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin).

### **Working for the Military.**

*(it can be fun if you have the right attitude).*

The small electronics firm, which became the property of the Communist Government produced high quality radio gear despite our often-drunk chief engineer. He was very sharp when he was not inebriated, I do not remember seeing him incapacitated while working, however. As time passed by working in the daytime and attending school at night was not exactly easy, but nobody said that life is. I learned the trade fast and am entrusted now with designing radio equipment. One project was to build a piece of gear for one of the high-power short-wave broadcast transmitters which at that time was used to relay Radio Moscow and to spray the ether with Communist propaganda lies in different other languages as well. That experience was valuable, I never have seen such a big radio station before. One day at the installation at the station big commotion was in progress. It turned out that not long before my arrival a technician transgressed one of the safety rules and got his reward instantly. The high voltage (150,000 volt) high power parts were enclosed in a grounded high wire fence and the doors were equipped with a safety feature: upon opening the door, all power circuits were turned off and grounded to prevent accidents. The technician mentioned above got tired of turning on and off - it takes extra time, so he unlawfully bypassed

the safety switch allowing the high voltage be present with the door open. You may have guessed the next step: yes, once he forgot the bypass he put in and entered the transmitter area with power on, thinking that all is OK. In a few seconds, he burned to an unrecognizable heap of charcoal. The smell was terrible. This was my first and his last lesson in High Voltage Engineering 101. I can never forget it.

As time passed, our company was merged with another, and we had to move to a larger place to accommodate the new employees. Comrade Uncle Weber stayed with us with his new increased power - he had command over more people now.

The disgust and lethargy showed on the ex-owners, the two former Capitalist engineers and we, old faithful employees heavily sympathized with them. For this reason, I decided that a lesson is in order for the person who forcibly, with the help of the KGB, robbed the respected former owners. A few of us had unconditional allegiance to the previous owners. With another guy, we decided to hold a mock trial over Uncle Weber elaborating his actions in taking away private property from the rightful owners. The second part of the trial is of course the declaration of the punishment. We felt safe that Uncle Weber will not report us to the KGB for this, counting on our developed friendship.

On the designated day, I announced to Uncle Weber that an important meeting would take place after work in the laboratory. I would not divulge a word about the issue.

AT 5 PM, my friend and collaborator invited Uncle Weber to the trial room. Now picture this, what Comrade Weber saw as he entered the room: I was sitting in a reclining chair with feet on the desk, American film style. A large lit stinking cigar in my mouth and a top hat on my head, in shorts. As Uncle Weber saw this, started to laugh in his well-known jovial manner. I warned him sternly that this is a courtroom now and no disorder will be tolerated. I instructed my friend, the 'bailiff' now (he was a huge person) to escort Comrade Weber to the opposite chair and make him sit down. Uncle Weber turned now serious, but displayed a great interest and did exactly as he was told. Good Communist training. I was imitating a real trial, questioning his name, company position and title and the fact that he took over the former factory illegally - exact date quoted, robbing the owners of their life's work. He wanted to interrupt but I very sternly warned him, so he kept quiet from that point on. I asked him if he was guilty. He did not answer directly, of course, and I had to intervene. The court determined that the evasion of the question is tantamount to admitting guilt, as such is noted in the proceedings. (I have learned this lawyer-stuff by reading some of my father's cases). Then I announced further charges: 'illegal confiscation of property by force with the aid of a third party, impounding finances for which he did not contribute, causing emotional and fiscal damage and despair to the innocent prominent scientists who had the right to own their factory', plus a few minor items. Uncle Weber's face turned first red like the Communist flag, then white, matching his white hair. I asked if he could under the circumstances bring up some excuses for his inexcusable terrorist behavior. He could not. He had to force himself not to show tears in his eyes. This event came to him as a total surprise and an unthinkable letdown. He had the civility of acknowledging the validity of our claims.

The trial came now to the climax: I instructed the 'bailiff' to stand behind the defendant and watch every move he makes because the verdict will be read next. Uncle Weber was now sitting at the edge of his chair, dead serious and his hand trembling slightly, what I had not ever noticed before. My 'bailiff' friend was biting his lips not to explode in laughter. Not so was Uncle Weber. *Conscience.*

I recounted all charges, mentioned that the defendant could not produce one iota of proof of his innocence, therefore in the name of every decent worker the following punishment is considered just and irreversible. I divided the sentence into two parts: the main punishment and the secondary punishment phases. The verdict was read as follows:

### **"Principal punishment:**

"Defendant Comrade Weber is obliged to read a complete issue of the Communist published newspaper, the official organ of the Communist Party from cover to cover in one day. Before and after the newspaper reading Comrade Weber to attend two compulsory Communist-sponsored meetings to be completed in 3 working days - if still alive."

### **"Secondary punishment and definitions:**

"Defendant Comrade Weber to be executed for his heinous crime committed against prominent engineer workers by confiscating their private property, making their life miserable and making them paupers. Method of execution: firing squad **or** hanging, **total Socialist freedom** of choice of the defendant.

During the execution the defendant had to hold a recent copy of the Communist newspaper under one arm and his Party I.D. book under the other. The defendant's family to be deported to an undisclosed concentration camp in Russia's Siberian region."

I hit the table with a large sledgehammer in lieu of a judge's mallet what I did not have, and the trial was officially over. Not so for Comrade Weber. Instructed the 'bailiff', my huge colleague to lead the condemned defendant away.

I was looking at Uncle Weber with keen eyes as he was inside totally collapsing psychologically. The transformation of his facial expression as well as his demeanor was astounding. He could not get up right away from his chair, just sat there not knowing what to say. Communist-style reprisal was out of the question - I hit the nail right square on the head, inducing a great deal of guilt and anxiety. Then he slowly rose from the chair and very slowly exited. Halfway out the doorway, he turned back and with a shaking head expressed his disbelief that such a thing could happen. It could, with me around.

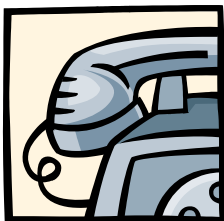
Uncle Weber did not show up for several days. This experience threw him completely off balance, he knew what he did, and he knew the pain he caused. When he returned, he came to visit me in the lab while I was alone. He was very sad still, and with resignation, he said that that trial was a little overdoing the issue. I assured him that it was not, simply reflecting on the **facts** of the takeover in a different way, from my point of view. I asserted sternly that since he survived the execution, there remained no further unresolved issue. He finally smiled and we shook hands. He still had not lost his sense of humor - despite his German name (profiling ?!) he was Hungarian. I invited him for a beer after work, he accepted it.

In summation, I think Uncle Weber was a decent person, but got caught in the turmoil of the times and he had not much choice in carrying out the Communist Party orders. I think he wanted to save his hide from something by joining the Communist Party. I can imagine how he felt deep down about the whole Communist-Russian issue having his son killed by them. Once accepted, the Party member is automatically forgiven for his previous past (until the Party wants to get rid of him), but now as an official in the Party, he had to prove himself to the official State sponsored Communist Mafia bosses by carrying out the orders.

Even many months later he shook his head when meeting me in the factory, smilingly mentioning the trial - **"you devil's baby"** - he said. I don't think he will forget that trial till the last day of his life.

When the ex-owners heard about the trial the next day, they demanded to re-tell them several times the whole story. I called on my 'bailiff' to take over the story telling, I was now too important to get involved in such a demeaning thing and I did not want to give the impression that I was exaggerating the facts. Besides, I was now a qualified, self-made judge, not a gossip. My colleague did a good job in recounting every little detail. They laughed heartily - it was a degree of psychological relief and satisfaction for them, also knowing that some of the 'old employees' are still loyal to them. I had to re-tell the story three times!

- they could hardly believe it. They also said that the whole affair was very dangerous on my part, had Uncle Weber been a deep-down Communist (I just knew through my bones that he was not), I would have a hard time proving *my* innocence downtown in the KGB dungeons. However, they said this smilingly with a warm condoning expression. I was the hero of the day. The story spread across the field and several people from other departments too came to congratulate me. I had to re-tell again. This gave me a chance to sort out the sentiment and loyalty. It was a good filter, who is sympathetic to the cause, who is not. Those people were not sympathetic to the Communist system, and that can be a valuable piece of information in the sea of Communist terror. One needs friends from time-to-time. *Communication* can be lifesaver or death in the 'People's Democracy'.



### **A Kiss to the KGB** *(alcohol-inspired, nevertheless)*

Occasionally, when a successful project concluded, our boss, a KGB major would announce a get-together at a local restaurant, footing the bill. He changed his name from something to a Hungarian one to make the Communist doctrines come out better from his mouth. But I just kept calling him by his old name. One of these get-together events provided an interesting event I had not seen before - maybe nobody else ever did. As the evening proceeded, our beloved alcoholic chief engineer got his usual dose and started to sing full blast. He had a deep, strong voice. Some people, like me joined in and sung along. As our chief engineer kept increasing the (free) alcohol intake, his spirit rose to an all-time high: he got up from his chair and staggered behind the distinguished KGB officer who wore his major's uniform. Ceremoniously, with arms stretched toward the sky, he gave a big kiss on his forehead!

Comrade KGB jumped up, got purple-red - his favorite Communist color - and embarrassed in front of 50 people or so he said something unpleasant and stormed out of the place. Our chief engineer stood there stupefied; he could not understand why the boss was so upset about a nice friendly gesture like this. Needless to say, there were no more get-togethers on company money.

### **As the Military Ties Tighten...** *(fun increases to this kid)*

Communism was now really in a high swing and my company ties to the military were drawn closer and closer. We moved again and about one third of the company was relocated in a nice two-story apartment-house style military laboratory. The building was located in an apartment house row on a street with nice tall trees. From the outside, it was impossible to see any military connection. There was no sign on the building, but a few submachine guns in the entrance guardhouse, invisible from the outside. The place was manned by civilians like me, just the boss and occasionally a visiting Army officer or KGB jerk in uniform. The building was formerly a chemical weapon and animal psychology / physiology institute for the Army. Some remnants of the 'work' they did were still in place at the time we arrived. One of the pieces of equipment we found was a large, weighted pendulum allowed to freely hit a hard stop when

activated. They would strap a dog to the end of this contraption and let it swing to the stop to see how much punishment the poor animal could take before rupturing its internal organs. This was a military secret, but I accidentally ran into an old friend and schoolmate from our Boy Scout days who explained to me these disgusting procedures. He was a chemical engineer First Lieutenant in the Army. He said he was disgusted too, but an order is an order, he had to carry them out, or else.

After all the residue was removed from the premises, we started to design military radios. The small company was given a 3-digit number that was now the name of the outfit. Secrecy, you know. Of course, everybody knew what we were doing there, even taxi drivers. So much for Communist secrecy. The general hate for the system among the population manifested in this way too by divulging 'secret' military information. We were working in small rooms labeled with different functions, two or three man per room, compartmentalized to the degree that we were discouraged to enter the door across the hallway to talk to our friends, because they were doing something different than you did. This way tried the military to keep their secrets. Of course, they could not enforce this rule, we were laughing at this whole paranoid idiocy, and we talked to our friends any time we wanted to, getting information of their 'secret' works in details.

The small company turned out very high standard radios for the military and the word went around. Beyond the national borders too, right to Moscow. One day we were informed that a high power Russian military delegation would visit us. So, what. We have seen - unfortunately - a lot of bastards before, Russian and otherwise. By this time, we were heavily supervised by the top Hungarian Army Technical Division, which reported directly to Moscow.

Since nobody could enter the building, just the 'initiated', I took an easy attitude about my clothing. In the summer hot weather, I wore no shirt at all (air conditioners there were unknown then), but a one time long, blue-collar type worker's pants which were of very poor Communist quality, disintegrating here-and-there. I fixed up the holes and tears with small screws and bolts and a large number of paper staples. It looked perfect for the Communist eyes: 'a real worker', their ideal! Some days even our new chief engineer wore shorts, he had a pair of long trousers in his office just in case.

Then the day of the arrival of the high Russian bosses came. I was asked to put on a shirt and a better pair of pants. I refused: this is the workers socialist environment in the true spirit of the Communist doctrines, Comrade Lenin would certainly approve it! (I never heard of such a collection of garbage before, but it worked). Then the door opened and in came a Russian general and a colonel plus three Hungarian KGB officers who all spoke Russian, our new manager: an Army major and our chief engineer. I was hiding behind a large piece of equipment I was working on, imitating busily working. As the general came around and spotted me, he became speechless for a moment, then turned to one of the Hungarian KGB officers and inquired about me. I could understand a little Russian by now. The KGB guy just shrugged his shoulders and said nothing - who knows what kind of a nut he is - was the message. Then our new manager saved the day by asking me what I am working on. I wanted to know first if the people present have sufficiently high clearances to allow them to know about my work. We were instructed to ask these questions if we were confronted with people we did not know. I did not know any of the visitors. As this was translated to the general, he took another look at me with wide-open eyes - I am quite sure nobody asked him this before. Then he must have remembered his military training and with a broad smile he indicated that he was impressed. Our major manager in uniform and chief engineer turned white during this past 10 seconds, looking at me with bewildered eyes. How dare you ask such a high official stupid questions like this? - was written all over them. The general took a liking of me at that instant and despite my unconventional clothing - more accurately, the lack of it - he asked for a demonstration after I told him some technical parameters of the high-tension unit I was working on.

Normally, no more than 3 people were allowed in the room while the equipment was energized, one person had to have one hand constantly on a main switch in the opposite corner of the room, just in case one of the engineers would be coming in contact with the high voltage, the watchdog would switch off the equipment instantly.

Our new manager, the Army major was an ‘electrical engineer’. He went through and graduated from the Red Academy, where at least 95% politics and I do not know what else was taught, because he did know absolutely nothing about electricity. Zero. But he was a good Communist Comrade, a faithful Party Member. Some Mondays he would come in smiling, recounting the nice weekend he had, something like this: ‘I decided to visit my friends in Moscow, therefore I requested the jet to take me there with some of my fellow officers, the champagne served on the plane was superb! We went shopping and sight seeing. It was a very nice weekend!’ I bet. In a system where everybody is supposed to be the equal, including the starving population.

Comrade Manager told me to give a demonstration to the general what I was doing before they came. I was reading an American technical magazine before they came, but I decided no to tell them. The manager picked up an instrument from my workbench and handed it over to me: comrade, show the power of the equipment you are working on by connecting the instrument to the unit. I told him that it is unsafe to do so - too many people in close proximity to the high-tension wires. Never mind, he said, just do it. I pushed back the crowd further away from the bench, including the general. He complied. Never taught before to give orders to a Russian general. The equipment was powered, charging the wires to 5000 volts. The ‘electronic engineer’ manager, major, Red Academy graduate picked up the wrong instrument and if I had connected it to the equipment under power, it would have exploded, burning the bodies the people around and with a high probability it would have electrocuted me. Think fast, kid. I told Comrade Red Academy graduate that I have a more accurate instrument here that would give a better impression - it was the proper instrument. He looked at me sternly, denied my request and ordered me to make the electrical connection. If the explosion takes place, I am dead: either by electrocution or by KGB bullets - of course they would have me ‘confessed’ in case I survived that I wanted to kill the Russian general and the rest. I must have been an American spy. I had no choice I contemplated. You are going to be dead in the next few seconds, one way or another. But, miracles can happen, if am around. Some day some zealots will make me into a saint of some sort - saints are all dead by now.

I picked up the instrument and proceeded to go around the corner to approach the high-tension equipment from another angle. On the way to the corner, I purposely bungled my feet and fell on the floor, banging the instrument against the hard surface. Everybody was stunned and the general helped me up from the floor. I told the manager that *now* I cannot use the instrument, it would be very unsafe and I have to use mine. He reluctantly agreed and I made the measurement with a flair. I showed the instrument to the general, he was impressed too. I knew then that he did not know about electronics either.

The General was delighted, and I ordered the equipment to be turned off. I let out a sigh and put down the instrument. The general gave me an approving hand signal, saying: *ochin kharasho, tovarish ingenyeer! - very good, Comrade engineer.*

Now the whole crowd in the small available place gathered in the middle of the room. They were involved in a discussion based upon what they have seen so far. The chief engineer, a very good friend and an excellent electronic expert as well, stood in the focal point of the conversation, turning his back to me. Now *that* was a mistake. I threw a pair of pliers on the floor, giving me the excuse to bend down and pick it up. Everybody turned their head toward me, and then the conversation continued. It took me but a few seconds to affix two beautiful, large paper spurs on the heels of the chief engineer! Nobody noticed, they



were too preoccupied with electronics. I picked up the pliers and with the most natural cool movement I placed it in my desk drawer. One of my colleagues who saw this had to run out of the room, he could not contain himself any more from exploding with laughter.

After this successful demonstration, the whole gang started to exit. First the chief engineer to show the next station, then the general and the rest. As my friend (up to that instant) was walking in front of the general, he noticed that something was wrong. He turned around and saw the Russian general standing there fixating on his shoes with arms on his hips and asking through the interpreter: ‘comrade chief engineer, what is the meaning of wearing spurs? Is this a joke, or what? Are you giving signals to somebody, or what?! Maybe you want to join the cavalry?’ An ominous dead silence followed. My friend was puzzled for a second, then looked down on his shoes and saw the nice big spurs with big colored paper stars as spikes. Thoroughly embarrassed, he reached down and tore off the spurs, which were made by me with such a loving care. They were masterpieces by anybody’s standards. I was not present at this instance; I only heard from others that he said something about an ancient Hungarian custom. The general shook his head, and the visit went from now on without a hitch - or spurs. I would like to get in touch with people who did things like this - do I have some *living* sole-mates?

I do not want to go into details describing what my chief engineer friend wanted to do with me. After the high officials left, he exploded in my room - he knew exactly without asking who was the only one around in a thousand-mile radius capable of doing something like this. He elaborated on the dangers of such a childish prank, we all could have been punished or worse, he said. I became irritated on his sermon and told him that it could have been worse, had I decided to glue the spurs on the general, #1! He almost collapsed. #2: the general probably will explain this ancient Hungarian military custom in Moscow, the next prankster will produce no surprise then to the Russian officials. Besides, the general liked me, he even helped me off the floor, remember? My friend got so furious that he had to leave the room. Slammed the door and said he would be back the next day.

Next day he cornered me and said that if something like this happens again, I will be heavily punished. I assured him that this would not happen again unless another Russian delegation comes to visit us. I reminded him that months ago he promised a bonus from the management upon a timely and successful conclusion of a project. The money we got was far less than promised, also we had to make a lot of noise just to get paid completely. He understood the connection and left the room smiling. Hey, this weekend we could go out to have a good time, as we used to, a little drinking, women, and the rest. He just got divorced, had no obligations. You are on - I told him. He was an intelligent man; he realized that with me around, he needed an insurance policy. *Communication!*

## MILITARY FIELD TELEPHONE

**You Lie, You Pay ---**  
***(one way or another)***



We got involved with a hush-hush super secret project (I must laugh of that now, as I did then) and the contracting officer, an electronics engineer, a devout Communist, about 6 foot 6 tall came from headquarters. We knew him from previous experiences. He demanded something, which was nearly impossible time wise. We told him this, for which he pulled out his service pistol, loaded it and slammed the gun on the table: ***“not only will the project be completed on time, but it will be done without errors.”***

***One mistake, one bullet!***” We were impressed. Why didn't you say so? For the next two months or so, we slept on the company floor, desks, even on the toilet. One young person was assigned to the job of waiting/sleeping in front of our laboratory door waiting for orders to bring in food, 24 hours around the clock. We could leave every three or 4 days for a few hours to go home and take care of things - the company car was waiting in front of our apartments with the motor running. After 2 hours, the car horn was sounded, and you'd better get back to the workplace. We were again promised a large bonus if completed the job to satisfaction. The job was done, the money disappeared with the promises, Communist style.

My huge friend office-mate and I got into a constructive discussion: how to punish the system for these lies all the time. We had several schemes drawn up and finally, we tossed a coin telling us which one it should be. At that time, we were converting German leftover WW II radios to be used by the Army and KGB for their use. In addition, we had a large supply of vacuum tubes for those radios, crates-full of them. We would fabricate slingshots and place the tubes on a shelf. We also manufactured projectiles from stiff wires, a lot of them. The agreement between us was that by shooting the tubes, at the end of the day the one between us who missed more, would pay the beer that afternoon in the pub. We carried an accurate account of each shot - with pleasure. In a 2-week period, we executed about 300 tubes. They were irreplaceable German tubes, the war was over, and so were the reserve supply and no more production. We knew this. When our friend, the chief engineer came to visit us and inquire about the progress in building the assigned equipment, we cheerfully advised him that the crates were improperly handled and the tubes within improperly packaged, consequently the tubes broke. Previously we swept all the glass and the remaining other parts back into the crate, we showed the tube cemetery to him. He got furious, slammed the door and left. He knew all well that we broke the tubes. He was smart and a friend, but he had little control over the money policies, we knew that. We used him as a leverage toward the Communist management. Although he was a Party member (he could not have been a chief engineer otherwise) and hated them, but one has to survive.

Our friend did not show up for days, then a parallel program started, and very expensive locally produced transmitting tubes were delivered to us. Our chief engineer friend was a vacuum tube expert, he was the chief engineer of an international giant electronics firm before the Communists nationalized it. Therefore, it was difficult to put him over. But the word ‘engineer’ in the English language can be bit confusing. ‘Engineer’ has to do with ‘ingenuity’, nothing *per se* with engines, as the English language suggests. In the French and German languages, the word preserved its original intention and is spelled: ***ingenieur***. We counted ourselves to be the latter.

These expensive tubes, which were produced now in Communist dominated Hungary, were of an American design originally. The Commies made a copy of the design, why invent the wheel again? They stole everything else, including atomic secrets, why would they not steal the tube design too? That was not the first or the last thing the Commies stole. At least we knew that the tubes should work. They did, but there was a weakness in the glass: under certain circumstances, especially in cold weather, the glass would break. Since we were the first users of this type of home-produced item, we had to evaluate them and file a report on the reliability of them. This gave us the idea to experiment on the glass envelopes, how strong a slingshot projectile is necessary to break them. We had to use more force of course but managed to learn just the right touch.

We carefully repackaged the broken tubes in their respective boxes and after about 50 tubes (estimated to be about \$10.000 per shot those days), we called our friend, the chief engineer. We related to him that the tube design has to be changed, all failed within the first 5 minutes as we put them to use. In that, we

were not lying. His face turned in all colors at the same time and was utterly speechless. He *knew* what happened but was unable to prove anything.

He ordered us to stop *'testing'* the tubes immediately - there were not too many left anyway - and fill out an individual report on each tube, annotating the serial numbers, the condition of the tubes before usage, the process which broke them, the room temperature, the outside temperature, where the tubes moved from one environment to another, how many seconds it took till failure, etc., etc. We spent the next week *'documenting'* the failures and then we handed the stack of papers over to the chief. He looked at us as if we just killed his mother. With teeth grinding, he said something I wish not to include here - I promised this book would be clean.

As it turned out, the chief engineer had no other choice than to play along, he had our *'official'* records of the failures, he was covered. He spent the next two months in the tube factory. He stopped all production, ordered to investigate all materials and processes, all production machinery, etc. This set back the Communist military program for several months.

It took about four months, until we started to receive the *'improved'* tubes. By this time, we redesigned our equipment using the tubes to accommodate the weakness in the tubes. Our friend warned us that if more *'unexplained'* (I wonder, why did he say that) breakage will occur, there will be plenty of trouble for us. I told him: *'to you too!'* He got the message, and the promised money was delivered in time with a congratulation from our KGB management! I had no idea what he must have told the management to react favorably, but who cares anyway, we got a promise to our deserved money. Just cannot figure out those KGB guys: one day they want to shoot you, the next, they give you money and congratulations for sabotage! It is a strange world we live in.

One day our plant manager came to visit our lab to see progress and to have a little chat. He came a long way in dealing with us. As a fresh graduate of the ominous Red Academy, the first time he entered our room he just kicked the door open and asked what I was doing. I paid no attention. His face turned Communist red and asked me again. I slowly put down the tool in my hand and very calmly said that in this lab, knocking on the door is necessary before entering. Allegedly, he was a locksmith by profession what is an honorable profession, but I doubt he knocked on the shop's door before entering. I knew that and told him that since we are working with high voltage equipment, it may not be wise to enter without endangering oneself. Besides, a sudden door kicking may surprise us and inadvertently we will touch a dangerous point in the equipment. Then he will have to fill out a report on why the employee got electrocuted. You don't want to go through all that paperwork, do you? "Of course, not", he replied. So, we agreed that he has to adhere to civilized behavior. He was surprised, but then he was the manager, his job was to see that the machinery worked under his command. We smiled, and he said: very well, Comrade! I hesitated for a moment and asked him to address me as: *'mister'*. His eyes opened to full circles and told me that in the Socialist System Comrade is the proper thing to say. For which I replied: on the other hand, I am the worker, ***I build Socialism, I know*** what makes me work harder, ***and I can decide*** my title. He was totally flabbergasted to this and shaking his head, he left. A few days later a very faint knock on the door. I assume this was the first time he knocked on any door. Enter! He came in and said Comrade..... I looked at him and reminded him of our agreement. He mockingly addressed me as *'mister'* with a demeaning grimace. Good enough, Comrade for the time being proper on my terms. Did anybody ever attempt to convert a Communist in 10 minutes and stay alive - I don't know. Hope yes.

We had a young Communist drafting girl working at the facilities. Our manager visited the drafting room with ever-increasing frequency, everybody noticed. We all had to punch the clock; chief engineer included. One minute later and you ended up at the Party Secretary's office, half hour wages subtracted from your salary. Two more occasions and you were severely reprimanded, money penalty, public

denouncement, and the rest. Also, your name appeared on the 'shame board' affixed to the wall. I came in late several times and my name was posted. It was supposed to be displayed for a month. After my month was over, my name was removed. I put my name back on and complained to our Party Secretary. He was completely confused; the Party manual did not list such a behavior. He advised me to take my name off. I left the office and told the person in charge of the board that by the order of the Party Secretary, I have a permanent place on the board, my name must ***not be removed***. I could get another month of listing on the board before this trick was discovered. They wanted to put me in shame, but they ended up being in shame, I was quick to point this out to management. The board was removed. The employees who knew about this were laughing to no end. ***They*** were trying to be arrogant? - bru-ha-ha.

But this girl was showing up later and later every day, no punishment. We all knew what was going on. One day it was announced that the manager and the girl were married. Good for them - or was it? In a 'good' atheist fashion they were married according to the Party protocol - permission was given to both parties on grounds of being good faithful Communists. The history of the Communist movement indicated, that they (Lenin, Stalin, etc.) were studying the Catholic Church to discover their secret as how to control masses. Stalin himself was a one time a priest student. The Commies must have adopted the 'permission' scheme from the Catholic Church.

They had a child who became very ill and in a few weeks, he (she?) died. The manager took this tragically, as most people would have. He came to visit me in the lab while I was alone and started to spill out his guts on me. He has come a long way, the proud Communist Commissar. I asked him if he believed in predestination. He was thinking of this for 5 minutes and seemed to agree, looks like it ***is*** a case of predestination – he never heard that word before. I asked if he ever considered a higher authority than the Party in or outside this world? He was totally surprised by this turn of the conversation and his face flushed. Higher authority than ***the Party?*** He lowered his head and tears appeared in his eyes. I told him that crying is no shame, a good cry can do good for even the most stubborn or high-ranking person. I told him to take a coin out of his pocket and look at it - if one does not know the coin beforehand, one cannot know what is on the other side. We mortal people spend but a short time on this planet - Communist or not - and the time is too short to know everything about life. Or death, as the recent events presented themselves. He was now devastated - sermon to an atheist! Would it not be comforting to know, or at least guess, what lies on the other side of the coin without turning it over to see the design, would it not be revealing just to think of many beautiful possibilities? Is there another side at all? I stopped here. Comrade manager now tried to pull himself together. Dried up the tears, he told me that it makes a lot of sense what I told him. He never thought along those lines. That I knew, the Communist Party does not teach theology (except their own). The death of his own child, not me, broke his stone-hard attitude. He finally softly thanked me for talking to him, we shook hands, and he almost hugged me. Not so fast, Comrade! I told him he could come back any time to talk to me on any subject if he pleased. I wondered throughout these years if my ideas ever took a root in his mind. People can change. After all, Dr. Karl Marx, the inventor of this trashy theory of Communism along with the Dialectical Materialism conundrum, was in his young age a fierce defender of Christianity, he has written several papers in defense of it. Born as a Jew, converted to Christianity, then he turned around again and became one of the most disgusting atheist and terrorist the world will ever know. I hope the Red Academy graduate manager took the opposite direction - from Atheist-Communist-to-decent.

## Socialism in Cold Water.

*(the way it should be .....what a pleasure!)*

As mentioned earlier, our laboratory was housed in a three-storey building. The first floor accommodated the mechanical department with its heavy machinery - lathes, drilling machines, etc. and some offices for the upper management. The second floor was almost entirely devoted to offices, including the Communist Party Secretary. The third floor was the real thing, the radio design lab. It consisted of small rooms for 1-3 people and all the design and prototype equipment construction was done there. No elevators between the floors - that would have been a soft decadent Capitalist Remnant (or similar idiotic meaningless Communist label attached). Between the floors were steel draw gates arranged, each locked by their locks and an extra chain with large padlocks attached. The doors and gate chains were outfitted with seals that would be applied at the conclusion of the day and inspected each morning by a person, '**The Secret**' as we called her, designated to do that before entry was granted to each floor. That person had to be a trusted Communist. The paranoia did not stop here. Each day at closing, '**The Secret**' had to inspect each room inside for closed and secured windows, that all paper material was removed from the desks and work benches, that no material has fallen on the floor - possibly giving a secret sign to the 'enemy'! Does this make sense to you? Then she would come out from the room, lock the door and apply the seal. Who would be interested in going to this insignificant small shop anyway? 'The Imperialist spies and their allies, Comrades!' - that is, you, my friends - who read these lines now.

The second floor also accommodated "**The Secret's**" room, with a heavy steel vault where the notebooks and some machine-guns were kept. We had to sign in and out for our designated notebooks daily where the design notes were recorded. Each page was numbered and had to be signed with the date and exact time. A small area before the main room, a separating Dutch door was designated to pick up and to surrender the books. By knocking on the door, she would open the upper part of the door and smile at me: how come you are 5 minutes late today, I was waiting for you! At one time, she gave me a long warm kiss. Hmmmmm. She was a bit stocky but proportional and very good looking with a purposely displayed disarming provoking smile at me every time. I felt in my bones that some day something will happen between us. She was testing me. Except for '**The Secret**' and upper Communist management, nobody was allowed to enter the inner room.

We were instructed to report any unusual circumstance at once to upper management, including people found on the premises whom we did not know. The top military organization sent out KGB officers - usually very young, zealous, and incredibly stupid and uneducated Communists, hate filled individuals as surprise auditors or as liaisons in case a secret document had to be transmitted. These bastards were authorized to use different uniforms belonging to different military divisions with different rank insignias. One day they would show up in an artillery lieutenant's uniform, the next day in an Air Force captain's for instance. This was allegedly devised to confuse the 'enemy'. Confuse who? Why would the 'enemy' worry about an illiterate jerk changing uniforms? The 'enemy' knew about this scheme, I am quite sure. **Paranoia ad nauseam.** Any time a new jerk was assigned to us, he was introduced on one of the compulsory meetings where all employees were present (theoretically) or the manager would go with him from room to room. I managed to escape or trying to escape some of these boring and disgusting, intelligent insulting propaganda harangues. On one occasion, they caught me climbing over a 10-foot concrete fence between our building and the neighboring civilian house. Two of the comrades pulled me down by my legs and forced me to attend the stupid meeting. They were ready to call the KGB in case I resist - I was told. Oh, well we live in the 'Worker's Paradise', where **FREEDOM** prevails. The main

gates were locked in occasions like these to prevent people from escaping. The room was full by then and I calmly sat down on the floor in the far corner and fell asleep. I must have been snoring because occasionally I received warning kicks from some of my friends to wake me up and avoid the rage of the Communists.

The matter was of course reported to the Party Secretary who summoned me next morning. In a very official and stern voice, he disclosed that such a behavior was totally unacceptable in the Socialist Society they were trying to build. He turned sideways in his outrage behind his desk, looking at the floor while chewing me out. I do not remember what he said because I fell asleep again. I had a nice long party with my friends the night before. When he realized that I had fallen asleep, he started to scream at me: what should I do with you?! I stood up slowly, performed a classical long yawn with arms stretched and fists clenched, turned around and was heading out the door. Halfway out I turned around and screamed so that everybody could hear it in the neighboring offices and in the hallways: *leave me alone!* Slammed the door and left.

The next morning, I was summoned again to the Party Secretary. I had to go down to see him immediately. It took a full day to the jerk to recover from my answers.

He made me sit down and with the most serious expression he said: "I have information that your brother who is in charge of production of the entire plant producing textiles for our Socialist Society as well for exports to our Socialist friends, two weeks ago on Thursday 10:32 hours in the morning in the presence of two of our Comrades made an unfavorable comment concerning the Socialist System. Inasmuch as you people are continuing to behave like this, I cannot foresee a great future for you and your entire family. You tell your brother to keep his big mouth shut or your family included will end up downtown KGB headquarters. The same goes for you too. I don't want to hear that you are trying to climb over the fence to avoid our compulsory meetings." I thanked him for his kind words and timely warning to me and in the name of my family assured him that I will be more careful next time when it is time for the meetings, he will not hear more about fence climbing. He mellowed a bit and with the forgiving smile of the Pope, who just heard the confession of a mass-murderer, dismissed me - OK then. On the way out, I softly said that the next time I would clime the fence 10 minutes before the meeting - this will eliminate embarrassments for both of us. It is fair, isn't it? I would not think of causing trouble to the Party Secretary! I slammed the door and left, leaving the dumbfounded secretary alone with his thoughts. He could have me taken downtown, but he did not. They needed my work what I did very well. I knew this, and this fact alone saved my neck so far.

The next morning a soft knocking on the lab door. The manager stuck his head through the cracked door and asked if I was alone. I was and he came in. After a few words about my work, he fidgeted a little but came out with the stuff: "It is difficult to manage this place even without any political problems. If somebody is causing problems for us, we have to deal with it to the satisfaction of the Party." I interrupted and said that I was fully aware of this, and I meant no harm to anyone. The only person who could be hurt was me, by falling off the 10-foot fence. Since I was in a very good physical condition, I was confident that I would not fall off and cause a lapse in production by the possible hospital stay in case I was seriously hurt. Therefore, I was not totally irresponsible. The manger got somewhat mad but controlled himself - probably remembering our touchy conversation before - and *asked* me not to do that again. I assured him that just because he *asked* me and not just ordered me, I will comply. I told him flatly if he had ordered me, I would not have complied. *He* is a soldier, I am not. He was quite surprised, impressed, and finally smiled. Then everything is in order. Taming of the shrew, Paul style. He did not mention my brother's anti-socialist behavior, and I did keep my word. I always do, I did not climb the fence after that incident. Instead, I managed to scramble my calendar so that by *mere coincidence* (synchronicity?), I had to leave



the plant an hour before the meetings to take care of official business outside the plant. The temporal separation of the meetings and my departure somewhat lessened the impact of me escaping officially, but the only damage I suffered was a few shaking heads and disapproving looks. I had the exit ticket; they have the problems. It is their job to handle the problems, I left them with themselves. Nothing is better than a swim in the river at 3 P.M. while the Comrades are trying to build Socialism.

The summer came and the charming and subduing chatter and song of the little birds under our open windows evoked the most natural instinct in us: get the heck out of here if you can, enjoy a little *freedom*. I gazed out of the lab window and my huge colleague noticed this. We looked at each other and without saying a single word; we were headed toward the door: ask our good buddy the Chief Design Engineer if he would join us in a little outing in this beautiful weather. He liked to drink heavily (this one too) and we said that a glass of beer or two would not hurt anybody. We pay. We had to go to him for a permit to leave the place guarded with machine-guns if the members of the upper management were not available. The tickets had to be surrendered at the gate, no exceptions. Our Chief Designer friend disclosed that the time is perfect since the Manager and the Chief Engineer both went to Army Headquarters for an important meeting. On the way out, we checked the bosses' tickets to be sure they were at Army Headquarters. They were - on paper.

In 5 minutes, flat, we were on the bus taking us to downtown Budapest. We always carried bathing trunks with us just in case and that day was no exception. There is an internationally known hotel, restaurant and bathing facility with indoor-outdoor pools called the 'Gellért'. Since Hungary lost her sea port after WW I, Hungarian ingenuity created artificial 'ocean-wave' by mechanical means. Every 15 minutes or so a whistle announced the onset of an ever-increasing wave-train induced by a wave machine in the outside of the pool, invisible from the pool. It is quite enjoyable. We decided to go to that place - it was close by; it was classy and could have a beer there too. The tree of us, like wild tigers just released from the cage ran to the pool and without looking jumped into the refreshing water. As I came up for air, I almost bumped into somebody: It was the Manager, next to him was our Chief Engineer! They looked surprised (too) and asked me what we are doing here. I calmly said that we are doing exactly the same as you two are doing - enjoying *freedom* in the nice cool water. After all, this is a democracy and the workers are entitled to the same privileges as the Management, not like in the old bad, bad Fascist-Capitalist system!

The two had a short conference while swimming and *asked* us: please do not stay too long and the whole thing is forgotten but keep our mouths shut! Of course, it will be forgiven. It was a good deal - we stayed for another hour, washed down the whole affair with a glass of cool beer, then it was time to get back to the plant, lunch brake was coming up. Nothing ever was said about this to us, except to our Chief Designer friend, he had to absorb the sermon, which, under the circumstances, was very friendly and forgiving. Naturally. He related to us that in his private conversation later with the Chief Engineer, he said next time we wanted out, check with him first. He likes to take a break too now-and-then too. And a beer or two. This was quite obvious to us by now. Kudos for Socialism!



## ***THE MAJESTIC BEND OF THE DANUBE RIVER - SUNSET – BUDAPEST***

### **The Imperialist Spy Plane Incident.**

*(or - how stupid can you get, Comrade?)*

To be in line with the Socialist rules, I decided to report everything *under the sky* judged possibly detrimental to the system. For instance, I called the manager one day and asked: is it not unusual to hear a fast low flying airplane overhead on a Tuesday 11:31 A.M.? Can it be an *Imperialist spy plane*? Is it taking pictures of us and our secret facilities? I very positively said that I felt it was my duty to report all suspicious incidences, as instructed. I asked him to be sure he got the time down right. (I knew darn well it was a Russian plane practice flight originating from the nearby military airfield, I saw the insignia, there were dozens of Russian planes in the sky all the time.) But, on the other hand, from the Communist point of view it could have been a camouflaged Imperialist plane as well. Paul may knows something we don't. (After all, he gets arrested frequently by coming out of the American Legation building!) Everybody knows the intentions of those terrible Imperialists; the Communist press is full of those (invented propaganda) stories. I expressed my utmost concern about this suspicious incident and told him that I was ready to file a written report addressed to him. He could make a good name for himself too in front of his superiors - his employee discovered a dangerous spy plane! He thanked me for the information with

amazement in his voice (knowing my sentiment concerning socialism) and said that it was not necessary; he got all the information down on paper.

Next morning the manager called me on the phone and said that he felt that it was now his duty to report back to me that he launched an investigation spurred by my call to him and it was found that no enemy plane was in the air space at that time. He said he called the Russian Air Force Command (!) and they said that we don't have to worry about this incident, the case was 'handled properly'. Handled what case - there was no case. You could not believe, how relieved I was now in the knowledge that no enemy planes were attacking us a day before!

## **Comrade Manager, Shoot that Imperialist Spy!** *(and he almost shot the KGB officer!)*

I was able to further demonstrate my *total devotion* to the Socialist Fatherland (Motherland?) to my manager by calling his attention to an unknown - to me, anyway - person found on the premises. It just happened that a new KGB liaison officer was delegated to us. The Communists kept changing these; they did not trust even their own devotees and cadres either. Their fear was that if the jerk is allowed to co-mingle to any length of time with the population - which cannot be trusted at all - some state safety aspects would be compromised. This particular thug was even more obnoxious than the previous ones before, I was told. I did not know him; he must have been introduced as our new Communist bloodhound on one of those meetings I was able to escape from. I knew who he was, but officially I did not know him, he never saw me before.

One day this idiot presented himself to show off his brand-new KGB Lieutenant's uniform and without knocking, threw the door open and confronted me: "what are you doing, what kind of equipment are you working on?" I did not even look up and worked along as he had not been there at all. He became furious instantly and demanded menacingly: "Didn't you hear me? I was asking you what you are doing?!" I calmly put down the hot soldering iron in my hand and told him that I don't know him, he could be a camouflaged Imperialist spy, I am not going to tell him top secrets, and I am in no way obliged to answer any questions to him. He went through the usual transformation the Communists go through when they are confronted with an answer not included in their training manual. I was supposed to be petrified upon his questioning. The manual said so, period. He stood there stupidly and took him about 30 second to realize that Paul vs. KGB ended in a defeat for him. He turned around and stormed out of the lab, even leaving the door open. He went in the next lab to ask people around who I was. I slammed the door shut, ran to the phone, and put an emergency call to the manager: 'Comrade Manager, this is a very serious matter. An individual whom I never met before (true!) kicked down the door and demanded to tell him what type of equipment I was working on, asking top secrets! Of course, I told him nothing! He is possibly an Imperialist spy wearing our Socialist People's Democracy's Army uniform to cover up his intentions!'

The manager threw down the phone and I opened the door slightly to hear the slowed down bullet by a Communist body slamming into the wall. Comrade manger exploded out of his office and with his loaded service pistol held in front of him was running up the stairs full speed like a rocket taking the stairs by three to meet the enemy spy. As he turned around between the second and third story, he saw the uniformed KGB jerk. Before the manager realized who the jerk *really* was, ordered him to stop and put his hands up! I overheard this and almost collapsed from laughing. 10 minutes later both came up to the lab like dogs which were severely punished, and cold water poured on them afterwards, the manager introduced the KGB man to me. I smiled and said that I was just discharging my duty in defense of the

***People's Democracy*** from its enemies. We cannot be vigilant enough, Comrades. There are probably a lot of those spies around, as suggested by the Communist press. Sometimes drastic steps must be taken to stop the enemy. The jerk was completely impressed and said that everything is OK now. I quoted everything exactly as printed in the Communist press, therefore I must be right. They left. I had to bite my lips and pinch my body parts bloody in my trouser pocket not to burst out in laughter while talking to the two. Waiting patiently in all these years, Murphy finally had his day: he was able to interfere with my plans successfully. The jerk was still alive. I felt ashamed.

Next morning the manager came up to see me. He was concerned because as he told me, it was just a matter of a fraction of a second - he almost pulled the trigger upon seeing the KGB officer, thinking he was the Imperialist spy. I assured him that *that* would have been tragic. He could not sleep the whole night, he said. I told him that I could not have slept either had I been in his shoes; with the possibility of all these enemy spies around, you know. He watched my facial expression intently - he wanted to know if I was joking or making fun of this whole thing. But I was disciplined and remained ice cold and factual, very serious throughout. The manager, experiencing my treatments before was not quite convinced of my sincerity in defending Socialism. But I never said that. I said ***People's Democracy!*** He has to do still a lot of learning from Paul. In the Communist mind Democracy and Communism was the same. Not in my mind. They called the system: '***People's Democracy***'. What does that mean? How about Dog's Democracy? Or Cats'? I left it with the Rat's. No difference, they all have four legs, except snakes and disgusting worms. He shook his head and left. The story started circulating and my friends - despite the compartmentalized isolation rule - came to congratulate me in my office. I rejected all their unwarranted sentiment toward me with the most serious facial expression telling them that I did not deserve their congratulations, I failed miserably, because that Communist jerk is still alive! We had a good laugh at this and I was invited for a beer or two after work. I don't know why, but *that* beer tasted extra good on the hot summer day. Maybe because it was free. What do you think?



## **Clandestine Radio Transmissions in the** **“People’s Democracy”!**

*(Have you ever heard the four-letter word: ‘P-a-u-l’ before?)*

One fair day the Chief Engineer friend called five of us down to his office: a Russian radio truck will be delivered onto the premises for a demonstration accompanied by a high-ranking Russian officer. So what? He said that he does not want any funny business - he stopped for about 15 seconds for the accentuation of his message and stared at me - then continued: if all goes well, we will get a nice contract to build a prototype Army Signal Corps communication truck for both the Hungarian and Russian Army, equipped with all the latest bells and whistles available by the progressing technology. It sounded good enough to me to keep quiet for a while.

Weeks later, the Russian truck arrived. It looked like an old barn with a chimney on top; the thing was puffing and laboring to get through the gate. Fortunately, the Chief Engineer caught us before entering the vehicle: no laughing! - he could hardly contain himself. We looked with interest and the Russian general arrived with the regulars: KGB interpreters, etc. The main attraction - and it really was - consisted of what we seriously thought was an old-fashioned iron stove with a tall black chimney. It turned out that it was a recent top-secret Russian ‘modern’ radio transmitter. I had to excuse myself to go to the potty - I could not hold back the laughter. Hearing me screaming in the potty people asked if I was all right? I was and my tears started to flow down my cheek. A few minutes later after washing my face I returned to see more modern stuff. The ‘thing’ was turned on and the room was filled with light emanating from it so strong through its glass window that one could not look in it directly. The Russian general with utmost pride presented the specifications of the ‘thing’ - in Russian, of course.

Next day we had to start conducting a series of measurements verifying the specifications. The ‘thing’ did not meet by far a single data point. I was not surprised, nor were the others. Now we shook our heads. As the project progressed, the Chief reviewed the data and said we got the contract and we can build a unit far better than this pile of junk is. He looked up to see if any of the Comrades were around. Nobody but us around, we had a good laugh at this ‘thing’.

Our project proceeded with a good speed. We were authorized to order electronic components from West Germany in particular, items not available in the ‘Worker’s Paradise’. The Germans were always producing first class equipment and parts; we had confidence in their products.

It was an interesting learning experience for me, as we had to test ‘our thing’ in all conceivable environments. I was chosen to operate for instance the finished prototype in a minus 70 degree Celsius (94 degrees below Fahrenheit) deep-cooler tunnel used otherwise to keep frozen food in for a state owned company. It passed with minor problems only we could correct in a few days afterward. Presumably this test was to verify the transmitter’s integrity in the Siberian winter.

As the whole ‘thing’ was assembled and installed into a brand-new Hungarian military truck specially made for us, our ‘thing’ was ready for tests. It was a transmitter capable of putting out over a kilowatt of radio frequency energy on short waves. It was at least 2 to 3 times better than the ‘modern’ Russian counterpart. Not just better, we invented automatic antennae tuning and some other nice features also, our ‘thing’ looked professional, two-tone business/military green, beautiful, shiny and very well working.

The endurance test consisted of operating at least 8 hours a day with full power. My friend, Béla obtained some modern jazz tapes from his friends who were allowed to leave the country (the Hungarian

soccer selection) and return the music without being confiscated. That type of American jazz was strictly forbidden in the Socialist World, in the Worker's Paradise. It was labeled decadent.

And now a few words not including military radio transmitters. I was about now in my twenties, old enough to notice nature's way worming to the surface of my soul - and body, for sure. I got friendly with a husky girl at work and started to go out with her. I dressed at these occasions with a defiant flare the Communists called 'Capitalist hooliganism'. Tight and quite short pants, a black, long corduroy zippered jacket with a very noticeable red-green-yellow shiny plaid design lining, a stylishly cut open collar shirt, super shining shoes and a provocative pair of socks. That was the *avant-garde* setup for the stylish - automatically improper in Socialist Paradise.

We went once to a place, which was a large department store in daylight and a dance floor with live music at night. The girl's father was a civil detective at that place during working hours. As the dance started, we got on the dance floor and started dancing "American style" - with wide energetic turns and alike. About 15 minutes later a detachment of soldiers appeared: a stupid looking young skinny lieutenant followed by two machine-gun toting soldiers. The officer went to the orchestra and halted the music. He then came to me and said that I was under arrest. I demanded to know why. He said something that in Socialism this behavior is forbidden. He told me to go in front of him; I was followed by the two gunners. He directed us toward the back to a narrow service stairway and gave the order to the two to take me downtown to headquarters. I started two steps down and just knew that something was wrong. I turned around and saw the 'officer' pushing my girl against the wall, tearing her panties off and proceeded to open his fly! I jumped back to get to his throat, the two-armed thugs did not want to interfere and let me jump at the bastard - they must have hated him too. He got scared, pulled up the zippers on his pants. I started to scream with all my vocal strength and called him murderer, pig, bastard and much worse. He let go of her and ushered us down the stairs. People ran to the staircase door and opened it, looking down at the whole scene. I was still screaming that the Lieutenant wanted to rape my girl at gunpoint. The onlookers were scared and did nothing but watch with disgust. I got a hold of my girlfriend and put my arms around her. Still screaming I told the officer that I would kill him if he tried to touch her, guns or no guns. The jerk was now in a hot soup, he did not think that I would dare to speak up, and we had witnesses now too. He did not deny my accusation. We started down the stairs with my girlfriend in front of me. At the bottom of the stairs outside on the street I started to scream again that now I will take him downtown and report him to his boss - you are not an officer of *our* (ha-ha-ha) Socialist Army, you are an Imperialist-inspired disgusting pig! - I told him. I pointed at the thugs and told them to arrest the lieutenant. Of course, they did nothing, but started laughing, seemingly enjoying the affair. The jerk officer was not prepared for a circus production. The Lieutenant got tame at this point and told me that we can go. We went back to the dance floor to the utter amazement of the people and after a dance we left. I just wanted to show who is boss, guns or no guns. My girl said that I handled the situation quite well, she liked it. We ended up at another place where we had a pleasant evening - without her panty on - no arrest that time.

And now we can do back to the transmitters. At work we rigged up a tape recorder and started to play tapes. The military authority assigned special frequencies we could operate on to test our new creation, the beautiful transmitter. We bent the rules a bit and were transmitting close to the normal short wave broadcast bands, so that people who were listening to the Voice of America, BBC, and other forbidden Western broadcasts would discover the station by chance. (Probability laws, you know.) That transmitter power could be received in the city with extreme strength, surpassing any other legal broadcast station's signal.



We used to travel officially in the city during daytime and noticed that our music was very loudly played through open windows all over the city! The news of a super strong “American” radio transmitter receivable in the Capital was spreading like wildfire. People started to talk about it openly on busses, streetcars, etc. I, of course told all my friends to tune in, the latest decadent Capitalist music is on the air, thanks to 'B, P & A' (Béla, Paul & Associates). It can be received even on cheap radios, it was very strong. At one occasion, I was traveling on a bus. It was somewhat crowded, so I could hear two people talking next to me: ‘Yesterday I discovered on short wave a fantastic American station, it plays the best modern jazz for hours. It is so strong; one would think it is next door!’ It was.

Our Chief Engineer put an end to this, however. The ‘test’ was going on for weeks by now and one day he decided to check something on the transmitter. It was on full blast broadcasting the *‘forbidden sound’*. He told us to cease operation or else - he did not want to go to jail because of our foolishness. He reminded me of the “no funny business” warning given before. So, we had no choice, we stopped transmitting, but a lot of people were talking about that unexpected event in the sea of Communist terror. As suddenly as the music appeared, just as suddenly it stopped. I heard people asking each other on the bus, what happened to that American station, they did not hear it for days - they wanted to get a hold of a schedule! I kept quiet. I was not ready to accept defeat openly. Murphy got ahead of me this time – once in awhile I let him celebrate!

Then came the official demonstration of the communication truck with all the bells and whistles in replacing the Russian 'thing' to the same General, who brought it to us. Upon entering the truck, he became furious – totally livid. He could not believe that these inferior Hungarian slaves can build such a sophisticated piece of gear. We spent a day in preparation for this occasion and even polished the paint job and all metal parts too. The equipment would have stood the critique and test of the Western standards and passed the test with flying colors. The inside was full of parts from Western Germany, the Capitalist side, anyway. As we proceeded with a slightly arrogant phlegmatic facial expressions as a matter of fact first class equipment demonstration, the general was totally demolished. The two pieces of gear, ours and the Russian, simply could not be compared on the same day. The general finally had enough, slammed an object on the floor with hysteria, and ordered his interpreter to proceed with our Chief Engineer to the offices. Later we learned that only a large quantity of vodka could quiet down the general temporarily. He was completely outraged: these Hungarians or what their name is, slaves, outperformed the Great Glorious Mighty Red Army-deigned equipment, and was very good looking too, with innovations and inventions the Russians apparently did not know about.

The radio hobby since I was 7 years old stayed with me. I decided to build my own transmitter at home. This was a risky business because the Russians clearly stipulated that any material left over from the war was automatically the property of the Soviet Government. In addition, any piece of transmitting equipment - no matter how small - was considered as an act of espionage and was punished usually with death. I had a ton of German military radio parts at home (as even today). The same rule was true for any weapon; even a spent bullet shell could get you a stiff jail sentence or a free trip to a Siberian concentration camp. In cases like that, the KGB was trying to ‘prove’ that the individual having possession of the empty shell was used to shoot the Russians. He was an obvious American spy and the hardest punishment for that crime against the state was in order. There were plenty of war material left over from the war and on flea markets; one could purchase all kinds of radio equipment and parts. Nobody paid attention to the Russian warning.

My project was going well at home and a small power short wave transmitter was put in service. I had to be careful with the antenna arrangement - the mail carriers were required to file a report upon discovering a suspicious antenna or radio device. In Hungary under the Communist rule people had to pay

for listening to the radio programs. My antenna was officially a clothes-drying wire that is all - when not in use as an antenna. We kids accumulated quite a large library of good American jazz records, many of the famous and popular orchestras were represented. Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Louis “Sachmo” Armstrong, Arty Shaw, Benny Goodman, Paul Whitman, Jimmy Wilbur, Stan Kenton, Jimmy Teagarden, Nat Gonella, and many others, even Spike Jones. I played almost daily on short wave, telling my friends to listen. And they did to their delight. The girls liked it quite a bit too.

This went on for months. One day my brother came home on his bike and with misgiving told me to cease operation at once. Why? The Russian military radio direction finder truck he was passing on the bike was just a few blocks away, stopping at every few hundred feet and taking aim. It was approaching our house. I had to go off the air and the Russians never found me and my transmitter. It must have been frustrating for them to trace me so close and not find me, that thought gave me some consolation. I went to see what was going on. They were messing around for a while, turning their antenna in every direction but it was too late for them. then gave up and left. It was good to know that Murphy was still working for the Russians.

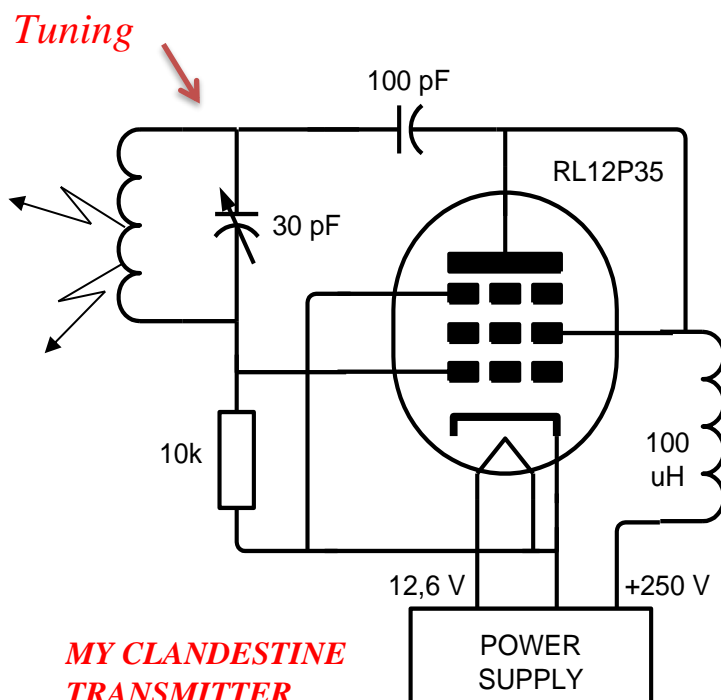
The Russians occupied the building next to us and that provided some firsthand insight in their *modus operandi*. My German grandfather planted two beautiful eucalyptus trees long time ago in front of our apartment entrance in our yard, achieving huge proportions. The trunks were about 4 to 5 feet in diameter with the height proportionally very tall and the branches extensive, giving pleasant shade in hot days over the whole house. It gave home to numerous species of birds too - starlings, robins, finches, doves and others. The Russian soldiers in their boredom occasionally conducted shooting practices over our roof on the birds. On one occasion a soldier next door shot a bird with his service pistol and the poor *Hungarian Bird* fell to the ground dead. I am not paranoid; just it was a Hungarian Bird. Having been through the war seeing all the senseless destruction of life, I could identify with that innocent little creature. Our cat by now knew from the sound of the guns that a bird would fall from the sky and was waiting under the tree, quickly picking up the dead carcass and running away with it. In 2 seconds flat the soldier kicked in our gate, screaming, and holding in his hand the smoking gun, demanding “*his*” bird. It was gone and he taught I took it. He leveled his pistol on me point blank demanding his trophy. It was not the first time I looked down at the barrel of a 9 mm pistol, it did not bother me particularly anymore. By now I got used to the idea of being threatened to be shot for nothing. I raised my shoulders and went inside. The bastard was looking all over the place for the bird, but it was now in the stomach of our cat. Cursing the *thief Hungarians*, he left.

Russians like and make a lot of noise. Just by talking to each other in a friendly Russian manner, by the noise they make one would think that they are about to kill each other the next second. On the upper floor of the building next door, they opened a window and placed a big, confiscated radio on the windowsill. They turned it on full blast tuned to Radio Moscow on short wave. The whole street had to endure this cacophony day and night 24 hours non-stop, the guards at the entrance were entertained too while they were drinking half mature champagne. The Russians ransacked the local champagne factory and by the truckloads they hauled the bottles in their quarters. Once I got caught in front of our house and was forced to help unload the bottles. The bottles had no label on them as yet; the champagne was in the process of being manufactured. Several of the bottles were broken because the 'Liberators' just threw the bottles on the floor of the truck randomly by the hundreds and the whole shipment was full of wet sticky shards of glass and mud. I cut my hand and started to scream and swear at them. To keep me quiet, they gave me a few bottles and told me that I could go. I watched the guards and their drunken comrades ‘opening’ several bottles Russian style: they grabbed the bottles by the bottom and slammed the corked end, the neck against

a steel rail, breaking the bottles open. The carbonated fizzing stuff escaped from the broken bottles like a fountain with great force and these pigs would immediately drink it as the champagne was inundating their clothes, faces and guns. They came to our country to give us civilization - they said. Many a jerks ended up dead and seriously wounded internally due to their insatiable lust for booze - they drank the stuff with the glass shards, dirt, and all.

One day a big commotion was heard next door with machine-gun bursts. I slowly cracked our gate open to see what was going on. The body of a bloody dead Russian soldier was dragged in the building from the gate among the heap of empty broken champagne bottles and puddles of champagne on the ground. It turned out that this jerk shot himself accidentally. The way Russian guards saluted their officers was by slamming the gun butt against the ground while holding the gun barrel close to the body. He did the same, without applying the safety latch or it may have gotten rusted in the frequent champagne baths - consequently allowing the machine-gun to go off by itself in the automatic mode. Bursts of shots riddled his body from the bottom up. Too much champagne in the head, too much champagne on the gun, too little brain.

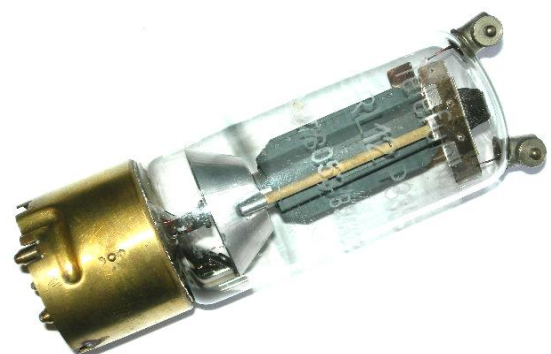
I had enough of the noises and decided to end the radio entertainment for the bastards. In a few hours I constructed a small, short-wave transmitter from my inventory of German military radio parts and tuned on top of the Moscow station they were listening to. This was the last 'German revenge' against the Russians. To their surprise but not to mine, the screeching and whistling noise resulting from my interfering signal proved to be unbearable for them. I was amused. First they were trying to tune to different stations, but the undefeatable and mysterious interference followed immediately. Eventually they had to give up and removed the offending radio from the window. Murphy must have taken up residence with them and have gotten drunk too on the bad champagne. Maybe shot himself. The simple radio transmitter schematic is shown below.



**THE GERMAN RL12P35**

**TRANSMITTER**

**TUBE**





## **CLANDESTINE RADIO STATION FROM WORLD-WAR – II**

### **KGB Order: Paul, Fix God's TV Set!**

*(god, you should have thrown out that junk a long time ago!)*

Since I was qualified to undertake sensitive work for the military, one day I was called down to the office by the chief engineer. The Party Secretary and the manager were present too. I speculated: promotion or firing squad? Hanging maybe? Perhaps they discovered my clandestine broadcasting last night? In the wonderful Worker's Paradise, one never knows what comes next. I mentioned that I like surprises and I have risen to the occasion as always.

The chief told me that a very sensitive issue came up: due to my qualifications, I was selected to repair the television set of the Russian High Commander in Hungary, a Field Marshal, a four star general, our manager's god or at least his archangel. The people present were very surprised that I was not. So what? This general had the power to pulverize the city if he wanted to do so. Later in 1956 during the Hungarian Revolution he did just that. He was in charge of the subjugated Hungary - a lord of life and death, mostly the latter one.

With the incredulity written all over the bystanders I said coolly that why is this big commotion and pomp? Bring in the set and I will take a look at it. Comrade Manager said that it is already on the way here, but there is another issue here too: I had to deliver the repaired set and install it at his place. I told

them to please give me his address and I will see to it that the set will get there. All the presents were staring at me and when they recovered from the amazement, they started to laugh. Comrade .... no, no, no: 'Mister Paul' - I interrupted. They did not know now to laugh or to cry. We want to send this Capitalist inclined obviously American influenced jerk to our God. Well, the decision was made, it is too late. His name has been transmitted to the High Command. The chief engineer later called me in his office and had a private conference with him. Our laboratory did not have the necessary equipment to professionally service the TV, we were in a different business, so arrangements have to be made to transport the set to the largest radio works upon my evaluation of the condition of the set for a final checking out procedure. The chief took the task of the arrangement himself.

The next day the set arrived with an accompanying package. I had to sign for the delivery and unpacked the shipment handed over by an army of KGB officers. They all wanted to be important. First I looked at this contraption and wanted to find the screen. Where is it? It should have one here somewhere. Is this really a TV set or an overgrown can opener? Then I discovered it, it was located on the front panel of the set, an *almost* 5-inch diameter round hole, the screen deeply recessed in it! Some TV!

I dismantled the thing and was somewhat amazed at what I saw. The set was one of the very earliest ones delivered to the Russians as part of the German war reparation agreement. The war destroyed most radio works and material, the Germans had to scrounge around and build the sets with whatever materials were available. I bet every set was different built in that age. There were American parts and tubes in it, probably from downed American airplanes, English, Russian, German, Italian and some other nondescript items in it as well!

I set out to work this beast into a workable machine. The accompanying package contained a bunch of spare vacuum tubes, mostly of Russian make. I tested the tubes first, I needed some tubes for my clandestine transmitters at home. About half of them were tested OK, those ended up at my residence - I accepted them for "Socialist Safekeeping". The rest was to be given back to the sender; they are bad. No lie here.

I had a hard time making that pile of junk to work. The Hungarian television service was in an experimental stage at the very beginning, twice a week for about 4 hours the very small power station played an old-old worn-out noisy movie picture over and over again. I had to wait days until I could even think of seeing something on that 5-inch black and white worn out dim 'picture' tube.

I tweaked that thing as much as I could to make it at least show something. Then the time came to take it to the factory for a final check. Only the KGB pressure made the test possible, the management of the factory wanted to do nothing with this project. I don't blame them. Finally, I arrived with the set and I was clearly laughed out of my trousers. They looked at the set, at me - repeating this about five times, the engineer in charge then told me to place the set on the bench myself, he did not even wanted to touch it. In his mind, the engineer transferred the nonexistent qualities of the set to my person, I could clearly feel that. Of course, there was no description or schematic with the set, one had to invent his way in the mysteries of this kludge. I helped him to identify the circuits, I knew this set by now. We spent about 4 hours trying to make that box work better, but it was a futile effort. The set was just as poor or maybe worse after the alignment. Actually, I was surprised that it worked at all. Back to the lab, for realigning the circuits, the heck with everything.

On the adjacent benches very nice modern-looking sets with large screens were worked on, the products of that factory. They worked quite well under the circumstances. I was ashamed, deflated and disgusted with this whole affair, but I had to do it.

I had the set turned on all the time during working hours and waiting for the scarce transmissions. I had to rig up a temporary antenna on the roof of the laboratory. This project was a disaster.

The KGB would ask for the delivery date every week twice. In my agony, I agreed on a date - as much as I did not want to deliver a junk pile, I had to get rid of it - the sooner the better. The KGB officer in charge called me on the phone and we decided on the delivery. "The white **Pobeda** (Russian made sedan) will arrive at your home at exactly 4:30 PM. You must be ready and immediately board it with your tools. The car will not wait more than 10 seconds.' Now **that** is something. I spent all my effort to make this thing go, and now they will not wait more than 10 seconds! I was deeply hurt. I did not know why this rigor was, but later I found out.

The car arrived exactly as said. There were 4 KGB officers in it including the driver. The set and the tools went into the trunk where a pile of submachine-guns and hand grenades were supposed to be stored. There were none. This car was probably designed for 4 people, but I had no choice, I had to sit between two KGB officers jammed in the tight space in the back, sitting on an explosive powder keg. **Literally** – as it turned out.

The car started out and we were along toward one of my most memorable trips ever. The KGB Lieutenant to my left occasionally pulled out a small piece of paper from his left jacket's pocket, looked at it for a few seconds, looked at his watch, mumbled something in Russian and replaced the paper again. He repeated this scene several times during the trip. I was getting curious: what is he doing? It sounded like praying! Praying by a KGB officer in Communism? Finally, I could not contain myself and asked him, what is going on. 'There are passwords which change every 27 minutes. The passwords will be asked by the Russian guards. The wrong password, and the machine-guns will be turned on automatically. No second chance.' I understood the gravity of the situation. I did not talk to him after this in a hope that he will concentrate on the code. It would be messy to die in a small Russian car for nothing.

The car took us to Rose Hill, the area where the millionaires of the past lived in their posh mansions. Now it was the property of the Russian 'elite'. The serpentine road leading up the hill is full of nearly 180-degree tight turns, one could not see ahead what lies beyond the turn. Before the first turn a Hungarian policeman with a tall musket, bayonet affixed, stopped us. The driver showed a paper and the policeman saluted - go! Local mortals were not allowed to enter the inner sanctum of the Russian power nest. Not even the policeman. As the car started up the hill, the KGB officer on my left again pulled out his paper, looked at his watch, mumbling again. From now on he was fixating on his wristwatch, did not take his eyes off the time piece. He started perspiring and I noticed that his hands started trembling slightly. Coward KGB - I thought. Can't I find somebody brave in this world anymore? Even the KGB is turning shy? I got disillusioned of the KGB even more now.

The next turn was refreshingly different: 3 Russian soldiers with machine-guns and hand held radios stopped us. One of them stopped the car and approached us. One of the others was talking on the radio, probably announcing our arrival, and checking for clearance. A Russian jeep was parked a bit further away with a mounted machine gun covering most of the turn, a soldier at the gun. The other two guards backed up to about 20 feet and aimed their machine-guns at us, guns cocked. The officer was not lying - maybe the first time in his life. He rolled down the car window and told me the password. The Russian soldier backed off, saluted and gave a signal to proceed. The officer ordered the driver to be sure and keep the speed limit: 5 kilometers per hour; about 3 miles per hour. After all, we have to give a chance to the Russians to shoot us in case they change their mind in letting us to proceed. Should there be a sudden radio order to the guards - maybe even mistakenly - and we don't exist anymore. This time not the Worker's Paradise, **the real one!** Or, accidentally stepping on the gas, giving the signal that we want to attack. As we were



climbing up the hill at the speed of a sick snail, the next turn was approaching. The KGB officer yelled at the driver to slow down even more - the time change is going to happen in 10 seconds and a new pass word has to be said or else. He studied his paper again and he said to me that he did not want to give a chance to the misinterpretation of the exact time, his and the Russian guard's watches may not be synchronized together. It was a very good idea. As we entered the new time zone, we were going into a tight turn again. At the end of this turn again a bunch of machine-gun toting Russian soldiers made us stop. The new correct password was told - obviously because I am still alive. As I looked forward through the front window, I was looking down the cannon barrel of a Russian T-34 tank. The cannon turned all the way down, covering our car from close range. A soldier was manning the heavy machine gun mounted on the tower aimed at us in full battle readiness with earphones on him and hands on the trigger. I took a look at 'my' officer who was now profusely sweating. He was snow white and very nervous - I wonder why? This is **your** system, enjoy it!

The guards let us go and now I had a chance to look a bit around. I saw good looking women officers in clean uniforms (the first time), some plain clothed women, probably the wives of the Russian officers and I noticed that all the street signs were in Russian as well: Lenin Boulevard, Stalin Street, etc. with Cyrillic letters, I could read them. The Russians converted part of Budapest into their city, nobody knew what was behind the tight serpentine turns. Now I knew, as well as my friends.

The car slowly stopped at the designated Russian address in front of a magnificent mansion: stone and ornamented stylish classical wrought iron fence, thick bushes covering up the sight beyond the fence gate to the windows and door level, and a beautiful building. As we slowly started to disembark from the car, all of a sudden two machine-gunned Russian soldiers appeared apparently from nowhere and with cocked guns demanded yet another password. My officer - wobbly as he was now still performed flawlessly, survival instinct no doubt - and we were allowed beyond the gate.

As we approached the entrance between the immaculately manicured bushes the door swung open and a Russian soldier saluted the crowd. He ushered us in and told us to wait. I looked around and I could tell that the room decoration, the Persian hand-made carpet, the curtains and all the fixtures were expertly done with class. I could not identify any of the paintings, but they looked authentic classics. There were plenty of rich people living there before. In a few seconds the boss appeared: a six-foot-six very large Field Marshal, a four-star general with a smiling jovial red (!) face. A typical Russian bear. He appeared to be very friendly. A perfect camouflage. That is why he is the boss. The KGB interpreter explained who I was and the general shook hands with me with a happy smile. My small hand completely disappeared in his enormous strong hairy hand, nearly crashing my bones. I prefer this type of a handshake to a slimy chewing gum type, however. For a moment I felt like a miserable helpless worm nailed to the wall. But only for a second. He clapped his hands with a grandeur (he must have seen some Hollywood pictures before like the 'King and I', Yul Brynner would be proud of him now) and a Russian soldier appeared instantly with a large tray of vodka shot glasses filled to the rims. He took a glass and motioned me to be next. I considered this gesture as an honor. I asked the KGB to excuse me, I would rather drink **after** the business. If anything went wrong, I could have been in trouble - doing business with the top dog while intoxicated. I was trying to be cautious. The Field Marshal started laughing with the voice of an unrestrained wild bore. He never heard of such an idiotic stupid excuse. (I understood his comments in Russian). Refuse a free vodka? **My vodka?** - these Hungarians are nuts! **Nitchevo!** - nonsense, he said. Now I had to preserve my Hungarian pride and prestige and took the glass with a flair, shadowing his and greeted the gracious and possibly slightly drunk host and we all poured down the fluid in a second flat. It was a very good vodka, top quality, in his position he could not afford to drink inferior stuff, I do not

blame him for this. Everybody is equal in Communism. As I was getting down to the business, he started laughing and said: *Stoy!* - stop, one vodka is no vodka! Stylishly, another clap and a new tray of vodka appeared instantly. The serving soldiers must have learned the procedure and performed as expected to the delight of the Marshal. Not a bad job, filling glasses with vodka the whole day. I could see his pride on his red face and nose: see, I trained my men to perform on the dash! We all saluted with the glasses and the vodka suffered the same fate as the previous batch. *Now* he was ready.

I told the KGB to retrieve the set from the car before I got drunk, including my tools. I did not want to face the trigger-happy guards again. Getting coward, I think. A soldier went out to get the machine. I was hoping in secret that he would trip over and smash that garbage to smithereens, so I don't have to explain why the picture is so bad. But the soldier was very careful, he wanted to stay alive. I had the set placed on a beautiful small French provincial table provided for the occasion covered with a hand made expensive lace work. The Marshal was a capitalist judging by the style he commanded, he probably did not know this. On the other hand, maybe he did. I was hesitant to comment on that. Through the interpreter I told the boss that the set was an inferior German product which can not stand up the rigors of time any more and the Hungarian TV is very poor too, just started to experiment with the stuff and is in its infancy. I was totally factual about these things, and maybe the first time, dealing with Russians, I did not have to exaggerate the facts. I told him not to expect a lot out of this box. He understood the problems and gave an approving nod with his giant *red* head.

The demonstration went well according to what could be expected. The picture was miserable by our standards or by anybody's standards and I told the Marshal that he should get a better antenna (I had not had the faintest idea what kind of antenna he had, nothing was visible from the entrance), send this set back to the Germans and get a newer model instead, Comrade General deserves a better TV! He said I was right, that this is a good idea, he has to go to Germany in the middle of the next month anyway. The interpreter translated every word the boss said - naturally. A top military secret revealed to Paul the Hungarian TV man suspected America sympathizer, unintentionally! A military person's whereabouts of his rank and position is a top secret. I realized this instantly and wanted to leave as soon as possible before they discovered the goof-up. I was not entitled to overhear this. One extenuating circumstance prevailed, however: we all had a few vodkas in ourselves and that mellowed the awareness of the officers. I was not an officer, I noticed this. The Field Marshal thanked me for my efforts in trying to make that box work and gave a last signal: the business has to be sealed with another libation. So it was. That vodka tasted very good. The driver got nothing. I gave the bag of bad tubes back to the owner and saluted goodbye.

On the way out of this inferno the same routine repeated with the guards except now it was dark outside and anytime we were stopped, a powerful searchlight was turned on, blinding us temporarily, on purpose. This was not to have any funny ideas in our little Hungarian heads, KGB or not KGB in the darkness which were not in line with the strict Russian protocols. They knew that we hated them.

The car delivered me home. As I was trying to get out of the car sandwiched between the sweaty KGB officers, some heavy objects fell on my foot. I looked down and saw a Russian issue fragmentary hand grenade. If detonated, the force of the explosion would have blown the car including us to bits, all passengers would have been killed instantly by the air pressure, the ensuing gasoline fire and the million sharp metal fragments thrown in all directions with high velocity. This type of grenade is labeled as 'anti-personnel' to inflict the maximum damage on the victims. It works very well; I saw these in action during the war. In addition, the shock wave of the explosion would have set off the other grenades and ammunition in the trunk in case they had stuck away a few, this is called 'sympathetic detonation'. Was not too sympathetic to me at the time. Now, don't get me wrong, I do like fireworks, but only from a

distance. The profile of a coward Hungarian. We would have been called the 5 scorched and melted Hungarian Swiss cheese merchants - on our funerals. I wonder if they buried with us the holes too the grenades would have punched through our bodies. Fortunately, *the safety pin was only half way out*. Apparently, the grenade was pinched in place by its safety pin which had a metal ring at the end allowing the easy extraction of it. It must have been dangling under *my seat* during all this time. If we had hit a hole in the pavement or the driver had to apply the brakes hard, the pin most probably would have come loose by the weight of the grenade. Well, obviously, it didn't. I picked up the grenade and pushed the pin back fully, safing it, while the horrified KGB officers were silently looking on. They immediately realized the situation, of course, which left them speechless. They were at *my* mercy at this point. I told them that this whole thing was not necessary, the set was delivered anyhow. They looked at me with the stupidest expression, they did not understand the pun - or did not want to. They were too stupid and horrified to try to understand Paul's remark anyway. The grenade was probably lodged under my seat (exactly under my rear!) and got dislodged somehow when the car came to a halt, moving the seats we were sitting on. I smiled - as always - and stepped out of the car and with a gentle and affectionate motion I tossed the grenade back into the car and waved goodbye to the officers. As a reflex, they jumped out of the car, looking at me with hate and disbelief. They did not have time to think, not knowing whether the grenade is safe or ready to blow up. They were also disarmed; they were not allowed to carry firearm into the wolf's lair. I knew that. Then they picked up the grenade, put it in the trunk and left, swearing. It is nice to be able to throw a grenade on the rats you dislike! Even if it is secured.

As the car left I ran up to my apartment and threw the tools in the corner of my living room and went out to wash down the Russian vodka with another fluid and to dullen the latent image in my head of looking down the barrels of loaded weapons of all denominations practically the whole day - pistols, rifle, submachine-guns, heavy machine-guns, and a cannon, not to forget the grenade. Any small slip on part of any of the players involved - soldiers or not - would have wiped out us all.

I was instructed by the KGB not to say anything to anybody about what I saw and experienced. In the company of my friends that night, however, this warning seemed to have no more power over me than a squashed snail run over by a T-34 tank would have, the extended libation helped too, I think. I recounted all the details of the Russian experience to my trusted friends. Just in case I disappear, the legacy of a grand experience will live in the memory of my pals. We had no idea what the Russians were doing up there on the elegant resort mountain, now some of us knew. I felt it was my duty to tell what is going on in our (?) country.

I continued to drink vodka - not as good of course as the Marshal's, but it did the job. On the way home in the streetcar, I was smiling and quietly singing some happy songs - I survived again. Let us see, what the next day will bring - finally I may have some excitement next time in this dull world. People looking at me smiled too, another drunkard, they thought. They were only partially right. After all, the Russians are here in Hungary by force, it is our country, if they don't like the scene and the people in it, why don't they leave? We all drank to that all night!

The next day not one but two KGB officers showed up, wanted to know how things were going the day before. I briefly told them that everything was going OK, the Field Marshal seemed to be satisfied but on my recommendation he will acquire a better set. I knew - due to compartmentalization - that these two were connected with the project. They must have been briefed before, because as I finished my report, one of them said that I did a good job, but throwing a grenade at the officers was a bit overdoing and against the rules. Not against *mine*, but I did not have to tell them, they knew this already. They watched me

intently with an intimidating look for my answer (ha, ha, ha). They did not know me, otherwise they would not have told me about the grenade.

I very calmly said that if they look up the corresponding military regulations (I had no idea of the military regulations whatsoever, of course) governing such operations, they will find that a vehicle entering Russian High Command territory must be searched at least twice and certified for safety by the commanding officer immediately before the operation commences. Allowing a live grenade to dangle by its safety pin is highly irregular and should have been caught by the inspectors. This was not done and this irresponsible officer allowed the car to proceed endangering not only all passengers, but the Russian officers as well. I looked at them as if they were totally surprised and slowly but surely deflated. Then I raised my voice, angrily screaming and looking at them with a fury in my eyes: just suppose Comrades, if the grenade went off when parked at the entrance of the Field Marshal, tearing him to pieces and burning his house down to the ground, killing scores of Russian high-ranking officers too! Comrades, where would you be today? You go back and study the rules before you even think of undertaking such a venture again. This was a very poor showing. Did I make myself clear? I was screaming by now very loud. Do you suppose, I should send a note about this affair to the Russian High Command?

Of course, I had not the faintest idea about military procedures of this sort, but I could deduce it from former exposure to KGB paranoia.

The two just stood there with pupils wide open - I could see the dark stupidity inside their heads though the eye openings. They wanted to chew me out - I had news for them. Just then they realized that they got more than they bargained for. When they finally recovered, they assured me that they will do exactly as I said and thanked me for the valuable advice. I also told them that just for the tremendous respect I have for our Socialist Defense Forces, the KGB in particular, I do not consider further action in this matter. I will *not* notify the Russian High Command of this sabotage on part of some irresponsible officer - I don't know if he is an American spy or what - I consider the matter closed. Again, they just stood there with their stupid faces, unable to say anything for seconds. We were not allowed to carry photo cameras in the building - I wish I had one at hand. The picture of these two for sure would have made the first prize on any international exhibit. Again, my answers were not in their manual. I was supposed to be timid and remorseful, trembling, begging for mercy, crying and admitting my terrible violation of the rules and here it is - he is giving *us* the shaft! Then they left in a hurry, taking the steps down by the 2 and 3 on the stairs. I never heard from them again and I never found out that if they ever studied the books - probably could not read anyway.

The manager and the chief engineer came in the lab shortly after this episode and I had to retell the whole story. They got a chuckle out of the Marshal's vodka party. Then the manager asked me: 'what the hell did you say to those two KGB Comrades? They stormed in my office and with trembling voices they wanted assurance that they will not be reported. Reported for what? They were so excited they could not utter a cohesive sentence!' So, very calmly, with my most phlegmatic stance, I told them about the grenade affair. The manger's face got white now. Are you sure? - he asked me. Ask the guys in the car, they will tell you! - I replied, I think by now they are also aware of the mess they created. My friend, the chief engineer got very mad and disgusted - he disliked the whole secret police business Communism included anyway - expressed his concern over the whole thing and very positively told the manger that under no circumstances will he consent to such a project again, this was a big mistake, thanks to Go.. ..to me, nothing happened. Why friend, why do you want to take my fun away? He said about the same thing of this subject: what if the grenade went off - we all be in jail and who knows what would happen after that with murder charges on our heads concerning the Russian High Command! The manager was visibly

shaken now - he thanked me for my enlightening exposé, and they started out the door. He now understood the fear of the two flunkies. The chief, although he had no hand in the affair except that he authorized this endeavor felt guilty now. He could not care about the KGB blowing up themselves with all the Russians included, but he would have caused my death indirectly. To ease his guilt, he said that the next weekend we go out and he will compensate me for the horrors - he will pay for the booze. Good show, chief - you are on! What horrors? He said, go home today earlier and go to bed, sleep off the whole thing. This statement, although it was made in a kind consideration toward me, I found it slightly demeaning. Why should *I* worry, it is *their* problem! I do not worry; I sleep well anytime. then I went home - correction: to our meeting place where good libations are served. Murphy had about a dozen chances, he grabbed none of them. Drunk again on vodka this time?

--- a not-to-different version of the general's tv:



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## **Motorcycles Can Be a Lot of fun.**

*(if you don't make stupid stunts)*

A colleague of mine came to work with his motorcycle daily and I wanted to taste the *freedom* of going anywhere I wanted to, not relying on public transportation. This *freedom* became contagious. I started to work on the project and indicated to him that I wanted to by his bike for which I did not have the money. He did some side jobs and accepted an offer to provide an amplifier and speaker system for a public restaurant music entertainment, including installation. I made a deal with him to the effect that I would undertake the job and he would get some money too in exchange for the bike. In addition, I would take him out for a dinner, and he could drink as much as he wanted to. He liked boozing up a bit on appropriate occasions, nearly every day, that is. The machine was an old German made DKW, with a 350

cubic centimeter engine. It was an old clinker, older than me, but it was a motorcycle nevertheless and it was very heavy. I had a lot of fun with it when it worked. Due to its old age, it needed a lot of attention - actually a lot of repairs.

I gained experience in riding the machine and decided to want to go into racing, why leave all this talent sleeping in my body when it could be used for more noble purposes. Besides, the roads had speed limits, the speed races did not, girls too used to look up to the daring guys. The idea of *freely* speeding without being ticketed was very appealing to me. No Gestapo, no KGB, no police. It just happened that one of my friends was a racer already. He served in the police force as a motorized expert in keeping the police bikes in order. His father was a legend in the past era of being the best auto and motorcycle mechanic. He studied in Germany and became a master mechanic with a well-equipped machine shop. This circumstance helped me in keeping my bike in running order. Through connections, I could get into a sport club run by the police and KGB. The left hand does not know what the other left one does, typical Communism. If they really had a way to know my sentiments about them, they would have shot me on the spot. My motto: if you *can* beat them, *join* them too. That is how to do it. A few of us would take weekend trips to different places, to the lakes and to the mountains. The girls too enjoyed the unrestrained environment we provided away from the big city and those were happy days.

I managed to make stupid mistakes and to get into all kinds of trouble with that bike, without any deliberate excessive effort – they came automatically, and they came naturally. On one occasion, three of us were going down to the lake for a little weekend fun. We traveled at night when the traffic was light. On a highway with nice trees along, we did about 70 mph; my friends were riding ahead of me. The narrow two-lane highway curving through small villages had deep ditches alongside which normally did not matter. That night, however, this fact had a lot to do with me. Apparently, a big pig was sleeping in the ditch and the sound of my bike and of my friends must have wakened him up, he jumped out of the ditch right in front of me. At 70 km/h and a huge pig in front of me about 30 feet does not allow much time to think. I hit the brakes and turned the bike sideways, sliding along the highway, horizontally. If I had hit the pig with my front wheel square, I would have made a somersault and possibly landed on the highway headfirst, followed by the heavy bike on top of me. So, I hit the beast in sliding into it and bending my bike out of shape instead. This was the only thing possible under the circumstances in avoiding a bigger catastrophe. The pig gave out a horrible squeal and ran away, leaving a trail of blood behind. It took me over a half an hour until I could get the bike unbent and back in running order and cleaning it from the residue the pig left on it - skin, hair, blood. My friends did not notice my absence until later. They came back to see what happened to me, but it was too late - I had things under control by then. This episode not only did not ruin our weekend but livened it up instead; I was subject to a lot of jokes and innuendoes about me and the bloody pig in the dark - it may have been a female, they said.

As I started to roll again, a big black cat jumped in front of me, I nearly missed it. 100 yards later I got a flat tire. I am not superstitious at all; therefore, I must assume that Murphy was impersonating the black cat.

Willie, my alter ego was out of the Hungarian Air Force after he crashed his plane. He had some time on his hands, and we decided to visit one of our friends who was drafted in the Army. We took off on my bike to take a trip about 80 miles away. It was a particularly nasty Sunday afternoon - rain, cold and frost, the rain froze into a shiny mirror of ice sheet on the highway. A perfect day to ride a motorcycle! Halfway down, a Russian made Pobeda sedan was stalled on the road. There were 3 Hungarian KGB soldiers around the car, flagging us down. I had my purple sport warmer issued by the police/KGB sport club under my leather jacket, military boots and leather jacket, and the soldiers spotted it. As 'Comrades', they asked us if we could help them, their car died. It was darn cold, and my fingers were freezing in trying to



diagnose the problem. To help matters, it was getting dark now. I determined that the ignition coil was at fault. They said that there is a spare one in the back of the car, please find it and install it. I got a bit discouraged because the time was running out; we could not get in the military compound to visit our friend if we arrive too late. I opened the rear door to look for the coil, but I found instead a pile of hand grenades about a foot high. I tried to find the item under the grenades, but I gave up. Finally, one of the soldiers unloaded the grenades and found the coil. By now my hands were stiff from the cold. Well, I installed the new part and the car started immediately. The soldiers started screaming in their happiness and the boss told us that he would treat us to unlimited drinks at the inn across the highway where the car stood. It is the only place a car should be allowed to stall. It was very cold inside and out; the grease froze on my hands, and we just could not turn down the offer. We entered, I washed my hands and all five of us (car driver included) had a few shots of rum. We had to hurry now so that we can still catch our soldier friend.

The car left with the very happy KGB, and we started out too. The road was now a solid layer of ice. As I was in a turn on the highway, I heard a crunching noise, the bike shook, and the rear wheel froze up - one of the two rear bearings broke. We started to sail across the lanes and managed to slow down, but not enough. The road was like a greased mirror, not too much could have been done. I had my feet on the ground to balance; my military boots held up to that point. Unfortunately, we slipped off the pavement and landed on the shoulder of the road, tilting the bike with an uncontrollable force and we overturned. Willie made a somersault, flying (once more, without a plane!) over my head hitting his head in a friendly kilometer stone marker. As I tipped over, my foot got caught under the foot holder and the heavy bike fell on me. The weight of the bike slammed me very hard against the frozen ground and I passed out instantly. Willie woke up first and tried to lift the bike off my body. At that point a policeman arrived and helped the process, arresting us since we were exuding the alcohol from our mouth. Actually, I did not know this until later as I woke up on an operating table. The accident happened exactly in front of the only town physician who wanted to cut my boot off, but I refused to allow that, it was my only pair of boots. The foot holder penetrated the boot and my left ankle, crushing the bones in it. I woke up to the pain the operation caused on my leg. So, the doctor pulled off my blood-soaked boot and started to treat my leg which was now swollen up quite a bit. The policeman was looking at this procedure and wanted to take us in. We told him to take it easy; we did not hurt anybody but ourselves. The nice older doctor agreed and told the police to forget the whole thing. The policeman was surprised, filled out a paper and left. I looked at Willie, he had an inch diameter and about an inch high horn on his head, I started to laugh I almost fell off the table. It was black, the result of his love affair with the kilometer marker. All accidents should be organized to happen in front of a doctor's office - Murphy failed again.

We were now too late for our friend to visit, had to go home somehow. This was a very sturdy bike and after an hour of work in the icy rain the bike was in a running order except the rear wheel, which was dangling on one bearing, instead of two, cocked, allowing the wheel to rub against the frame. Then I had an idea (physics again!): I told Willie that he should drive - obviously, my foot was broken - and try to get the bike up to speed no matter how torturous it would be for the motor. If the speed is high enough, the wheel will straighten up due to the centrifugal force, the gyroscope effect will bring us home on one bearing. He was incredulous at first, but we had no other alternative.

The motor almost blew up trying to reach a higher speed due to the braking effect of the wheel. But miraculously, all of a sudden the bike took off like a rocket, the theory worked! As it turned out, we could not make a left turn, the wheel would immediately act up. So, right turns only. We had to plan the way to make right turns only, across Budapest, quite a few miles on icy roads in the traffic, avoiding stopping, we just could not afford to get stuck. Fortunately for us, the rotten weather kept most vehicles off the road, it

was now past midnight. Willie drove the bike through red lights, green lights, yellow lights and we were approaching finally our district. I saw some policemen trying to stop us but they did not dare to follow us, they knew that we will be killed.

All of a sudden a loud noise from the engine and it died. We got off the bike and to our amazement we found that the spark plug, and its cable flew away! In the accident, the spark plug was probably hit with such a force that loosened it and now it was gone! Willie said that he will push the bike to his home and will try to fix it. Fortunately, again, this happened exactly in front of a street-car stop - Murphy must have been sleeping during all this. The last train was to arrive in two minutes, I knew this by looking at the clock at the station, and I took that last train quite a few times myself. I managed to stagger in the station and purchase a ticket home. My leg was hurting; I was in a terrible condition. My jacket torn, my body was covered with mud, flowing down, and mixing with the trail of blood I left behind. This was the last train of the day, elegantly dressed people coming from the opera and theaters frequented this train at this hour. They looked at me with horror and kept a comfortable distance from me, which I liked. I always liked privacy. I sat down on the curb, waiting for the train, which came promptly. The conductor - the first time in my life - did not want to punch the hole on my ticket, it was bloody and muddy, and he did not want to touch it. He must have been a spoiled kid in his youth, he said looking me over that today is free, I deserve it. Of course, I already paid for it. I had to walk but a short distance to reach our house, everybody was asleep already.

I took off my clothes and wrapped my bleeding, hurting swollen broken leg in a large cardboard sheet, which was one of my father's rifle-shooting practice target, forming a tube around my leg. I plugged the end of the tube with rags to prevent the blood oozing out of it and soiling the bed. I did not want to go to the hospital and wake up the sleepy doctor on duty. Always been an altruist.

Next morning my father asked me what happened, seeing the protruding blood-soaked paper tube. I told him about my experience. He smiled, he said that that this is an occupational hazard, every sign pointed to that this would happen, take care - he had to go to work. I staggered to the doctor's office which was close by, leaving a trail of blood. The young doctor who hated motorcycles started screaming at me and called me all kinds of names from idiot to much worse. He applied a temporary bandage and gave me a paper to report at a certain hospital downtown for an x-ray. I waddled to Willie's house, he was now in the process fixing the bike, and we needed a new bearing. I told him about my condition, and we set out to the hospital. In Communism, you are not entitled to get an ambulance if you can move. According to them, in Socialism the supreme value is the people! Thanks. So, we got on the streetcar, 40 minutes later at the hospital we waited 2-1/2 hours to take me in, they took X-rays, then I had to go back to the hospital for a cast. The young doctor continued his tirade against me, for which I started to laugh hysterically. This upset him so much that he said he would throw me out. I told him that it is OK, but then he has to lick up my blood from the floor and shut up because I kick him in the shin with my good leg. I made it clear that he was hired here to take care of patients and not to bitch non-stop. He shut up and put a cast on my leg with his teeth grinding, treating me very rough. He said so himself, it was for me to remember motorcycling. It was a beautiful heavy white plaster cast.

I walked out and went to see how the motorcycle was coming around. Willie was able to find a bearing and we put the thing together. We had to try out the bike, so I got Willie sit in the back and we went for a ride, with my left leg sticking out straight. The machine was back to life. Several foot patrol policemen who saw this and wanted to flag us down, but I was in no spirit to stop after I regained my *freedom* again to roam around. I did not stop; I wanted no more sermons for the day. They were trying to take my license number, but I was going too fast for that and disappeared from sight before they could get their pencils out, even if they could read.

My foot started to heal and unannounced my boss visited me to see how I was doing. I told him what happened and that I will be out for 2 months or so. He said that a lot of work accumulated and asked me if I could go back to work sooner. For a little extra money, honey. He laughed and said that it is a deal. I will start in 2 weeks. I needed a little free time to play around. Those were happy days, I managed to totally disregard pain, I did not let pain interfere with my happiness. Mentally I isolated pain from my body; it is the pain's problem or my foot's, not mine. This philosophy seemed to work, only when I forgot momentarily about it, started hurting. Induced schizophrenia? Who cares?

Then, a checker came to see me if I was indeed ill. Of course, I was not home, I was motoring. My mother was very upset about this and said that the man will be back next day. These people were sent out by the government to assure that no **corruption** is going on by people announcing sickness while they are not ill. I was waiting for this man impatiently the next day because I wanted to go motoring. He came and told me that he has to terminate my sick leave because I was not home when he came, obviously, I am not as ill as I pretend to be. I pointed to my leg in the cast, but *that* did not mellow him. He noticed radio parts and associated equipment lying around and asked me if I fix radios. It was not allowed by the government rules. I told him that I do not fix them, but I could make an exception with him because he is an important person. He jumped on the opportunity and promised to bring his radio down the next day. I told him that the set will be fixed free, no matter what is needed to restore it, see me in about 3-4 days and if I am not home, just take the repaired set. He changed his mind about reporting to me, we both were happy and **happiness is no corruption!** His radio was gone a few days later; I was not home at the time when he came, of course. End of this story.

The following is a demonstration of how some people disregard anything sane. Motorcycling among traffic on a public street ***standing on top of the seat with one leg and doing the spread eagle*** - body horizontal, arms stretched. I used to do this in my youth on the ice with skates. It worked then; it should work now on the motorcycle too! Well, it worked for awhile, but when I was coming down to sit again, I had to evade a car which' driver almost hit the curb in amazement - he watched me instead of the road. I had to jump off the motorcycle and by holding on to the handlebars, I tried to run along. The theory was perfect, but not the speed - about 30 mph. I had to take huge steps and in this process I sprained my 'good' foot, along with the previously broken one. Now both of my ankles swelled up equally. I did not complain, I like to live a balanced life. My friends who watched this expressed their concern that that evening we were planning to go from house to house and give serenades to the girls in our group. I assured them that I would be there. The girls, after learning that despite my condition, hopping along, still sung to them, I gained again a little more mucho status. This did not bother me, I earned it. In the months to follow I also earned some gold medals in racing. I did speed races solo and sidecar, 24-hour endurance races and motocross, the real hard one.

It was sometimes 20 degrees below, we would get up 4:30 in the morning, go to the outskirts of the city where the races were held and with spiked/chained tires we would race up and down small icebergs, snow and through frozen-over creeks. Frozen over, until the bike was in the middle of the creek, then the ice would break and had to fish it out from the icy water and continue the race. One time the race was so hard pushing the heavy bike up the ice that I started sweating at that low temperature, after falling into the creek. I finished the race by shedding my leather jacket - it was too hot; all my underwear was soak and wet - from sweating! At the end of the course, a trailer was waiting for us with hot tea and a nice warm oven. You may think this was a test of courage, skill, endurance, and character. Interestingly enough, we did not think along those lines whatsoever, did not even cross our minds, it was just clean fun! Are you a man, or what?! If it was solely to prove the qualities mentioned, probably we would never have done it.

Many a people who knew our affliction said that we were just plain idiots. They had a good point. Take your pick.

An endurance race under bad weather conditions really put me to the test. I raced with a Czech bike, a 250 cc Jawa. It was a good bike, but the drive chains were probably made out of soft butter or similar. We called it a Socialist night-pot steel. On a muddy terrain, where the going is rough, the bike has to put out a lot of power to propel the bike with the passenger. The mud would accumulate under the fenders and effectively rub against the tires. It is like driving with the brakes on. Every so often I had to stop and chisel the mud out to allow the wheels to turn freely. Then the chain would elongate, and the slack had to be taken up every 25-30 miles to prevent it from jumping off the gears. Pretty soon the chain stretched so much that it was impossible to compensate for the stretch, it was jumping off the sprockets all the time. That meant that one had to stop, take the chain off and remove a link, making it shorter. The process with luck takes about 15-20 minutes, a bad loss of time. This worked once, but when the second link had to be taken out, the chain gaps did not match the sprockets anymore, the chain was riding on top of the sprocket, not in it. One had to take it easy and go very slow, of course one would come in too late to the check points.

After such a chain link removal operation, a Russian tank column caught up with me. They were apparently on an exercise mission. The mud was about 4-8 inches deep, and the poor bike had to labor hard. The third-rate dirt road was very narrow; it was made for horse carriage traffic. The tanks could go faster than I (did not have a chewing-gum chain) could and since they did not slow down, they started passing me. I had but about 8 inches of muddy road surface between the tanks and the ditch as the tanks would come up behind me. It was impossible to stop now. One slip and I end up under the tank treads. Fortunately, I just fixed the chain. If it had fallen off now, I would have been in trouble, sliding all over uncontrollably, possibly under the tank treads. All I could do is now to purposely drive into the ditch to save my neck, but that solution did not turn me on. It was questionable if I could get out of it ever. So, I put my right leg on the tank in passing and let me be pulled along. There was a steel guard or something in front of the tread that was the place. I had to watch not to allow my leg to slip, or else say goodbye to it. Or the bike not to get too close. A 4-inch clearance was maintained, and I made it. As the road widened, I let go the tank and followed them instead.

We would get a map showing the route of the race to be followed with checkpoints marked on it. We had to report in at these check points at exact times, plus or minus 10 minutes allowed. One could not go in sooner, because it would have meant that the racer was officially speeding, disqualifying him. We had no female contenders. A large clock was arranged about 50 yards before the check stations, one could wait there if needed before entering the check zone. The area before the check zone was safe, racers waiting there were not officially considered as speeders. Very interesting.

It was heavily raining, it was cold. Despite this, a lot of village folks came out to see these mud-covered demented individuals. We call this sport. A police officer doctor was present with a nurse at these stations, they would turn your eyelids inside out and squirt a pink disinfectant fluid on your eyeballs, to wash the mud out of the eyes. We wore goggles but after a few minutes in the mud following traffic they had to be taken off - the mud completely covered the glass and blocked the vision. Upon leaving the stations, a chocolate bar was given to the racers to get their blood sugar up a bit and a little extra energy, and not as the grand price.

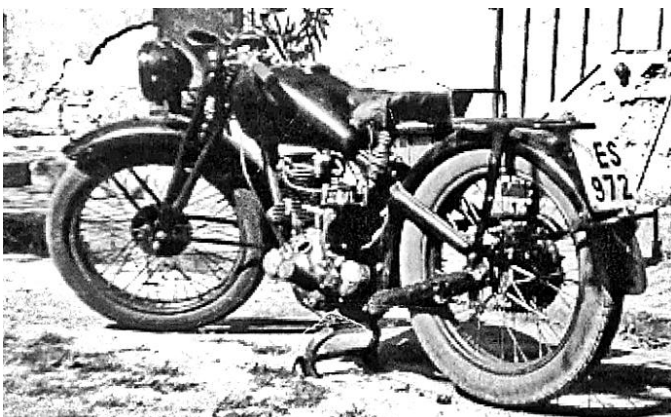
I was ready to pull in one of the check points and as I switched to a lower gear, the chain jumped off (again) the rear wheel and blocked it. I fell but held on to the bike, revolving on the muddy road, swirling and sliding toward the checker police officer. I stopped exactly where I was supposed to stop – normally of course without falling. The motor was still running, he looked down on me in the mud, he started to laugh,

I reached down in my pocket to present my card. He hurriedly put it into the punch machine, gave the card back and said that I just made it; I had 5 more seconds without losing points. The village folks watching this circus production were enthused and I got hearty applause. I waved back to them from the mud. Then I had to take the chain off, etc., etc. I did not come in with gold that time. I did not come in with anything, except with an exhausted body. Just the body. It was now late evening when I got home at the slow pace I had to follow to avoid the chain from falling off. I decided that I didn't want no more of that, I had enough for the day, it was getting dark anyway – and I had no light on the race bike. The cold, the icy rain, the torture of fighting the way through the mud and the vibration literally paralyzed my hands, they turned white, and the blood left them. I pulled in and tried to stop the motor under my window, leaning against the wall. I could not get off the bike, my hands and arms were totally disobedient to my will, could not let the handlebars go. Total arrogance on part of my body parts, I diagnosed. After sitting there tired in the cold for a half hour in the hope that my hands would be getting mobile again, I decided that it was a futile effort. I had to ditch the bike, let it fall over on the side with me on it, so I could separate myself from it. It was past midnight now. Finally, I could turn off the motor and I crawled away and up the stairs, leaving the bike on the ground, I simply could not lift it. Tomorrow is another day; the bike will probably forgive me for this rude behavior of mine. I felt ashamed. Sorry, bike. I had to open the door with my, elbows, my hands just dangled there lifeless and that night I had to sleep with clothes on the floor, could not even undress. A perfect racing day. But we both endured, not necessarily productively this time.

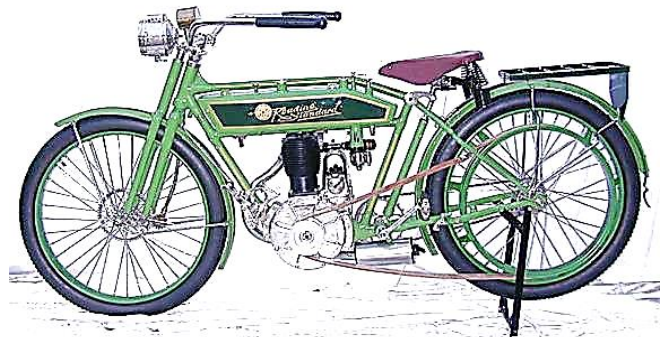
## **SOME FUN MACHINES OF YESTERYEARS.....**



**'My' Czech-made Jawa 250cc club  
racing bike after a 24-hour  
endurance race -  
about November 1955, Hungary**



**My 350cc old German DKW bike**



**And a bike  
from  
another age**

**Ivan.**  
(and 'Paul The Terrible' )

He was my immediate boss at the electronics lab; he was a jolly good fellow, although I did not notice this trait in him early enough. He also presided over my huge 'bailiff'; we were three of us in the lab room. Ivan took a strong dislike of me from day one and turned more antagonistic toward me by the day. His head did not carry much hair and we made some references about this fact by talking to each other with the 'bailiff' so that be sure Ivan could hear it. That did not help either. Ivan disliked the way I dressed - actually the lack of my dress - and definitely hated motorcycles with a deep irreversible passion. He always showed up fully dressed, business-like and he often addressed me as a 'motorcycle bum, a gangster, a filthy unkempt, uncivilized and disrespectful idiot, a gasoline jockey, incorrigible bastard,' etc., etc. I would listen and haughtily laugh at these expressions; I found them not a least bit insulting, considering the source.

One day my huge colleague and I decided to play a trick on him. Ivan acquired a pair of expensive pliers, which he usually kept in his desk drawer, although one day he forgot to put it away. *That* was a mistake. Next day when he left earlier, we took the pliers down to the mechanical department and asked the guys to weld a heavy bolt to the pliers allowing us to bolt it to his desk. The mechanics were very cooperative, they would drop everything to help, to be a part of a joke. They knew me well and if I went to them for a favor like this, they said that all is OK, but I have to inform them of the results. There was no problem with that. Sometimes the mechanical department boss, a super master-mechanic overheard my request. He would shake his head smiling and turn the other way - just report back what happened so they can have a laugh too. At times he would even give advice as to the best way to accomplish the mischief.

We removed the top drawer, and I drilled through his desktop and bolted the pliers tight. On the underside, we applied a big washer and a nut tightened as much as was possible. Then proceeded to bang the end of the bolt with a big heavy hammer, distorting the bolt and the nut, making it difficult to remove.

The next morning, he came in and saw his priceless favorite pliers on the desktop. He, with an energetic grab wanted to pick up the tool, but it was there permanently, he almost broke his fingernail. He thought it was just glued down and tried to pry it loose but discovered that it was ***bolted down***. He let out a swear and looked at me apprehensively with hate in his eyes. He said something nasty, which under the circumstances was appropriate and fully justified. Ivan asked me why I did that. Didn't I know that this was his favorite tool? I said that I knew that, and ***that*** is the exact reason why I picked it. Besides, a lot of things are out of order here lately. He seemed to understand the implication.

As Ivan tried to remove the pliers, he had to borrow a large metal file from the same mechanics who did the welding. At that instant, they realized that the trick worked and told Ivan to take care of the file, please do not weld it to his desk, it is an expensive item! Ivan got furious and started the difficult task of filing the iron bolt under the tabletop in the restricted space provided for the drawer. He worked several hours sweating and swearing, occasionally casting a disgusted look at me. I remained cool, as if he were not there at all. Than I remarked that he is making a lot of noise with this filing business, it is impossible to concentrate on my work. I will not repeat his answer.

Halfway through the bolt removal process, the manager unexpectedly came into the room. I think the mechanics must have told him to pay a visit to our lab, he seemed to know something about this thing. He laughingly asked Ivan, what on earth is he doing sitting on the floor under the desk with a large file in his hand? Ivan turned red from tip to toe and told him what happened. The manger started laughing and told Ivan that a little physical work is good for the blood circulation - he was the captain of the Hungarian



Army water polo team and knew the value of physical exercise. Ivan said nothing and resumed his operation. About an hour later with busted knuckles, he proudly produced the pliers and hoped that it was not destroyed. It was, the pliers' halves were permanently welded together, the mechanics did a good job on it.

Ivan left earlier that day, could not endure my presence any more in the same room. The "bailiff" and I congratulated each other and enthused by the results we decided that a series of lessons are in order for our but mostly for the management's enlightenment. We were altruistic in that.

Ivan did not hide his disgust toward me and started to needle me now on a constant basis. At one point, I told him nicely to quit, but that just intensified his efforts. He thought that I was caving in and it was finally getting on my nerves. On one of these occasions, I got mad and screamed at him that I was going to beat him up after work, motorcyclist style with a chain. I told him that I would do this in front of all employees as they depart the place.

Ivan got white, looked at me for a second and ran out the door. Five minutes later the phone rang, and I was summoned to a meeting hall. The manager, the chief engineer, the secretary of the Worker's Union, the Communist Party Secretary, and of course Ivan was present. "Comrade L..." "No, no, no! *Mister L..* or just Paul!" "OK, OK, Paul. Comrade Ivan leveled a very serious accusation against you to the effect that you were going to beat him up. Did you say that?" "Not only said it, but I am going to do just that after work, of course not on company premises and not during working hours. You and all your friends are invited. I beat up once before an arrogant manager, if you need documentation, I am more than happy to supply the date and other data in connection with that." A total dead quiet descended upon the room. All eyes were fixated on me, with a complete disbelief, particularly Ivan's, he appeared now scared. He thought I would repent and beg for forgiveness. Lesson #2! They, again, were not prepared, underestimated me. I despise unprepared amateurish management, but their response was predictable: my behavior was not listed in the Communist manuals.

They sent me out to wait for the verdict. About 5 minutes later, just when I was already in the process of walking away - who the hell do you think you are, making me wait *outside* the door! - they called me back. My friend, the chief engineer asked me to explain why I threatened Ivan. Very calmly I recounted that the constant needling was becoming upsetting, I found it difficult to concentrate on my work *in building Socialism*, I am here to build important equipment *for our Socialist People's Army*, (etc., etc., and the rest of the stupid Communist slogans, according to *their* manual). There can be no rebuttal against the officially propagated slogans. Again, they were caught unprepared. They looked at each other befuddled and asked Ivan if my statements were true. He begun now sweating and started to defend his position, losing the argument in that this was an indirect admission on his part. The chief engineer stood up for a good measure - he was a very good looking impressive tall man - and asked me if I was willing to apologize Ivan for what was said. I smiled as always, replied that it is OK with me but only if he is doing the same, and guarantee that this childish needling will stop. After all, Ivan is a nice guy, just has to be squeezed out of him like toothpaste from the tube, which I did. Ivan was now glowing in happiness; he did not think that he would get out of this jam *that* easy .

We apologized to each other, and the chief told us to shake hands too, we did. I told Ivan on the way out that he carried himself splendidly, even admirably. My words sounded hollow, totally empty, but I said that anyway. He did not reply.

About a month or two later, when the excitement of the 'pliers affair' and the wrestling match story subsided already, Ivan told us that a specified day he had to go to a very important meeting after work to Headquarters. If I am correct, this was a top level gathering to decide on budgets, etc. My colleague and I looked at each other synchronizing our thoughts in a fraction of a second without saying a word. In a short

conference we decided that this was an excellent opportunity for lesson #3. There is a saying in the Old Country: 'Three is the Hungarian Justice'. Nobody knows why .

On the set day Ivan arrived in his best business suite, white shirt, tie, etc. By this time, we were already prepared. He put his jacket in the small clothes' cabinet and just before quitting time, he had to go down to management to discuss last-minute details. We did our trick and left for the day. Except for our lab, the whole plant was secured with locks, chains, and seals. We went home with excitement and anticipation, what will the next day bring in the top-secret Army lab?

Next day Ivan showed up late because the meeting stretched into late night. At about 10:30 a.m. the door opened slowly, Ivan appeared with a desperate grin on his face, holding a 5-inch diameter shiny brass sheriff's star in his hand! He looked at me, my colleague and could hardly contain ourselves. Instead of screaming at us, he started to laugh and replayed the scene the night before, interspersed with some unkind expressions. The manager did not know anything about sheriff stars or sheriffs, Ivan had to explain the significance to him.

We, with the help of the mechanics, fabricated the big shiny star stamped in with large letters "SHERIFF" with a welded bolt on the backside. We pushed the bolt through the jacket's lapel buttonhole and applied a big strong washer and a nut, tightening and hammering the bolt and nut flat - it was impossible to undo this. Just when he wanted to leave, he discovered our latest artwork on his jacket. He tried to remove it but was unsuccessful at first. He had to summon management to unlock the mechanical department and had to grind down the bolt on a grinding wheel. The chief engineer and the manager were assisting him with delight, holding the rest of his jacket out of the way of the wheel that it would not be caught and destroyed. So, all three were a bit late to the meeting, but were no other consequences.

Ivan said that first he was very angry at us and was going to attend the meeting with the sheriff star attached to his lapel to show what kind of people he was forced to work with, but he was talked out of this. Although the Communist High Management would have been impressed by the American-style big shiny star, this would not have made things easy on management where everybody was a Communist, except Ivan himself. They may have misinterpreted the whole affair, casting a dubious shadow on the company, its employees and mostly on the Communist management. Firing the whole company management, for instance. Communism does not allow for jokes; it is a *deadly* serious affair. During the day in half hour intervals Ivan would suddenly start laughing without any provocation - he could not get out from under the aftereffects of this beautifully executed artwork. Like a series of aftershocks following an earthquake.

The chief engineer friend and the manager showed up later and were inquiring about Ivan's well-being, they asked with a touch of cynicism if it was not too heavy to carry that big brass star to the meeting. We all laughed; Ivan's eyes were filling with tears from the laughter. He did not like the Communists either and that was a good point in *our* eyes.

Ivan got the message, and he mellowed up a bit. He realized that he would be the only loser in the long run if conditions will not improve between himself and me. One day he announced that an important event in his life will take place on the next week Saturday. It was a family affair, and all family members were invited, he would leave perhaps a few minutes early. In Communism, we had to work six days a week, Saturdays included. I believe this was a wedding anniversary for him.

I thought that it is high time now to set the tone for the future. I always liked surprises, he seemed to accept them too, actually had no choice in that matter. I sent a very big bouquet of flowers and food in a rattan basket, the largest I could find to his address with some expensive booze bottles buried in the flowerbed with a good wish card.

Monday morning Ivan opened the lab door, looked at me and said that he is in the wrong room, slamming the door shut. I just observed the happenings emotionlessly. I knew what this was all about.

Then he stormed in, stopping in front of me and said: you #%(;#&\$%\*\*! I had never thought that something like this could happen. He said that he was having complexes lately in connection with me, could not sleep at night - he did not know what to do about me and now I solved all problems with one stroke. He thanked the nice flowers and the stuff buried under them. I played the phlegmatic and said that he has to accept facts, this is me! He was delighted, gave me a hog, and asked if I would be willing to honor his house with my cherished presence next weekend for dinner, what is my favorite food? When pleased, he would cock his head slightly to one side, like dogs do when they hear a strange noise. This became our greeting signal among us from that day on. We became so synchronized that other people observing the ritual are till today always greatly surprised. Then we would pinch our right-hand thumb and index fingers with our pinkie stretched out from the hand, touching each other with the word: *'perhaps'*, head cocked. The Communist thought this was a secret code to start a revolution, our manager did not seem to understand fun but had no control over our newly discovered custom. Communism is *deadly* serious. Literally.

I accepted happily too and from that day on things became a lot easier. We discussed motorcycles, for which he said that he made some mistakes in his young life too - although not nearly as disgusting ones like riding a motorcycle - but he outgrew them, as opposed to me. We had a good laugh and had a few whiskey shots to wash down the past. Ivan had a very nice and vivacious wife, a good cook too, and two absolutely delightful daughters, about age 6 or so at that time. I still see them when I close my eyes as the first time I saw them: light blue pleated short freshly ironed skirts, beautiful white blouses, white socks, black shiny shoes - like two identical little angels. I was impressed; I did not know that he could do something like that.

Any time I visit Hungary, after I settle in for an hour, I call Ivan, for which he: 'I want to see your ugly stupid rotten face, you motorcycle jerk! When the hell are you coming to see us, you #\$\$%&\*\*()!' 'It takes 40 minutes on the bus, you bald #\$\$@+@\*\*(&! A big hog upon arrival, the shot glass is full already before entering, at the door. He is one of the nicest guys one could have for a boss or as a friend! I bring some gifts for him every time, sometimes objects not found there. He gave me some ink and aquarelle paintings made by his father who was a well-known architect by profession and a first-class artist in his spare time - my lessons to him paid off handsomely. His huge pictures can be seen in museums in Vienna, Austria as well. The pictures he gave me are the most treasured items I ever owned, outclassing even my motorcycle. I look at them every day, I cannot fill up with enough pleasure looking at them, not to go back an hour later and discover a little hidden new feature, like a Bach or Beethoven masterpiece. Nobody could have given me a nicer present. I feel like getting on a plane right now and having some discussion of the latest news in motorcycles with him. And such is life! We all learn (hopefully).

*Note: Ivan passed away some years ago from cancer. Any time I go back to the Old Country, I call his wife Klára, who always invites us for lunch or dinner. One of the girls is A PhD, the other is in business in England. We all converge at Ivan's and have a ball eating her super dinner and recounting the 'good old days – with proper libations'.*

## **As the Russian Bear Bears Down on Us.**

*(life becomes un-bear-able)*

*Again: There are many humorous things in the world: among them the white man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages.*

----Mark Twain ----

1956. Life - if you can call it that under the oppressive Communist yoke (another white man's invention besides Nazism) - was dragging on its prescribed and brutally enforced track by our captors: very little and poor quality food; merchandise scarce and of extremely poor quality; constant severe shortages and total absence in certain food items and essentials; extremely demanding work schedules with antiquated tools under primitive and unhealthy conditions at very low pay; saturated Communist propaganda 24 hours a day; hardly any fuel to fire up the ovens in wintertime; restricted, measured-out living spaces; confiscation of private property without compensation; secret police presence in every aspect of life - even in 'private' life; people disappearing during night by the secret police and winding up in torture chambers to be annihilated by incredibly cruel methods or ending up in forced labor concentration camps in Hungary or in Siberia; daily enforced compulsory collective 'study' of Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Bible, a patchwork of ill-conceived and hate inspired ideology called 'Dialectic Materialism' based on falsehoods, half-truths and lies; elimination of the intelligentsia from the captive societies and replacing them with a centralized Communist 'elite' giving orders from Moscow enforced by Russian tank divisions and the KGB; putting the Communist Party's interest and the Communist ideology over everything - life, family, education; the restriction of all religions and theories contrary to Marxism - trying to extinguish the notion of the existence of God enforced by Russian guns; installing barbwire and minefields surrounding the country's borders with searchlights and machine-gun towers accompanied by police dog assisted KGB foot patrols to prevent the enslaved people from escaping the Socialist Paradise; ever increasing pressure to produce more-and-more at the ever decreasing buying power of the already meager salaries; attempting to indoctrinate and brainwash everybody with special attention to the young generation, inciting them even against their own parents; prohibition to own property; kangaroo courts to convict people on trumped-up charges if they were judged to be danger to the Socialist Paradise; torture, murder (what they did to my father) and mass murder of innocent people without trials - no evidence necessary; dredging up and fostering destructive emotions like hate from people who will then tell stories - true or not - on other people they don't like thereby turning over the unsuspecting victims to the secret police torture squads; carrying the hate policy even further and turning layers of society against each other under the label of 'Class Struggle', then watching from the comfort of the protection of the Russian Army how people and social groups tear each other to pieces; brutally enforcing a ban on reading, looking at or listening to material other than that of the official Communist propaganda; removing hope from people's mind that the system will change for the better - only empty, unrealistic and evidently unattainable long range promises repeated ad nauseam; banning all art forms except the ones approved and encouraged by the Communist Party censors to further their propaganda campaign in capturing people's minds; subduing people's minds and will power to remove the danger of resisting and revolting against Communism by indoctrination and intimidation; destroying the accepted morals of society and replacing them with the Communist Marxist atheistic 'morals' where, for instance torture and murder of innocent people becomes not only acceptable but mandatory if that promotes the Communist ideology; gross neglect of nature - exploitation of the natural resources without any regard whatsoever to defacing and polluting the Earth; using science entirely for the purpose of dominating the world by Communism; forcing a process on society to eradicate individualism from people and building an utopistic Communist society based upon Pavlov-style conditioned reflexes and on the reality of reprisals and intimidation instilled in the masses reduced to a collection of robots serving fully the whims and will of the Communist Masters - they called this the 'New Marxian Man'; rewriting and falsifying the Nation's thousands of years of history by alleging that everything before was terrible until the glorious Communist Socialist system arrived. The Communist-printed schoolbooks thereby justified torture, barbarism, mass murder and an absolute lack of civilization in the name of Communism - the total terror system, the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' - their own definition.

Due to my job in the military establishment, I had a considerably higher salary than a similar age person in the industry with comparable experience. Even so, I had to spend a full month's salary on a pair of better-quality shoes. Once I bought a less expensive pair, which fell apart the first time I walked home in the rain. The rest of the merchandise was of the same 'quality'. People had to stand in long lines for food in 20 below temperatures, some started the line at 4 o'clock in the morning. By the time the middle-liners got to the front, the food was gone. Undernourished workers died at the machines and workbenches due to complete exhaustion and stress in the Worker's Paradise. Day-by-day the political pressure increased with less-and-less to show. A considerable percentage of people in all the Communist subjugated countries in desperation gave themselves to alcohol. They gave up hopelessly in the quest of a better life. The Commies forcefully took everything out of people: their money, property, pride, history, food, hope, decency, culture, religion, morals - and gave nothing in return but terror and empty transparent absurd phrases and promises. Forced to live in this spiritual, material, and cultural vacuum ambiance something had to happen. And it did.

## **B l o o d   o n   t h e   S t r e e t s   A g a i n   -   t h e H u n g a r i a n   R e v o l u t i o n .**

October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1956 started out just another day on the calendar, but something was brewing underneath in people's souls, which came forth with a tremendous force on that memorable day. About 10 o'clock in the morning, one of our colleges came in our lab from the outside and told us that a strange atmosphere is lingering around on the streets. People became restless and a rumor circulated that University students are planning a peaceful demonstration to show the Communist government that people are fed up with the Communist system and improvements must be made in the official policies allowing free speech, press, assembly, religion, literature, and the rest.

Hour after hour reports reached us through our colleges that something serious is going to happen: an unprecedented grass-roots demonstration challenging the oppressive Communist government. By the time we left our laboratory after 4 P.M., the demonstration was in full swing: the students were on the boulevards slowly marching on. As people came out of the factories and offices, joined the crowd as I did myself. The procession headed toward the commemorating statue of Polish general Bem who was a commander of Hungarian military forces in a past era. The students placed a wreath of flowers on the statue pedestal and read points of demand for freedom. The same thing happened in 1848 resulting in a revolution - that time against the Austrian oppressors. The Austrians were beaten, so they called the favorite whipping boys of the day, the Czarist Russian Army to put down the Hungarian quest for freedom. And they did, executing 13 Hungarian generals and the rest. The bloody Austro-Russian wave of reprisal and terror with all of its hate against Hungary once more engulfed the country.

The students, after reading the declaration, which was followed by a tremendous outpour of approval, informed us that they are now heading toward the local radio station studio and will demand to have the points be read over the microphone. A huge assemblage of people was already waiting there having had the same idea. The studio was located in a narrow street in a multistory building downtown Budapest with a heavy locked door and a balcony. People were in a state of delirium now - is it possible to force the government to give us freedom? The repeated shouting and banging on the huge door resulted in a spectacular but predictable response: KGB guys with machine-guns appeared on the balcony and started shooting at us, totally unarmed citizens. Many people died instantly; more were wounded. Then some hand weapons were obtained from disarmed policemen and the one-sided shooting game continued. A military

ambulance truck with large Red Crosses painted all over was trying to get to the gate, people thought that help came to care for the wounded. The soldier driver of the truck was unwilling to let people examine the contents of the cargo, but the door was forced open, the driver yanked out of the vehicle and - again in true deceptive Communist manner - the truck carried a full load of machine guns, grenades, and ammunition. The KGB was trying to deliver reinforcement to their besieged comrades. The weapons were unloaded in record time and distributed among the people. The bloody *Revolution for freedom* of 1956 was now on.

The goring details of the Revolution are now in the history books, I do not want to go in this in great details, but just to give you an idea of the Russian Communist treatment of us, and I will spend a few words on the subject, nevertheless.

Russian tanks started to shoot at everything that moved. Many of my friends and colleges got killed by Russian tank cannon fire by standing in line for bread in front of a bakery. The tanks just blasted into the crowd *with their cannons*. Russian tanks would demolish multistory buildings story-by-story with their cannons if snipers were suspected in them. People would go down into the cellars to seek refuge, but the Russian tanks knew how to implement Socialism in the Worker's Paradise: they turned down their cannon barrels low and *shot into the small ground level cellar windows*, killing everybody inside. The Russian tanks, World War II vintage, the famed T-34s could be defeated with a burning bottle of gasoline, called the Molotov cocktail, by judiciously throwing the bottle to the engine air intake opening. The motor sucked in the gasoline cocktail and blew it up along with the occupants. Some young teenager kids became experts in this.

A Hungarian tank commander by the name of Maléter took charge of the handful of tanks under his command and started fighting the Russians in the hopeless situation. He was an impressive 6 foot 6 tall officer, who saw the dreadful end of his outgunned tank battalion and the quest for freedom and arranged a meeting with the Russian Command to negotiate the possibility of a quick end to the massacre. As he and his entourage met the Russians, they were immediately arrested and murdered Communist style, according to the Communist morals. People's Democracy, they called this. My 'ex-friend', the Russian field marshal whose TV set I fixed, ordered the heavy artillery to bombard the city, giving orders from above the plush, well-defended mountainside, from the Russian Citadel of Budapest. The shooting continued for many days, further demolishing our beloved city.

In my wanderings in the besieged Capital of ours, I tried to assess the momentary strength and deployment of the Russian forces. On a main boulevard leading to the center of the city, I spotted a caravan of white cars approaching. It looked strange in the midst of the shootings, so I waited to see what is going on. It was a number of ambulance cars with Red Cross painted on them. A team of doctors and nurses in official white smocks sent by West Germany to help what they could. America did not. For a moment, tears came to my eyes: some people still care. Nobody else helped us, not the United States, not any 'civilized' Western country - or Eastern, for that matter - they just watched on TV with a can of beer in hand how we were slaughtered by the one-time allies of the 'Free World'. I halted the caravan and talked to the driver, a medical doctor in the first car. I advised them of the Russian tank and army positions according to my latest information. I warned them of certain routes where heavy concentration of Russian tanks were in action, but they had not much choice in maneuvering, they had to cross a bridge - Russians waiting on the other side. The caravan slowly started rolling again, I was still talking to the doctor, running along the cars, then the caravan picked up speed and went on to fulfill their duty and destiny. I stood there for a moment with mixed feelings - it felt good too experience a morsel of human compassion in the ocean of the Communist horror. I knew I would not see them again alive. Only later, after I came to America did I see them again on TV, as they were slaughtered by Russian gunfire.



Public transportation was of course non-existent those days. So, I walked up the boulevard tracing the path of the German doctors. On a strategically important large square, where the doctors turned toward the bridge, I saw 2 youngsters, ages about 15-16, manning a small caliber field cannon, poised in the direction of the bridge from where the Russian tanks were expected to come. Hungarian humor (HuHu): a cardboard paper hanging on the cannon barrel 'crew under 16 years of age' (in order to preserve the virginity of the souls of youngsters, students under 16 were not allowed to see certain movies). I tried desperately to dissuade the kids from committing suicide. I knew the power of the Russian guns. The small cannon could not penetrate the heavy front armor of the Russian tanks, maybe could scratch the paint on them at best. They would not listen. And the tanks did come, trundling with an ominous thunder on the stone pavement. The kids tried to hit the first tank, which fired one shot, and the two teenagers evaporated with their cannon and all. Fragments of the projectile and the exploded cannon were flying all around. A very good friend of mine, an Army Lieutenant who witnessed the approach of the tanks at short range ran through the gate of a nearby building - too late. One fragment got him and severed his head right off. I saw the fountain of blood squirting out of his body. Stunned and horrified for a moment, I had to take cover. Fortunately, I was not hit by shrapnel. I took refuge behind a 5-foot diameter concrete cylinder used to display advertisements, European style. People were running for cover from the rage of the infuriated Russian beasts in their tanks. Except for a beautiful young girl, age 10-12. She, seeing this barbarism, in her indignation threw a stone at one of the tanks. The tank opened up its machine guns, and that was the end of her. The red beret she wore was still lying on the pavement after the tank left and the little girl's body was removed by bystanders, soaked in her patriotic blood.

At the beginning of the fighting at one point the Russians were beat for about 6 days. Many of them gave up their tanks for a loaf of bread and for a couple of bottles of vodka, armament and all. The Russian soldiers were told by their officers that the hated Nazis invaded Hungary and it was their duty to 'help' their brother Socialist country. Instead, the soldiers saw some young kids and civilians desperately trying to defend their territory from foreigners, the Russians themselves. No sign of the Nazis. Others were told that they were at the Suez canal. We carried the soldiers on our shoulders - they were now our friends - so to speak. Gave them food and booze, painted the Russian insignia over and took possession of the tanks. Some World War II Hungarian veterans could drive them. Then 5000 modern tanks entered the small rebellious, *freedom-demanding* country. Those tanks could not be defeated with Molotov-cocktails. The Revolution for freedom was coming to an end by the action of the Russian Army. Exactly as in 1848.

In the interim period of the cease-fire condition furious efforts were made in trying to free the political victims of the Communist terror. Some Hungarian Army tank man freed the head of the Catholic church, Cardinal Mindszenty who was convicted on trumped-up charges. He was tortured beyond belief. An eloquent orator before, now drugged and beaten, could hardly speak, just gazing with glassy eyes on the ground. Voice of America short wave transmissions speculated that he might have been operated on in the KGB jail to assure an incriminating confession: lobotomy could be done without any outside visible evidence by cutting nerves in the frontal lobe of the brain through the nose cavities with special tools, reducing the victim to a will-deprived vegetable.

It was also discovered that the KGB has built a secret underworld tunnel system below our city, equipped with the indispensable amenity of Communism: torture chambers. Ever fading knocking was heard coming from under the pavement. Attempts were made to locate the entrance to the labyrinths or break through the walls, but the fortresses were built with extremely thick, impenetrable concrete walls. The signaling from the underworld eventually stopped. It was discovered however, that the tunnels were connected in some fashion through the cellars of the heavily guarded surrounding KGB buildings. Time

was running short and the beginning of the second phase of the Russian onslaught did not permit further explorations. Some 'confession tools' were discovered, however. One of them *really* captured my imagination: political victims, after they were physically and mentally tortured, starved and deprived of a single second of sleep for many days were required to sign a 'confession' of being American spies. Sometimes they had to stand naked in a small cell on the toes on a brick stood on edge, the whole floor was flooded with steaming hot oil, stepping off the brick would have burned the flesh off the feet. A powerful searchlight shining in my face day and night, closing the eyes did not help in trying to sleep, the strong light went right through the eyelids. KGB guards taking turns banged on the cell doors at intervals when suspected that the unfortunate victim may have fainted in the confession preparation process. That would have brought the victim back to reality to be able to enjoy more of the Socialist treatment of the **'People's Democracy'**. Due to the tight confinement in the cells, turning around was impossible. Regardless of the outcome of the torture process, the victims were pushed in acid tanks alive adjacent to the torture chambers, dissolving their bodies. All this in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the respected *friends of the West*. Control valves allowed the dissolved body-cocktail to empty in the 'Blue Danube', explaining the occasional sudden death-wave of millions of fish found on the shores of the river. Unknowingly to us at the time when bathing in the Danube River, we were actually swimming in the cocktail of the dissolved bodies of our friends, our countryman. The Russians were much smarter than their Nazi buddies by destroying, dissolving evidence, testimonies of the horrible atrocities they committed against humanity. Forcing glass tubes in body cavities - for both man and women - and crushing the glass in the body with heavy hammer blows and truncheons as well as breaking the bones with specially designed tools for that purpose was known before, was no surprise for us anymore. Everyday occurrence, kid stuff in Communism, in the **'Paradise of the Workers'**. These devices were necessary by the KGB thugs to show the bosses how skillfully and efficiently did they obtained the 'confessions'. Not long ago, Hungarian TV has shown one of the KGB buildings remained where people were destroyed. In freezing subzero temperatures military trucks delivered tightly packed loads of totally naked people - men, women, children to the building at night under the watchful eyes of the KGB. Searchlights were aimed at the surrounding building windows to prevent people from seeing the happenings. The people were unloaded and shoved into the building. According to the eyewitnesses, the one-time KGB men themselves admitted the fate of the people: they were thrown alive into huge meat processors and were ground down alive as meat. *Blue Danube?*

Just when maximum *unity* would have been required, during the 6 days of freedom, political parties sprung up like mushrooms, encouraging the population to join them. A typical Hungarian trait - they are too independent in thinking. The Russians momentarily were beat and immediately the fractionating of the unity started. The placards were handwritten pieces of paper pasted over telephone poles and buildings. I counted about a dozen different political parties. The exhilarating feeling of freedom prompted people to form parties, which of course was impossible under the Communist regime. *Just 6 days of freedom.*

On the other hand, I saw incredible and unprecedented unity in ideas and behavior as well: money collections were made for the families who lost members in the freedom fight - mostly young kids - in emptied huge trash bins all over the city. People like me donated all the money that could be spared. The general consensus was that families of the Russian brutality victims deserved it - they sure did. Bricks and large stones were placed on the tons of money to keep the bills flying away in the wind. Nobody took a bill, although the money-filled bins were *not* guarded - everybody gave. The merchandise in the show windows behind broken glass was untouched. Empty display windows with no merchandise in them carried notes: merchandise was not stolen; it was removed by the owner. A general wave of decency and

identifiable unity came over people - unseen in Communism. It seemed that all the inhabitants of Budapest were on the streets, all 2 million of them: total strangers with tears in their eyes hugging and kissing each other - is Communism dead? Just for 6 days. An incredible sight I will not forget. Then, at that instant, I decided that no matter what happened, I would not live under Communism again. Give me Liberty or Give me Death - became reality for me, without even knowing that somebody already said that in a remote continent called America.

### **RUSSIAN TANKS DELIVERING 'FREEDOM' TO HUNGARY - 1956**



### **RUSSIAN-STYLE HAPPINESS IN THE WORKER'S PARADISE**

### **Running for Life - between the jaws of Death.**

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution for freedom came to an end with the expected finale. The Russians could not afford to let go a slave country supplying a sizable percentage of food for *their* subjugated population, aluminum for *their* airplanes, uranium for *their* atomic bombs and other valuable war material and commercial goods, not to mention the abundant cheap Hungarian slave labor. Some people started to flee the country right after the revolution broke out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October. I waited to see to the last moment possible what would happen. I took over the military command of the laboratory and threw out all Communists, ordering the guards not to let them in. If they were to force the issue, use weapons to keep them out. A few well-aimed bullets can be a quite convincing argument in dissuading them from entering. I knew for sure that they were cowards and would not show up unless they felt safe under the protection of the Russian Army and the KGB, which was not there at the moment.

I wanted to throw out of the premises a particularly slimy and disgusting Communist Personnel Boss in person. He knew that I was now the master of life and death, the KGB was busy hiding from the anger of the population and shooting us and the Russians were busy too annihilating us. He had no protectors now. I burst in his office and noticed the strong burned paper smell, and indeed, I saw the pile of paper burning in the corner. They were my personal files! I missed a minute, and now I was not able to see what was on my secret files about me. I could guess, he was afraid that if I read them I would shoot him. Not a completely unfounded fear. I had some information, however, of the contents and was not surprised to see my files on fire.

Strangely enough, the Communist Party Secretary who was scared to half death now without the Russian protection and 'facing the music' - or maybe to placate me in his sudden 'honesty', had a sense of decency and he himself told me what was on the files: "Independent thinker, America sympathizer with Capitalistic tendencies, therefore a Fascist (!), good worker, intelligent but because of his political views he is unreliable, must be intensively watched and must not ever be allowed to assume higher positions." He was trembling and asked me not to harm him. Previously too he gave me valuable information to save my neck from his Communist comrades and for his luck, I remember this now. I had no problem in the past with this man. He knew that I was contemplating fleeing the Socialist Paradise and since he was a KGB border guard during his military service, he was in possession of vital information about the frontier fortifications. He pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket and drew a picture of the best possible place where I could get through the mine fields to *freedom*. I thanked him and in return, I made him an official of the Swedish (Swiss?) Embassy - by the smeared stamp and official looking signature method which fooled the Russians before. According to the song, it is better the second time around. It worked. He was thankful and left the premises. I told him not to come back for awhile for his own good, until the lost Revolution is over. We both knew that the end was just around the corner.

Yes, you were Fascists, my friends here in America in the eyes of the KGB, like me. The slimy Commie now dethroned *ex-boss* looked at me with a disgusting cynical smile indicating that I came too late. He admitted that those were my files burning and said that nothing can be done now, all the papers are reduced to soot. I ordered him to open the heavy steel vault where the papers were kept before. It was completely empty. At that moment, I recounted point-by-point the stuff I knew was in my secret files. Slimy turned white and started shaking. For about 5 seconds he just stood there and then was trying to edge toward the door. He thought I will grab or shoot him, with his deformed back, he looked like a less intelligent clone of the Hunchback of Notre Dame. I did neither, just spat in his face. He did not even wipe himself, just forced a grin on his rotten face and ran toward the plant exit. I followed him and before he could leave the gate, in a loud voice I gave order to the guard on duty that if this individual shows up and tries to force his way in, use weapon force. The Commie jerk shook and all of a sudden started to emit an unmistakable smell of diarrhea and ran out of the premises. The glorious brave New Marxian Man!

I knew what was in the books for us as a country: history repeating itself again, as so many times in the past - annihilation. I managed to take the Army truck parked in the yard with the transmitter equipment we built in it to a nearby open field. I was fully aware of the Russian radio intelligence's efficient operation, their ability to triangulate me and start to shell me. I was trying to get in touch with the 'Free World' to ask if anybody is coming to aid us in our heroic fight against the Russian Army. Indeed, it took only a few minutes before projectiles started landing around me, exploding in well known loud crashes. I took the truck back. The Russian intelligence was intact, we did not have a chance. A few hours later 2 Russian tanks showed up in front of our laboratory and parked there, turning their cannons toward the laboratory building. I knew then that they detected my transmissions and were able to zero in on me. But, I had the truck back now, locked up, showing no sign of radio transmissions. Any further action against them on my part was impossible, we did not have anti-tank bazookas. The Russian military purposely kept anti-tank weapons out of Hungary because they had a heavy concentration of tanks there. In case of a take-over by the subjugated slaves (as it happened), they could be defeated with their own weapons. One time Czechoslovakia produced airplanes for them, they had limited anti-aircraft cannons. Pretty good planning.

To illustrate the efficiency of the Russian intelligence operations, let me recount an episode from my past as a part of the military organization. I was a member of a team, which had to design radio communication equipment to be used for a special purpose: transmitters in 2 big Russian made limousine

convertible cars to be used for the inspection of the military troops on their biggest holiday on May 1st, on the 'Workers Holiday'. The top Communist brass would travel and inspect the troops assembled on the biggest square in Budapest, stopping at each unit and greeting them through the car transmitters. The voice was amplified and broadcast over a large area through loudspeakers.

In preparation of the project, we had to seek out radio frequencies most likely to be free of interference from other stations, assuring a clear message to the troops. We spent weeks on end listening and logging, searching for quiet spots. The data was transmitted to the military intelligence, which approved the plan. At one of the rehearsals, a foreign station showed up on one of our selected frequencies, getting into our system. I reported this immediately to the attending intelligence officer. He said that wait for 5 minutes; he will let us know what radio station is in question. He went to a phone and in 5 minutes he reported back: it is a Norwegian freighter identified it by name, told us what cargo the ship was carrying inside her belly, he told us the ship's tonnage, registry, the radio equipment on board, the power of the transmitter, the position in the Atlantic Ocean, the speed and direction of the ship's course. The officer asked us if we have other requests. We had none. I stood there in amazement, witnessing this efficient spying operation. I learned later that large military buildings were devoted to this kind of operation, hundreds of Signal Corps soldiers listening 24 hours a day on all radio frequencies, logging and deciphering everything they heard. To monitor inland telephone calls, large multistory buildings were used by the KGB using thousands of tape recorders, listening to and recording in secret automatically every phone conversation in the country! When you picked up the phone, the recorder started to work. The soldiers had to report at the end of each shift what they heard. In case a danger to the Communist State was suspected during a conversation, the KGB would take immediate action, of course. I understood then why so many people disappeared at night not to be heard from them again - they must have said something on the phone that was not agreeable with the Communist doctrines. The general population had no idea that this clandestine operation is going on. I used to give phone serenades to girls over the phone playing American jazz music, which was forbidden in the People's Democracy, in a Communist Paradise. My phone was permanently disconnected by the KGB, could not get it back ever.

As time was running out for me, I had to think of a way to escape from the revenge of the KGB. Communication was nearly non-existent: many radio stations were silent, telephone service was down in many areas, no newspaper. A multitude of rumors circulated, none were credible or provable. Friends related to me that some individuals were looking for me. That can only be the KGB. I changed locations daily to shake them loose. Finally, I said goodbye to my parents and took the road. Transportation was sketchy, trains sometimes came, and more often did not. Sometimes people had to wait half a day or more for the train. Hitch hiking was the main method of transportation in those days. I was able to ketch an overloaded truck going west. That is the general direction I wanted to go, the big KGB motherland is to the east. Most trucks did short distance hauls, so I had to ketch quite a few until I got close to the border. Surprisingly some trains were still operating at that region, near to the Austrian-Hungarian border. As the last leg of my travel, I took that train. The clientele consisted mostly of fleeing Hungarians like me. The conductors on the train very thoughtfully turned off all the lights in the wagons, to be able to hide from the sporadically still operating Russian and KGB units. As the conductor entered our cabin, he scanned the occupants with his flashlight and asked for the tickets. Looking at mine, he said smilingly: 'it is a good place to get across the border'. Out of a dozen people except for 2 of the local farmers, ladies were all escapees. We had a good laugh and then an eerie quiet descended in the coup. The train was going very slowly, quietly, not to arouse the Russians. In the dark, I reached in my pocket and checked if the sketch

given to me by the Party Secretary is still there. It was, but days before I spent hours to study it and to remember every detail on it, I knew the route by heart.

The train slowly pulled into the station where I and a lot of others wanted to get off. It was pitch dark, we just felt each other with stretched arms not to bump in each other. Judging from the soft murmur of the crowd, about 50 people were around me. Small groups were formed in the dark and each group started out in the direction they thought was right. I stood near the railroad tracks and reached down to ascertain the direction of them. Then our small group started out in the direction I judged to be the right one. The direction was right, but my small map did not indicate a minefield ahead of us. It may have been installed after my Party Secretary left the area. Only the soft crunch of the snow under our feet was there, the compacting of the 10-inch-deep snow.

Very carefully, quietly and with an uncertain feeling inside of us we proceeded until an authoritative strong voice ordered us to stop! We all stopped and in the absolute quiet, I could hear the clanking of more than one sub-machine gun. My ears were acutely tuned to these kinds of noises - German, Russian, all the same. Is it the KGB, or not - that was the question. Then the voice continued; '2 steps ahead of you is the beginning of the mine field! One more step and you all be blown up!

We stood there for a few seconds, which seemed to be hours. Then the voice continued: 'we are freedom fighters of the Hungarian Army - our commander sent us out here to assist you to get across the border'. Is it true, or is it a KGB trick? We had not much choice but turn around and feel the soldiers, they were two of them. The one in charge gathered the group together and gave us a lecture: 'One of us will lead, the other will follow the group. We have sub-machine guns and be able to provide only a very limited protection against the Russians. For this reason, we must not let them detect our presence, we will have to pass the Russian command post 50 feet away. No talking, no noise, hold each other's hand not to get lost in the forest in the dark. We will march between mines left-and-right, so do not deviate from the path, or we will be dead. Is this clear?' It was very clear.

The caravan started to move as ordered. It was a severe November-end winter. Snow, frost, cold wind - and a searing hot desire to leave the Communist Paradise behind for ever. We were guided through winding forested areas, meadows, hills, and valleys. At one point, the leader stopped and very softly announced that the Russian post is ahead of us, take extra caution not to make noise. 5 minutes later, we could see a small building with Russian soldiers inside drinking. What else would they do between shooting at us. They may run out occasionally of ammunition, but never out of vodka. We passed the happy ones and were told that the border is very near. Some light came through the heavy cloud cover now just enough to see the outlines of people. The leader stopped at a half frozen over creek. A log was laid across the water - this is your bridge to freedom the soldier said. They were not allowed to cross it, the other side was Austria. He sat down on a tree stump and wished good luck to us. I thanked them the invaluable aid in guiding us to freedom and gave them all the Hungarian money I had with me. It is worthless in Austria anyway. Most people in the group did the same and the soldiers ended up with a stack of money a foot high - they deserved it.

We started to crawl across the slippery, frozen round tree trunk, some people fell in the creek, breaking the ice into the cold water. We pulled them out and continued. Upon arrival to the other side, people started to wander in every direction, totally disoriented. I separated from the group and took a direction I thought was the correct one. Nobody wanted to follow me, they all *knew* they were right, arguing with each other. It took but 10 seconds in freedom, the unity was broken and several parties with even more directions were born instantly. Typical Hungarian thinking. The border at that place we crossed is very treacherous in that it is full curves and one can end up again in the Communist Paradise just by



walking in the wrong direction for a minute. Indeed, this happened to people. As I learned later, a young lad in our group wandered back to Socialism and had to escape again from the KGB 3 times until he made it with us.

I took a few steps just to fall on my face due to a wire fence stretched over the ground about a foot high - it was not visible in the dark. This was a border marker, Austrian style. As I got up from the ground massaging my aching nose, I heard the familiar noise again: machine-gun clattering. The thought like a hot arrow pierced my brain: KGB or Austrians? Then I heard a stern voice in German: 'how many are you there?' My heart throbbed like it never did - I could not ever imagine how sweet German words could be! I immediately answered in German that I do not know. This made me the official interpreter of the group. The commander of the two border guards came to me in the twilight and gave me orders to translate for the group. People were assembled in a military formation, 5 people in each row. I sported an Eisenhower officer's jacket, looked very official. Then the first question came: *'are there any gypsies in the group?'* This question totally surprised and amazed me, but I translated it. No answer from the dark. I heard people talking with a gypsy accent in the group, but I had no proof other than that. Next question: 'does anybody have a gun?' No answer. I was amused by the order of the questions - the importance of the knowledge of having gypsies in the group surpassed the weapons! Very interesting.

The order was given to start marching. Exhausted by the physical and psychological trials of the day (and the years spent in Communism) we proceeded toward our unknown destination - and destiny. After about an hour worth of walking, we arrived at a small village with a large barn. The first weak and timid rays of the sun started to peek out from the thick clouds and looking down on us, homeless, countryless, freezing, muddy, bedraggled hungry refugee crowd. One of the guards opened the huge door and we were shoved in. It was nice and warm inside from the body heat of the numerous cows, large piles of straw piled up against the barn walls greeted us besides the kind smiles of two Danish Red Cross officials. They gave us large plastic glasses full of hot chocolate. It tasted incredibly good. Most of us went back 3 or 4 times for repeats, they encouraged us, plenty more was there. Totally exhausted, but with a full stomach we fell asleep on the straw mountains. The smell of the cow dung became the sweet perfume of *freedom*.



**the results of the communist**

***“People’s Democracy”***

REPUBLICAN PARTY

*Water, taken in moderation, cannot hurt anybody* ----- Mark Twain -----  
*Moderation, taken in water will not hurt anybody* ----- Paul Lukas -----

You will read the word '**water**' a lot in this chapter –

**Be Prepared** – **Boy-scout Paul** - after **Baden Powell**.

My affinity for and indulging in **water** started at the age 12 when I took a trip to the beautiful Carpathian Mountains, a long, crescent shaped formation of natural beauty in Eastern Europe. Traveled on trains, trucks, on foot, climbed the majestic mountains, enjoying bathing in the pristine clean ice-cold lakes and creeks of the area. One particular lake high up, embedded in the cradle of the mountains was under the sea some eons ago. Actually, it *was* the sea then. When the ocean receded, the lake was formed in the basin and stayed there since there was no outlet for the **water**. The lake started evaporating, the salt stayed. Now the salt concentration is so great, that one can lay flat on the **water** surface and float comfortably without sinking while 5-foot-tall brown bears are looking at you from the shore, sampling the abundant berries growing in the surrounding forest. One of those (not the berry) looked square in my face by picking fruit opposite the sides a thick bush. Being a Boy Scout, we were thought to be kind to animals - so I apologized to him and turned over the entire bush to his disposal. Since he already had his lunch (fortunately) and the berries were just the after-meal dessert, he let me go. It is a heavenly place, one of Nature's most inspiring achievements, as I perceived it, **Lake St. Anna**.

My itinerary took me down in the farthest corner of the mountain range, beyond the reach of politics and other forms of pollution where the ills of civilization have not penetrated yet, except telephone, one of my aunts was named Postmaster in a small place among the mountains. Primitive but extremely beautiful areas were sliced up by crystal clear creeks rushing down to lower elevations, **water**, which just a few hours ago was virgin white snow. Eagles with wingspans of 8-9 feet soaring over the fields and peaks, looking down on us with keen eyes ever searching for food. These magnificent, majestic, and very powerful birds were known to steal small sheep right from the herd, flying off with the bounty with ease. Of course, they were not familiar with the man-coined expression of the word 'stealing' and with the enforcement of the consequences invented by lawyers. He was hungry, period. I watched these perfect flying machines as they were just floating seemingly motionless with ease with their spread-out wings high up in the air, circling for hours, just to fade out into the distance as the sun was dragging its shiny body across the sky slowly folding up one more day in the succession of the eternal sequence.

To my utmost surprise, one of this kings-of-the-sky landed one morning in our yard. We could not go closer to it than 10 feet - he(?) was hissing, opening his beak menacingly, spreading his huge right wing out to show his exquisitely designed feathers, the left wing was just hanging down, scraping the ground. We got the message: his left wing was broken, and he was in a great pain. Old people were called in who were born and living there, some of their ancestors going back two thousand years or more, they would know what to do. Several of us surrounded the bird and with heavy blankets thrown over him, we were able to subdue the valiantly fighting bird. A wooden splinter was affixed to his broken wing, the poor animal was screaming in despair, but finally the doctoring was done. A chain was attached to one foot and the bird was placed on the top of a tall fence. The old folk said that birds, and especially eagles like to perch as high as possible to be able to survey their surroundings constantly, that gives them the feeling of security. We should do the best we can under the circumstances to comfort him. The blankets were removed, and the poor eagle became quiet. His intelligent aristocratic head with his extremely alert keen eyes impressed me to the utmost. He measured us up one-by-one and then looking at his patched-up wing,

inspected what we did to him. Looking at me, I could feel what must have gone through his mind: ‘that thing over there, I could pick up that skinny funny looking collection of skin and bones, but I would need another one too like that for breakfast to satisfy my hunger’. A wooden platform was affixed to the fence acting as a tray for food and water. The eagle was fed twice a day with fresh raw meat and plenty of water. He seemed to adjust to the new environment and conditions - he had not much of a chance to do otherwise - and after a couple of weeks when I thought he was getting used to me by now, I was trying to approach him slowly while talking to him. He let me get as close as 2 feet now, then he opened his beak and threw a punch toward me. I got the message - ‘stupid kid, don’t mess with me, even with my broken wing and chained foot I could still eat you for lunch’. He was right and from that day on, we were just watching each other in tranquility and respect from a safe distance. The bird was kept in the yard for several weeks and when his condition was judged satisfactory, he was let go back to the wild. Occasionally, a big, beautiful eagle would circle over our head for a few minutes - I wonder if that bird was the same one we helped to get back to life. Without our help, he would have perished for sure, being unable to catch food, he must have sensed that. Possibly, this was the way he showed gratitude for us, he behaved far more civilized than some people I know, including my ex-wives. I waved to him and wished him good luck - and watched that wing!

One of those crystal clear very fast small rivers cascading down from the high mountain peaks was rushing by our location and on a nice warm day I decided to go swimming in it. The turning-twisting-swirling fast torrent claimed the life of a young woman who was teaching in the local school. She got caught in an eddy and was dragged down to the bottom, she drowned a few weeks before, I was told. Maybe the cold **water** caused her cramps and was unable to swim - that is deadly in that river.

One of my numerous aunts was at hand accompanying and allegedly supervising me, she just wanted to bask in the sun and keep an eye on me while I was bathing. The **water** was so clear that one could see even small stones on the bottom several feet down. The small river was quite shallow, but it was flowing so fast that in an 18-inch-deep **water** I could not stand up, I was swept away immediately. Now this *is* a challenge. Occasionally large stones were hurdled along in the water, one had to watch out for those things. As I was going in the swirling **water**, after two steps I simply disappeared from the view of the world, eagles included. I found myself revolving under water like fast spinning top going down, down, down to the bottom. I was caught in an eddy, which carved a large cone in the riverbed, appearing quite innocent from the shore. As I was rotating with fury, my feet started to drill into the silt like a professional twist drill. I like surprises but this was a bit too much. I must have lost my sense because apparently I was trying to drink out the river to save myself from drowning. Due to this unexpected experience, still to date I am avoiding drinking too much **water** if I can. There are a lot of substitutes, I do not care to name them all. Finally, out of air, in a desperate effort I kicked into the bottom of the well and fortunately came to the surface at the edge of the wildly spinning **water** vortex cone, spitting me into the middle of the torrent. Coughing and puffing, throwing up **water**, rolling uncontrollably, hitting the stones at the bottom, finally I managed to get thrown against a trunk of a small tree, which was growing in the river and was able to crawl out to dry land a quarter mile downstream.

My aunt was fast asleep in the warm sun (fortunately) during all this and did not know anything about my under**water** excursion. If I had not been so lucky, she would probably be still looking for me. This river joins ‘Big River’ Danube, which, in turn empties into the Black Sea. By then, I would have been half eaten by fish. She woke up hearing my coughing, spitting **water** out of all my orifices and said that she is sorry she let me in the **water**, now I contracted a cold. ‘I don’t want your mother accusing me of not watching you’ she said. I just bowed my head agreeing with her - ‘you are right, let’s go home’.

Then I grew up to a ripe age of 17 and we kids spent our summer vacations usually at Eastern Europe's biggest lake called Balaton in Hungary. Out there in the middle of the warm body of **water**, swimming in 3 dimensions makes one forget moderation and can get carried away by the feeling of unrestrained freedom, a perfect example of *carpe diem* according to the ancient Latinos, as you will see. This lake is one of the biggest attractions to foreign and local tourists as well, it is warm, pleasant to swim in, full of various species of fish including a special sturgeon type called 'fogash', which is absolutely delicious, cooked or smoked. Tastes best with beer or with a glass of crisp cool light white wine, not with a substitute called --- hmmm... **water**. There is enough stuff like that in the lake.

In larger towns around the lake, there are numerous hotels and very good open-air restaurants with gypsy music and dance orchestras. The lake is surrounded with fertile loose sediment, which remained from the age when the mountains were under **water** and the slopes are now conducive to grow fine wine grapes producing excellent wines. Most farmers in the area have their own micro-wineries.

**Water** is a mysterious uncontrolled material - it is dangerous and such it should be a controlled substance. Chemists call it H<sub>2</sub>O. This stuff can be extremely dangerous and deceiving. It is a liquid most of the time but can camouflage itself as a vapor and as a solid as well. This stuff can do all that, simultaneously, at the same time at 32 degrees Fahrenheit, or 0 degree Celsius! Science calls this weird phenomenon 'triple point'. **Water** is corrosive, people have to replace their **water** supply pipes choked up by rust and it can cause death. Automobile bodies can be eaten up mercilessly. Many people died because they were deceived by the solid form of H<sub>2</sub>O by walking on it. Yes, walking on **water**. Then, at the most unexpected moment the stuff gives away and people fall into the ice cold - yes, **water again**, drowning. Then take the case of the super-deception: this awful material, contrary to common sense and belief, can exist as a fluid, let say at --40 degrees! Several airplanes, captain and passengers including died because of it! This H<sub>2</sub>O, when carefully cooled, will stay liquid. What a stunt! Then, you slightly jar or knock on the glass or vibrate the airplane wing and you have a bomb on your hands: the stuff turns into ice in a fraction of a second, expands, breaks the glass or deposits on the wings of the airplane as ice, reducing the plane to a piece of rock. From time-to-time, it causes billions of dollars of damage, washes away fields, towns with the people in them. It is pouring down from above, can carry you away below. Who wants to drink such a murderous and dangerous cosmic concoction voluntarily anyway? **Water** is to swim in, to carry ships, to make fish happy and to promote crop growing. Used in moderation we can wash our hands in it. Keep washing your hands over-and-over again in it and you will end up with chopped dry skin causing bleeding and opening the path for infection. Do not ask me how I know this. On the other hand, did you ever hear of wine storms and uncontrollable wine rivers wiping out cities, inundating millions of acres, demolishing railroad tracks or bridges? Never happened.

My friends owned conical shaped military type small tents of the size of about 6-by-6 feet. They could accommodate four kids, somewhat tightly. We usually pitched two tents right at the beach, 15 feet away from the **water**. Spending the summer vacations there were very pleasant experiences, I made a radio and distributed the sound by wires in an underground channel to have music in the other tent too. A number of earphones were disassembled and arranged so that every kid would have his own piece. We used to put them on the floor of the tent and put our ears over them, falling sleep with pleasant music. In the morning, we just jumped in the **water** for a quick swim, then fished for a half an hour or so to ketch the breakfast. In a skillet on an improvised stone oven, the fish were cooked to perfection. Then a fast swim and **water** ball playing for 2-3 hours till noon.

One afternoon in the very calm lake, I spotted a small waterfowl happily swimming, frolicking, quickly submerging for fish, then emerging 50 to 100 feet away again. I decided to take a closer look at this cute little creature and started to swim in. In fact, I decided to catch its legs just for fun.

The elongated shape lake is 50 miles long and about only 3-4 miles wide at that location, we sometimes swam across to the other side. As I approached the sweet little chick, she (must have been a she) took up the fun and started to flirt with me: she allowed me to get about 3 feet close, then, with a lightning quick turn, she disappeared just to come up the surface probably laughing, looking at me 50 or 100 feet away. However, I do not give up *that* easily. It just happened that a large squash or pumpkin or similar was floating on the *water*. I seized the thing and with my teeth and fingernails cut it in half, carving out the inside. I placed one half of the shell on my head as a camouflaging device, slowly swimming toward the unsuspecting chick. Yes! I was able to grab her legs under the water! She started to fight me furiously, screaming all kinds of things, possibly chick obscenities. I got what I wanted and let the bird go. I took the squash off my head and got on my back for a little backstroke practice. To my horror, looking up to the sky, I noticed that an ominous black cloud formation was covering half the sky already, moving rapidly in my direction. The lake is situated in a depression surrounded by mountains and one can not see the approaching storm from a larger distance. Since the southern shore - where I was - is very gradually sloped, when the wind pushes the water south, the waves are getting amplified, reaching higher and higher heights. Quite frequently fair size excursion boats are overturned in case they do not get out the way of the raging storm, usually killing most or all passengers. A classmate of mine in High School, an experienced sailor got killed in one of these storms right after graduation. Apparently, he was not experienced enough - similarly to me. He went sailing alone and did not get out in time. After the storm subsided, his boat was found, and his body was washed ashore a day later. This lake, as beautiful and pleasant when at rest, is a formidable treacherous opponent when in rage. Before the dark clouds start accumulating, a warning cannon shot is fired from the mountaintop, signaling people to get out of harm's way. By chasing that female, of course, I was mostly under water and did not hear the warning shot. This was not the last time, however, that females got me into trouble. Fortunately.

Knowing all this, I could foresee my fate: being so far away from shore, getting caught in the storm, drowning gracefully. Upon realizing the mess, I was getting into shortly, I started to swim toward the shore at full force. The clouds were moving overhead with a determined irresistible high speed, far faster than I could swim. A full-blown storm developed with thunder, heavy rain and lightning striking the *water* all over me. The waves were getting pretty high, tossing me like a nutshell. I was in the water now for about 4-5 hours and was getting tired a bit. I had to conserve energy to have at least a tiny chance to survive at all. I cut back on my speed and just used minimal effort to proceed toward the ..... shore? Where *is* the shore? In 15 minutes, it became so dark that I could not see anything. The rain was coming down in an almost solid wall and the waves were now about 20 feet high. At times while riding in the middle of the wave, the pressure from above shot me into the loose silt below, sometimes up to my waist. But luckily, I had to wait only for about 5 seconds till the next wave came which, by spreading my arms, pulled me right out, just to shove me back again into the mud at the next wave. I had to listen the roaring approach of the next waves behind my back to take big breaths at the right moments. One mistake and the omnipresent *water* will replace the air in my lungs. Progress has become very slow and frustrating now, just to say the least. I was trying to judge the direction of the shore by the direction of the force exerted on my body by the relentless onslaught of the waves and the position of the blinding lightning strokes, which should stay behind my back. I made up my mind concerning the direction and started to swim again. I was intently concentrating to see at least a speck of light, which could verify my position and direction.

As a Boy Scout, I learned to observe every possible feature surrounding me at all times. It just happened that by a second nature now, I remembered the pattern of the dim road-side lights on the mountain top behind our camp. The lights were deployed in irregular intervals, or just a few bulbs were burned out in between, I never know. I had a very strong mental picture carved in my mind about this light pattern.

Finally, at some of the wave peaks, I could see very dim specs of light. This gave me a little hope - I was going in the direction of a shore, who cares which one! I made a point in trying to ride the wave tops to get a better image of the light pattern. The **water** tossed, turned, twirled, somersaulted, twisted, shoved, tortured my exhausted body as I never experienced before. I felt like a piece of rag in the washing machine. There is always a first time, I thought - and maybe the last if this goes on for much longer.

As the hopeless fight continued, I perceived the wishful notion that very slowly I am getting closer to the shore. The light specks were getting a bit brighter and the spacing between them slightly larger. I am getting either closer or mental illusion is taking place in my head. We will see, thinking optimist. I was now very close to the end of my physical endurance. Just by trying to stay afloat took a tremendous energy out of my body, not to talk about the large quantity of lake **water** I imbibed involuntarily. I apparently did not learn from my **watery** experience at a younger age in the fast river, and again I was trying to drink out the lake to save me from drowning. Actually, in midst of this ordeal I threw up several times, fortunately I was able to time these momentous happenings at the top of the waves, expelling the excess **water** from my stomach, simultaneously watching for the beacon lights.

I was in the **water** for about 7-8 hours now and was getting sick all over my body, inside and out. Another 30 minutes or so, then good by Paul! I knew that. Looking and looking at the light spots, I surmised that I must be very close to shore now, I had to raise my head slightly in order to see the lights - a good sign, the lights were on the top of the mountain!

I was trying to sing my last song in the midst of the roaring **water** - there was nothing else to do, but my little wet voice was no match to the immense roaring power of the liquid horror surrounding me. But I was always musical and kept singing, even though I could not hear my own voice. Then, something hit my elbow. Something hard. Am I dreaming? Delusion? I was now hopeful that a floating log or something got in my way I could hold on to it to regain a little strength. The waves were pounding relentlessly against something with crashing blows in front of me, I could hear that. There was a stone wall, a wave breaker in front of our camp - is this possible, I hit the beach right at the center of our camp? Cannot be. This is **against the law** of probability. In pitch dark, disoriented, totally exhausted, in half delirium - no, it cannot be! Then a lightning bolt hit the **water** behind me, followed by a tremendous thunderous ear-splitting roar. For a fraction of a second I saw the tents - the lightning illuminated the scene! I started to scream but the thunderous swirling-crushing H<sub>2</sub>O drowned out every bit of it. I recognized the stone breaker too and made a concentrated effort to clime over it. With a total disgust I realized that I was now so exhausted that I could not even raise my arms over the water level - I was just floating and banging against the stone wall 15 feet away from my buddies helpless, voiceless, powerless, almost hopeless, on the other hand I never give up. My body was now totally numb from the cold and all feeling was gone all over, felt no pain, but I could still perceive that pieces of me were left on the rough surface stone wall every time the wave smashed me against it. I suffered a few blows to my head too, but my thick stubborn Hungarian top piece was still holding out.

At that point I was speculating what my buddies will say when they discover my bloody dead body next morning feeding the fish they were to catch for breakfast, floating peacefully at the foot of the forbidding wall with an inextinguishable smile on my face. If they eat the fish, which were eating me, they,



in effect would be eating me! This thought immersed my soul in a peaceful mood, I was trying to force a smile on my face. Out of this tranquil moment in midst of the stormy sea I was jarred by the sight of a flashlight beam. Is this real, or just imagining things? I was trying to turn the other way - Nature is trying to torture me till the very last second of my frail life. What cruelty! Even to the last fraction of a second of my existence on this planet I was to see **mirages**, making me believe that somebody is actually trying to save me while hopelessly drowning! I was outraged. Or am I on the **other side** already? Then, all of a sudden I heard people screaming and a several hands reaching out toward me. I almost broke out in laughter. This is too much! No more jokes, please! Do you hear me, no more cruel jokes! Is this for real? I felt a jolt and I was jerked out of the **water**. My buddies, seeing what they could hardly believe- my messed-up bloody body - dropped me on the ground and grabbed my feet, holding me upside down for awhile. All I remember was that a lot of lake Balaton came out of me. I think they would be curious if I swallowed some fish too. They put me in the tent and .... I do not remember any more what happened, I passed out.

When I woke up about 10 o'clock in the morning, I saw my friends playing ball in the lake. They saw me in an upright position and came right out of the **water**. 'You had a nice long sleep' they related. So what? can't I sleep till 10? Am I going to miss the Transcontinental Express? Or the flight to America? They started to laugh 'no, you did not miss anything , but one full day!' What? It was not next morning, it was the day after! 'But we left some fish for you' don't worry. I never worry. They said that they gave up on me, nobody ever survived such a storm. Actually, they went to bed, but were awakened by a big thunderbolt (the one which illuminated the tents in front of me) and debated if they should get up in the raging storm and look. Then they decided to take a last look in the **water** anyway. They were sure, though, that it would be for nothing. They said that they were more surprised to see me than I was to see them. I am not quite sure of the validity of that statement.

The fish and the fresh apples tasted extra good that day, I had a big lunch to reconstitute my strength. I sat in the sun for awhile and listened to music, then a joke-telling contest started. We had compulsory happiness enforced in our group at all times. About 2 PM - as always - the **water** polo commenced - I felt even more home now in the **water**. Surprisingly, it felt very good to be back in the **water**. Am I turning into a fish? Although I lost a day from my life and a polo game too by sleeping, the playing in the **water** again made me now even more secure - if I was able to survive that ordeal (with a little luck and help), I can survive almost everything (with a little luck and help). During the rest of my vacation days I concentrated drinking some wine and beer, instead of **water**. I hope you people out there will understand the reason why? I never heard of somebody drowning in a sea of wine. If I had to drown, I would chose the latter - dying happily.



## BALATON - THE 'HUNGARIAN SEA'

## Uncle Steve - My Absolute Favorite Guy in the Family.

Among the numerous relatives of mine, I can say with conviction that the only person I *really* liked, was Uncle Steve. This was for several reasons: despite the fact that he came from a German family (partially me too), when the disgusting WW II started, he changed his German name to a Hungarian one - this reflected character and principles. He had a very good sense of humor; it was a pleasure to talk to him anytime. Always had an interesting story to tell.

My favorite story is the one from his young life. As it happened, he accidentally cut off his right index finger on my Grandfather's power saw. This was at the time when WW I started. It was recorded in the military books, that several people, to dodge the military draft, severed their fingers, this way they could not pull the rifle trigger – they thought. The military told them that they have to learn to pull the trigger with another finger!

Uncle Steve was constantly embarrassed by remarks that insinuated that he cut his finger off on purpose to avoid the military. Character trait #2: he got fed up with the accusations and volunteered for the Army – otherwise probably he never would have done this. The Army accepted him with pleasure.

The enthusiasm was short-lived: not long after he volunteered, he became a Russian war prisoner, after his troop lost a battle (and all others thereafter).

He – with the other prisoners – was attached to the Russian Army, traveled with them as the war demanded – at the rear of the Russian troops, obviously. It happened that the troop arrived at the big river Volga and the Army had a day or so off to recover from a long march. The commanding General gave the order to have everybody take a dip in the river, to clean up. This order was received with pleasure, a little fooling around in the water can do good to the soul as well. As Uncle Steve was entering the water with his underpants on, he was surrounded by the Russian soldiers, and they threateningly demanded that he declares what is wrong with him! Uncle Steve by now understood the Russian language quite well. First he did not know what this was all about, but they told him that obviously he must have some bad contagious disease, that is the reason for covering up his body. Looking around, he noticed that all of the Russians were totally naked! He unceremoniously had shed his underpants, the Russian soldiers conducted a close inspection on him, but found no irregularities. For which they admonished him of making fools of the Russians! He nearly escaped from being beaten up. It turned out that the General, his wife and his daughter were also taking a bath little further up the river – also totally naked!

Hygiene Russian style, although I find nothing wrong with it, if one is accustomed to it. The hysterical denial of the subject can create adverse effects in society – I believe this may be a contributory factor in assessing the proliferation of the sex crimes in this country, the heritage of the super-religious pilgrims. In Europe, bathing topless is accepted and it creates no more crime, maybe even less. You can not put a taboo on nature, it will backfire.

One day the POWs were collected and a long travel to Siberia started, to the favored Russian concentration campsites. Accommodations there were skimpy at best, a number of POWs died in exhaustion and malnutrition. Then they were asked, if anybody knows tailoring - the Russians needed 3 tailors, but about 25 hands went up. Uncle Steve was one of the privileged few selected. Those got a little more food, could work in heated room, etc. In a place where the temperature can (and does) dip to minus 70 degrees Celsius or -94 degrees F, an arrangement like this can be a lifesaver, they knew it. Of course, Uncle Steve did not have the faintest idea about tailoring. Nor did the others. Then one day the big mustached old Sergeant camp guard with his enormous rifle and bayonet came in the room and told the POWs that they have an order coming. A General wants to have a new uniform made for him. A large bolt of material was delivered, and they were told to get to work. Work with what? - they did not have even a sewing needle! The sergeant was informed of this minor oversight. Next day he appeared in the barrack

and told Uncle that a shipment of sowing machines is waiting in Vladivostok, a large city with a seaport. He and a Russian guard must go and pick up the machine. Uncle was probably selected, because he spoke good Russian by then.

Travel was to be done mostly by train – the transcontinental Russian line, the only one there. With some complications – snowdrift impeding progress, running out of food, etc. made the trip lasting over 3 weeks.

Upon arrival, days passed, before anybody could give a hint about the whereabouts of the machines. They found them in the open under snow, rusted and in terrible shape. Uncle, with the help of the guard, selected 3 machines which, with some doctoring had a chance to be made into working machines again. They were all American Singer machines. (They were excellent machines when not rusty, my Mother had one of those pedal-driven jobs).

The machines were delivered to the railroad station. An overnight snowfall covered the machines (again), but that made no difference, the machines were in a pretty bad shape already. Another 3 weeks or so resulted in the arrival of the load at the camp. The machines were installed and worked on to make them workable tools. Then the Sergeant with the big rifle asked them how long will it take to make the General's outfit. This created a stir because it was discovered that there were no needles in the machines! This fact, however, did not create an overly big consternation, Uncle was ordered to go back to Vladivostock and pick up some needles!

About 6 weeks later the needles arrived, in the meantime the military located some spools of thread. The time was running short by now – the General started to get impatient and demanded a quick resolution to the problem. He was told to come back in 2 weeks, so the measurement can be taken (they had no tape measure at that instant).

The General came, and measurements were taken on him with a string. They tied knots on the string as measurement data. None of the 'tailors' had any idea how to take measurements. Then work begun in earnest. The first two or three tries were a total disaster. They had to throw away the ruined uniforms. As the remaining material got less-and-less, a feeling of despair started to show up among the 'experts'. The General was getting madder and madder after each unsuccessful try. Finally, there was no more left. In desperation, the self-appointed tailors were concentrating on a lesser task: maybe they can make nice military cap for the General!

Indeed, that is what happened. Uncle had to elaborate in length to describe to me the General's reaction to this new turn of events. Not only were the tailors immediately sent back to the barracks, but they were threatened with a firing squad – a common occurrence in Russia. The General was screaming at them for a good half an hour, he did not run out of expletives during his tirade. But the message was clear and unmistakable: the tailor's holidays ended .

So, what to do now? The cold was so intense, that by spitting on the ground, the spit froze before it hit the ground – it was ice! After some time spent working in the camp, the POWs were allowed to go out to town. Uncle and some other young lads accepted manual work – hauling wood, etc. to get occupied and also they got paid a little too.

In one of these occasions, Uncle met a very beautiful and expensively dressed Russian woman. Thy started talking, she invited him to a lunch (I am certain there was vodka involved too). As time passed and they met almost daily, the lady asked Uncle Steve if he would like to go to Japan. What? He told the woman already that he is a POW and is confined to the barracks. The lady smiled and told him to ask the big-mustached Sergeant for a leave, to return later. This sounded so fantastic that Uncle first discarded the idea. But then, the frequent meetings with the beautiful woman had it's effect: Uncle got his courage together and reported to the Sergeant with his plea. The Sergeant looked at him, Uncle had to give his word to return to the camp later, good luck! He almost fainted. This was totally impossible, he thought.

Uncle did not say, but that influential woman may have something to do with this. I will never know. Neither did he.

Uncle went to live with her in her apartment for awhile, then started to pack for the trip. New classy clothes, shoes, etc. had befallen Uncle, beside the pleasant close association with the beautiful female. She related that she is married to a very rich Japanese tea plantation owner, but he is very old. Very, very old. That said it all. But what will he say, upon bringing a young man with her to his house? The woman smiled and said that nothing will happen, trust her. The old husband will be very happy that she found somebody capable of entertaining her!

This whole thing sounded like a fantasy-inspired novel. What the heck, what can I lose - was the thinking. After a month or so, the happy couple arrived in Japan. The husband – as predicted – was very happy and Uncle Steve was accepted immediately.

The days and weeks passed like water flowing down the river. Uncle Steve was an active man, and although the accommodations and all comfort, including the kindness of a woman were very impressive, he felt in his innards that something is not right. He used to work, being active of doing something. He felt that he is a bit worthless, being at the mercy of a woman. This feeling intensified by every passing day. And then one day he told the woman that he is leaving, going back to Russia. The woman begged him to stay, but Uncle made up his mind. The woman gave him plenty money for the trip, food, and some tears were shed. Then he left.

After a bit of sightseeing here and there (until he ran out of money), he returned to the camp. The 'Old Mustache' was still there. Uncle reported his return. The Sergeant looked at him and said: all right, go back to tour barracks – I knew you would be back, you gave your word.

One day a contingency of Japanese POWs were delivered to the camp – in the meantime more of the prisoners died, so there were open beds available.

The Japanese troop was led by a young Japanese Lieutenant in perfect military formation. Uncle had the advantage that he could understand now some Japanese too. The Lieutenant had his side arm still on his belt. This was unheard of in a military prison camp. The other European nationalities – Hungarians, Germans, etc. were in a bad shape – lack of discipline, demoralized, and had all the symptoms of a defeated bunch. Not the Japanese.

The Russian commander ordered the first row behind the Lieutenant to do some work. Nobody moved. He started cussing and screaming. Nobody moved. The Russian pulled out his pistol and shot the unfortunate Japanese soldiers. Next line! Nobody moved. The Russian Commander was now in a tantrum. Uncle, seeing this horror, volunteered to interpret between Russian and Japanese. The offer was accepted. The upshot of the affair was this: the Japanese Lieutenant disclosed that 'only he – and *only he* can give orders to the Japanese soldiers. They can shoot everyone, they would rather die without blinking an eye, then to submit to a foreign authority. POW or not – makes no difference'.

This revelation shook up the Russians, but they needed a work force, not a bunch of dead Japanese. After a few minutes of consultation, the Russians gave in. 'All right, we accept the situation. But you, Lieutenant, have to surrender your pistol'. The Lieutenant made it absolutely clear that he will not give up his weapon – it would be 'losing face', the weapon is his authority. Without it, nobody will move. 'If you shoot me, do it – but then you have to shoot every one of us, because nobody will heed your orders. Without my weapon, I have to commit hara-kiri, and then you are back in the same problem. The gun stays with me, loaded. If something has to be done, you come to me'. During all this, the troop stood in a stiff attention – not the slightest of motion was detectable. Discipline at it's best.

The Russians were visibly shaken in watching the display of such bravery and determination. Finally, the proposition was accepted, the Russians backed down. The rest of the time in the camp was passing as expected in a prison camp. Uncle, in his wanderings in the town, however, picked up a pair of ice skates. He used to be good at it years ago, before the war. There was an area in the camp which is a small lake in

warmer months. But it was frozen over now, and Uncle exercised his skills in doing all kinds of fancy turns and alike. This did not elude the Japanese. They used to come to see Uncle performing. Most of them had never seen ice skating. One day, the Lieutenant asked if Uncle would be so kind as to let him try the skate, he never in his life has seen this. Uncle obliged with pleasure, took his skates off and applied to the Lieutenant's shoes. This Japanese officer was a very slight, frail figure, the meager food supply in the camp did not help either. The Lieutenant, with the help of Uncle slowly proceeded to slide on the ice. Then he thought that he can manage alone. That was a big mistake. He fell and broke his leg. A huge commotion ensued, the on looking Japanese ran in, grabbed the officer, tore the skates off his shoes and among screaming curses directed to Uncle, they hurriedly transported the injured one to the hospital. After this, Japanese never came to see Uncle on the ice. They thought that somehow it is the *work of the devil* what makes people glide on the ice, anyhow. I found this story very educational. Discipline can go a long way. So can superstition.



*no, he is not Uncle Steve*

*He was lieutenant Hiroo Onoda who was sent to a Philippines' Island Lubang during WW II. He lived in the jungle holding out despite he was told that the war was over. He refused to give up until his commander was called.*

*He then surrendered and handed his sword over. Returned to Japan where he received a hero's honors.*

*Died on 2014 January 16.*

*Now that is a solder!*

## **Murphy's Law.**

*Let us endeavor so to live that when we come to die even the undertaker will be sorry.*

*Let us be thankful for the fools. But for them the rest of us could not succeed.*

*I have long ago lost belief in immortality - also my interest in it.*

*---- Mark Twain ---*

As for myself, all above applies, I agree with the statements. Now I have to look for a sympathetic undertaker!



A lot of funny things were written about Murphy and his law - claiming some very strange and frustrating experiences. Some of the wild stories were invented, I am sure. But all statements are focused to the point: *'if something can go wrong, it will'*. In the more sober world of science, we like to modify slightly the law: *'if anything can go wrong, it sure can'*. Since it is a probability function, no one-sided outcome at all times is valid. And do not take this lightly, Murphy's Law has a scientific foundation too, as reported by **Robert A.J. Matthews**, a computer scientist in his article in the April 1997 issue of the 'Scientific American' magazine. What this boils down to is in most part it has to do with the Law of Probability, mathematics. One is not capable of defeating Nature even if sometimes we are able to get away with some mischief. Nature has the ultimate, irreversible word, just keep trying, you will see. One expression of this principle is the embodiment of **Murphy's Law** in our everyday lives.

I, for posterity can claim an addition to the application of the Law I did not see written down before:

*'The underwear or shirt will come out of the washing or drying machine turned inside out, or at least one of the arms of a shirt.'* Extension: *'even if you turn them inside-out in any combination before putting them into the machine.'*

*This aphorism works for me all the time, allowing Murphy one outlet, the revenge, to laugh at me as I turn my underwear back into shape, while I am escaping from the serious stuff. A total distraction, but all other pleasures are banned from him.*

In this writing, numerous references to Murphy can be found. You mathematicians out there, could anybody of you assess the probability of me being alive today in light of the hair-raising experiences in my past life? **And without a scratch?** If it is possible to come up with a number, would anybody with the answer please contact the publisher? I was trying to figure this out myself, but I would be biased in assessing the issue by asserting that this is normal with me....

A list of some of the touchy close-call specific predicaments I have gotten into - whether due to my own stupidity or someone else's is recounted below. I did not count the **general** types, like bombing. A lot of people survived bombing by having been far away of the area or hiding in bomb-proof shelters - that is kid stuff. Sit on the bombs appealing to you **but get off a few seconds before you think it will blow up**. That is something. Some of these types of interesting experiences I went through at close range I call the **real things**. Some of the events are not listed on these pages, they were chronologically remote from the mainstream of happenings, they happened in the New World. I do not know what Murphy is, but I know what **he is not**:

- Not mentioned before in the book, at age 10, a large clump of ice of about 100-120 pounds fell off the roof of a tall Catholic church, landing an inch away from me brushing against my overcoat and spraying me with sharp ice fragments. Just a few inches saved my life. Is anybody up there is trying to tell me something? - Murphy is **not Catholic** - **he missed**.
- The German affair - a series of sabotages, taking weapons and grenades out of circulation undetected for **my** own war - Murphy is probably not Irish, but German, **he did them in really good** in two wars in the 20th century.
- Disarming the drunk German soldier - the Gestapo affair - Murphy was afraid of the Gestapo, he was afraid to follow me in the office and listen to my conversation with the desk sergeant, he is **not brave**, **he is a pacifist**.

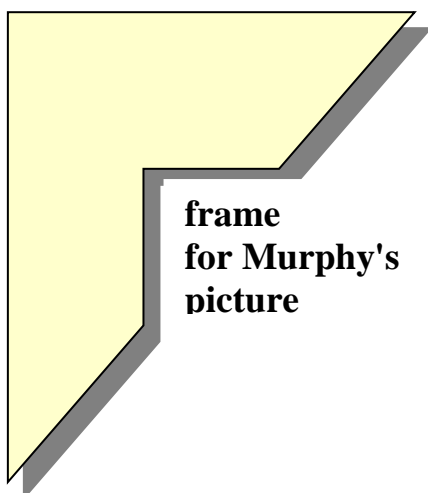


- Disarming bombs by removing the trigger mechanisms - Murphy *does not understand bomb fuzing, he is a liberal.*
- Rolling bombs over the edge of bomb craters, exploding a second or two *too late* - the craters were too deep for him, he is *agrophobic, he has no sense of timing.*
- Showered by shrapnel - *he does not know how to efficiently distribute and aim shrapnel.*
- Exploding incendiary bomb between my legs - Murphy is shy of incendiaries, he was banned from playing even with matches, I think he wetted his bed in his youth, he is *not trustworthy* around fire.
- Burning temple roof collapsing a second *too late* - *he is not Jewish.*
- Being shot at by a P-51 fighter plane on the rooftop - *he is not a P-51 pilot.*
- Being shot at by P-38s in the Boy Scout camp - *he is not a P-38 pilot for shure.*
- Scorching my hair by heavy machine-gun bullets when caught between fighting German and Russian armies - Murphy is probably a Bulgarian or a drunk Chinese, *not Irish*, he came pretty close, though.
- The memorable 'Pass-Over' barge affair, pinned down in the silt on the bottom of the river - he is *not a swimmer*, possibly claustrophobic and cannot stand water pressure, afraid of river fish.
- Fishing with dynamite with short fuzes, evading the pursuing Russian soldiers - Murphy is terrified by TNT explosions, *he is not enterprising.*
- Escaping the aircraft machine-gun fire at digging anti-tank trenches - *he isn't brave* by hiding at the bottom of the trench with me.
- Not complying with the German Army draft - hiding in the coal cellar with *my* machine-gun - *he is not a soldier.*
- Not complying with the Communist Army draft - a capital offense, death penalty to be carried out usually in 24 hours under martial law - he is definitely *not a fighter*, scared of the Commies and he has no concept about ropes.
- The KGB trip to the Russian Field Marshal - the 'code word and hand grenade' episode - he speaks *no Russian.*
- Jumping and swimming in the Danube between jagged-edged steel plates under water - he is not without claustrophobia; he is *not a metalworker either.*
- Motorcycle ride in the mud with Russian tanks at 4 inches away - he is *not a mud wrestler.*
- Hand grenade throwing contest with Willie - *he can not even throw a stone* [hey, drunk again?]
- Standing on the seat of a motorcycle while cruising down the street between cars at 30 mph - *he is no racer.*
- Constant harassment of the Communist police, KGB, etc. - many people lost their life for less - Murphy is *not a politician.*
- Walking near the minefields - almost stepping on some - *he may not even be a lawyer.*
- I saved the lives of about a dozen kids who were nearly drowning in the Danube, I had to knock one kid unconscious because he was fighting me in his panic. I came close to drowning myself, but the larger kid was saved - Murphy *does not like water* (this sounds sympathetic to me), just whiskey, a serious case of *hydrophobia.*
- Almost drowning in Lake Balaton - he is afraid of sweet water fish and frogs; he is *not a swimmer or an ichtiologist.*
- The near fatal motorcycle accident - just a broken foot, kid stuff - he was afraid to break my other leg or my neck while I was incapacitated, *he has no guts .*
- The icing-up airplane carburetor affair - Murphy is terrified of flying, *he is not an aviator* for sure, and he does not know how to apply ice, *he is no physicist either.*

- Rattle snake warping around my neck twice in the water, bit me **only** on my finger, not on my neck thereby **could not prevent me from writing these lines - Murphy is also a reptilophobe (new word?), not an animal lover.**
- etc., etc.

If Murphy had some saying about the outcome of the items described above, I would have a hard time writing these lines from the grave. Murphy is a coward wimp, **he is not brave or inventive, can not use and exploit opportunities, not even against a young skinny Hungarian boy with two left hands.**

There were a lot more potentially deadly situations I walked (swam, flew, ran) into and away from. Upon arriving and settling in California from the East Coast we took a nice apartment right on the beach. Often times I just sat at the big picture window and watched the sun go down into the water - or as it seemed, a very beautiful sight. I came from a country which was robbed of her ocean in the Trianon 'Peace Treaty' in June 4, 1920. So, for me it was an exhilarating experience to look out the window and see the immense beauty and the mass of water in front of my eyes. As nice weather set in, I would tell my wife that I am going for a swim, be back later. Swimming in a mile or two was no big problem for me. When the coastline got fuzzy, I headed back to shore, sometimes I swam too far and darkness descended over me. I remembered the street light configuration in front of our apartment (similarly to my Balaton escapade) serving as beacons, guiding me back in the dark. A Boy Scout is always a Boy Scout. Ignorance of ocean currents awarded me with the exhilarating **freedom** of swimming alone in the **big puddle**. Had I known at that time about the currents capable of carrying people out to the open sea, I would not have had the pleasure of swimming unrestrained, probably would have thought twice before entering the water. On the other hand, as I know myself, probably I would have done the same or more, despite. It would have been an even bigger challenge. People asked me if I was ever afraid of sharks. I told them that I did not insult any, they have no reason to attack me, besides, even sharks don't like Hungarians, they don't taste good. I felt safe and I am still here smiling - what else can you ask for?



## APPENDIX - A

Hungary, 1954. I was called up for military duty. Since I was working for the military – as a civilian – in the previous years I could get a deferment. Not this time. The military – as any other institution of the Communists – involved an aggressive political brainwashing, now it would be under strict military discipline, I would have to endure more rounds of atrocities. No way. It was bad enough to go to work 1/2 hour before starting time to take part in compulsory meetings where a Communist official, usually the Party Secretary presided, and the daily politics were discussed. Articles from the official organ of the Party newspaper were read, and then each-and-every attendee had to pass an opinion on it. It was unthinkable not to say some approving words to the tripe unless one was gambling on to be 'invited' downtown to the KGB office.

Now, I had to report to my near undoing. I decided: ***much rather got shot or hanged right then and there, than going through a long torture*** in the military due to insubordination – I will not obey any Communist order whatsoever. Through my connections I learned that the group called up for duty that day was destined for slave labor to build Russian rocket launching sites in a mountainside. This means using shovel and pick axe, 14-16 hours a day, 7 days a week for 3 years if you last that long. No way!

***Better Dead than Red! – Dr. Bertrand Russell*** - not the other way around as you stated! You should have lived under Communism, you moron! The only person who could give me orders was my father. Period. If somebody wants to give me an order, I have to first approve the person giving the order and then the content of the order later. Even if I would approve of the person, I still reserved the right to disobey, in case the 'order' did not meet my standards. I can not be brainwashed, I decided that I will not join the Communist thugs, no matter what. Dressed up in several layers of warm clothing; did not want to catch cold an hour before they hang me. Was always conscious of my health. So, I appeared at the military court building one day later than the note specified. It was a large multi-story building in the middle of town, with an enormous size thick solid oak double-door. Started banging on the door with my fist. A soldier opened a small window and asked what I wanted. With the most perfect calm voice, informed him that I am reporting for military service. The huge door slowly opened, and I entered. Behind me 2 thick steel locking bars were applied to the door. Another soldier was stationed on a platform in a glass enclosure. I gave the paper to one of the soldiers, he informed me that it is one day too late, for which I displayed strong disbelief and indignation. Then he picked up the phone and reported the event.

About 5 minutes later two soldiers came with submachine-guns. I was sandwiched between the two and a long walk started. The soldier in front of me started to go up to the 3rd floor, then through offices round-and-round the building where a soldier sat in every room. Each room had 2 doors – in-and-out, so we walked the whole city block inside the building. Then down to the 2nd floor. 3 minutes walking, up the 4th floor. This went on for about another half an hour. They wanted me to lose orientation in case I wanted to escape. Escape? Each window had iron bars, then the guards, machine-guns, steel bars, etc. I knew exactly where I was all the time, I counted my steps and turns. Boy Scout, remember? It impressed me immediately that ***they were more afraid of me than I was of them!***

Finally, we arrived in a hallway: One side had offices, the other jail cells. They opened a cell, shoved me in, and locked the heavy steel-bar door. I lay down on the bare concrete floor, feet high against the wall, smoking a number of cigarettes singing happy folksongs in-between – I won't have to live under Communism for long now!

About 2 hours or so later the armed thugs came and showed me in a door across my cell. It was a small room; a desk with an incredible amount of paperwork on top in total disarray, behind the desk sat an older

lieutenant colonel, a military judge. He looked intelligent in comparison with the usual Communist officers – he was probably from the pre-Communist old guard, I theorized.

"Your name: .... your birth date and location.... etc." Since I was smoking facing him, he 'ordered' (ha-ha-ha) me to stop smoking. "There is no smoking here" – he related. For which I: **"Apparently your eyesight is not so good – don't you see that I am smoking?"** He looked me with eyes that were hard to describe. Then I demanded a chair, I was tired – I said. **"There is no chair available"** was the answer. For which I unceremoniously sat down on the floor – still smoking, looking up to the desk. The poor officer's face was difficult to describe, he could have won an Oscar just by watching his facial expressions going through a dozen modes and colors. Finally, he pressed a button on his desk and the two machine-gun toting thugs appeared. The officer gave them a piece of paper and the walking tour started again around the building.

My mind was racing through different Shakespearean possibilities: **'bullet, or rope – that is the question'**. After about 10 minutes of marching from one floor to another, it became a curious project; if they want me killed, why this charade? Just get to the point, and it is over. The thought occurred to me that they perfected even the last-minute suffering for the target by trying to make him think that there may be a way out. I was still convinced, however, that they would execute me.

Finally, the procession ended up on the cobble-stone surfaced large yard, in the middle of the compound.

The lead soldier cut across diagonally, and the execution location became observable. Along one side of the yard there were about a dozen parking places filled with military trucks, front ends facing the yard. Between each truck gallows were installed, with ropes neatly attached, ready for action. At the executions, they fired up the trucks to drown out the death cry of the victims. This is why the outside world, people walking on the boulevard – could hear nothing, just motor noise.

Ok, I thought, finally my worries are over – a few minutes, and then eternity, in which the Communists did not believe **and have no control over**. But I have to accomplish one more last feat before that: I have to get rid of one of the thugs. (Hungarian mythology states that if you kill an enemy in combat, he will be your shoeshine boy in the afterlife! I never had a Communist shoeshine boy!). Which one? If I attack the guy in front of me, the soldier behind me will shoot me at once. On the other hand, if I suddenly turn and attack the soldier behind me, he will not have time to cock his gun and place it in the position to shoot me. I will carve his eyes out and simultaneously will try to bite his throat. By the time the front guy turns around and shoots me, hopefully I will have my plan carried out. --- Still walking – I liked the 3rd gallows from the end, it looked better to me than the others, for some unexplainable reason – remember, **(three is the Hungarian justice?)**. I was tossing coins in my mind, which one will it be? But we passed all of them! In fact, we were proceeding toward the entrance. Now this is strange. Aha! They will push me out of the door onto the street in front of all people and will shoot me as an escapee! – raced through my mind. In

Communism that would be a standard procedure.

Then we arrived at the huge doors, the front soldier gave the paper to the attending one on the podium. He looked at me twice in disbelief, and then picked up the phone. He wanted to be certain that no clerical error occurred, and they let a prisoner go. He gave the sign to my faithful companions to open the door! The two heavy iron bars were lifted, and the door was opened. One of them said that I can go. Aha! They want me to run out, and as an obvious escapee, shoot me. Now this is me: I told the soldiers that **"I refuse to leave!"** They were totally surprised and asked me, why? **"Because I like it here!"** was my answer. The two looked at each other for a few seconds, then one of them said that I have to go. I waved to them good-bye, and slowly, **very-very slowly** started to exit. They slammed the big door behind me, which gave me a slight push from behind. To my knowledge, nobody, but nobody came out of that building alive before. I

stood on the street in front of the door, looking up to see if any guns were visible from the windows above. None were seen; I started to walk *very slowly* down the boulevard. At the next corner, out of sight of the goons, turned right and started running as fast as I could. I sat down on the steps leading down to big river Danube, lit up a cigarette and with the most perfect stoic contentment, smiling, I enjoyed every sip. Projected my worries onto the river - *let Danube handle it from now on* - it is much bigger and stronger than I... Then looked straight up the sky, which was getting dark by now by the advance of heavy clouds and got up. Pinched myself to see – am I really alive? It is time to go home.

A ride home on a streetcar was uneventful. A bunch of us close friends, about 20 boys and some girls used to meet at a local sweetshop which offered coffee, ice cream and short drinks as well. We used to congregate there, especially at weekends. I thought I deserved a shot (!) or two for the ordeal I managed to survive, so I stopped by. As I entered the gathering, at least 15 boys and girls had a good time – they must have had a few libations, judged from the behavior and the noise they created. One of the girls looked up and screamed: "*he is here!*" All eyes turned toward me speechless, two of my friends dropped their glasses to the floor. There was an eerie quiet for a few seconds, then things turned loose. A couple of my friends grabbed me and forcibly meshed me into the crowd. The noise level became at least twice than the usual. The ones who dropped their glasses relayed to me that at first they thought I was a ghost! They knew darn well that *nobody, but nobody* came out of the Military Court building alive before.

To make a long story short, they forced several rounds of whiskey down my throat (actually they did not have to use excessive force), until I had to sit down – the room started to revolve around me – I did not eat for a whole day.. I recounted my experience, the nice KGB soldiers who refused to shoot or hang me, the despicable criminal, the unceremonious cowardly exit from the building, the whole nine yards. They all came to me and congratulated – the reason they gathered was to commemorate my death. They were sure I will be killed.

Next morning, I had a hard time getting out of the bed and going to work. Upon entering the premises, the manager, Váradi-Weinberger, a KGB major looked at me with an incredulous expression. "Comrade, how come, you are here?" he asked. For which I: "it is customary in the Socialist System to show up in time to work, to build Socialism!" The guy was speechless, just looked at me in total disbelief. His comrades must have told him that I was arrested at the military court. He was KGB; he knew that people are carried out of there, not walking out. I passed him with a complete indifference, and told him: "Comrade, if you have any problem in the future with the KGB, political or otherwise, just let me know. I will pull you out of it!"

Váradi-Weinberger was totally floored. He looked at me demolished as I, with a phlegmatic gait headed toward the building entrance. Before entering, I turned back – he was still looking with open mouth – how is this possible? I smiled at him and gave him a good-by hand signal. According to KGB practices, I would have been dead since yesterday. But I used a bit of psychology: in Communism, nobody trusts anybody. A measly KGB major knows very little of the upper levels of command. I knew this. As a consequence, he probably thought that I had some very high connections for what he was not privy of. I kept smiling the whole day.

Next day at home my father asked me as to what happened. I recounted the whole episode. He asked me to describe the lieutenant colonel who interrogated me. Upon my description he said: "I know who you are talking about. He is a good friend of mine; he is the last of the old, non-Communist guard."

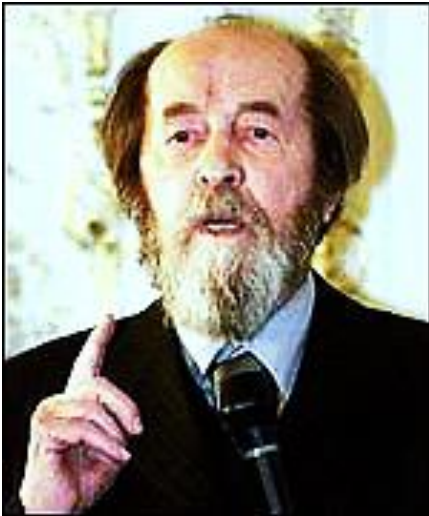
The officer must have recognized me from my father's name and data, he gave me a break. At his point I felt terribly bad: I should not have behaved in the rotten way I did, but I did not know, whom I was



facing. Asked my father that in case he meets this person, relay my sincere apologies to him. Father smiled – al always – case closed.

### ***Afterthought ----***

If the goons had shoved me in a different office, if not *the* lieutenant colonel, my father's friend would have presided over the hearing; you would not read these lines for sure. Can you estimate the probability of my survival? And now, *'The Marxian Man'* – the idol and aim of the Communists as portrayed by some episodes of history:



*"I love strong opponents! It's such fun to break their backs! - said the Leningrad interrogator Shitov. And if your opponent (e.g., your prisoner) is so strong that he refuses to give in, all your methods have failed, and you are in a rage? Then, don't control your fury! It's tremendously satisfying, that outburst! Let your anger have its way; don't set any bounds to it. Don't hold yourself back! That's when interrogators spit in the open mouth of the accused! And shove his face into a full toilet! That's the state of mind in which they drag Christian believers around by their hair. Or urinate in a kneeling prisoner's face! After such a storm of fury you feel yourself a real honest-to-God man!"*

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his book

*"The Gulag Archipelago".*



Machine-gun and searchlight tower like the ones I had to pass during my escape from the

***"Communist  
Worker's  
Paradise"***





## APPENDIX B

A few words about the “Law” and “Lawyers” - the way I look at the issue. Since lawyers are governing a large sector of legal affairs of countries (lawyer presidents, governors, politicians\*, etc.), it seems timely and imperative considering the sorry state humanity is in - to shed light on the issue from a different point of view, from a different angle. The short exposé below is just that.

### Paul’s aphorism (ἀφορισμός) :

**“People - worms, plants, minerals - can not create laws.”**

Why? Because what people can create are *not laws*. People can make rules, regulations, ordinances, issue edicts, summons, declarations, etc. – but they cannot create *laws* - it is a sheer arrogance and abuse of the principle to state that we can make *laws*. Throughout the ages governments and similar declared their creations as “laws” to elevate themselves into the realm of the laws of God or the real laws of Nature, the Universe, hoping (and achieving) respect by the general population. By equating the regulations with the real laws, they bolster and elevate their childish and self-serving ego to God’s Laws – who dare to dispute the validity of the *Laws of God* ? The layers due to their creations of rules should be called *rulers* – but that does not sound right for obvious reasons. They call themselves *lawyers* instead and *rule* the populations anyway. This progression of events is perhaps mostly responsible for numerous countries and societies losing their power of self-determination, freedom. Is this hypocrisy (ὕποκρισις) or what? This brings up the question: What are laws and from where do they come from?

Laws governing the Universe are mathematics, optics, chemistry, physics, electricity, nuclear science, geology, mechanics – celestial included, gravitation, mass properties, etc., etc. (specifying and enforcing dog leash length is also called *law*, but it is not). Laws are with us from the beginning of the Universe, some scientists formulated theories according to which the Universe and therefore the laws which created and governing it may always have existed, they are infinite, yes, the Universe *could* be infinite in time and in dimensions as well at the same time. Some religionists insist that the Earth is only 6000 years old. No comment. Difficult to imagine the concept of infinity but there are many other difficult issues. Besides, our present status of understanding is lacking the knowledge. Present science does not even know what mass really is and from where the mass properties are coming from – although they claim they found the “*God-particle*” (or similar) a miniscule nuclear part of the Universe predicted by a certain Peter Higgs physicist and friends, explaining the existence of mass. The same is true concerning gravitation. How about time? Still today, it is not known. But the science of anthropology (ἄνθρωπος-λογία) calls our species *Homo Sapiens* - the smart ones! Interesting at least. Keep reading.

To make a point: So far nobody could prove to me that for instance the length of a dog leash in San Diego or anywhere else is equivalent in importance and falls in the same category than the above-mentioned disciplines of science. That is called the “*Leash Law*”. These both categories are designated as “*laws*”. Until somebody can convince me of the equivalency and importance of these two categories, I will not change my mind about the issue, until then I am forced by sheer and simple logic to distinguish between the two issues.

Laws have temporal and general constancy, permanency, including the laws of relativity. Things in our everyday life seem to be constantly relative, the only thing I can call constant is change. An oxymoron? Not to my point of view. Not until recently was science capable of producing images of objects on the femtosecond (0,000.000.000.000.001 or  $10^{-15}$  of a second = one quadrillionth, or one millionth of one

billionth of a second) time resolution scale. Two consecutive pictures at high speeds of a human cell show movement and change. Change is constant. But one cannot change the speed of light with an edict, with a declaration, with an ordinance, with a simple stroke of a pen, or suspend gravitation for 10 minutes, because a lawyer wants to float around in the room. The gravitational force exists everywhere, even in outer space, where it is much smaller than on Earth, but it can be changed locally by approaching another object what will predictably create a larger force proportional to the masses. I can predict (with certainty, by using known *laws*) the gravitational forces between two objects if their physical characteristics and the distance between them are known. Along with the same logic I do not know of anybody or any theory which would predict the leash length in downtown San Antonio in March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:54 a.m. time in 2055 – for instance. Can you, “*lawyers* ?” You still call that a Law? A *Law* ?

Fortunately for the sake of conversation and otherwise I can count a large number of cherished and highly respected lawyer friends: Albert Einstein, Alessandro Volta, André-Marie Ampère, Ed Teller, Isaac Newton, Blaise Pascal, René Descartes, Michael Faraday, Max Planck, Marie-Slodowska- and Pierre Curie, and a few hundred more. They all dealt with *laws* and to my knowledge neither of them ever mentioned or researched, proposed or written theories about leash lengths or similar. However – without taking away an iota from scientists, for instance “The Laws of Newton” are really Laws of Nature – or the Universe, take your pick - and he (and the others) did not create or own the Laws, but discovered them. Correctly: “The Laws of Motion as Discovered by Newton.” But that takes too long to pronounce, isn’t?

Considering the above, the commonly applied term “Lawyer” in my dictionary refers to scientists, not attorneys. From time immemorial people arrogantly applied the term “Law” to some people-created problems – *traffic laws*, *divorce laws*, etc. The traffic “law” is: two or more vehicles can not occupy the same place at the same time *in this dimension*. That is the reason for the traffic *rules*, *regulations*, *ordinances*, to prevent occurrences called traffic accidents. Collisions happen in the universe also, but those are not accidents; they follow a set of strict *laws* – *not rules*. The people working in the affairs of other people should be called “Attorneys” only. I have absolutely no problem with that.

The equality. It is customary to state that “*everybody is equal under the law*”. This is true – no matter who keeps throwing stones up the air, they will all fall back. That is a law. The higher you throw, the faster they will come down – regardless of if you are a plumber, or a physicist, or an attorney, or a president, or anybody else. *They are all equal under the law* - of gravity in this case. Looking at history, no matter how many years or centuries one goes back, the same cannot be said about *rules* ; people-made instruments. All political systems will favor the ones who agree with it. The opponents may be jailed, exiled, or murdered – as history teaches us through over millions of tortured and murdered people, considering dictatorial systems. Therefore, it can safely be stated that according to practice, *not everybody is equal* under their *rules* - *not laws*. Laws do not murder, practitioners of *rules* can.

\* for the definition of Politicians, see pages 6 – 7.

## APPENDIX C

Working for the military in the “People’s Democracy” presented delightful experiences at times. One such occurrences were the April 4<sup>th</sup> military dispalys when army units from all departments were assembled on a big square for the inspection of the Minister of War. There were two large top-down ‘ZIS’ made cars (they were old Packard chassis cars – long out of production in the US). In one of them was standing the Minister of War waiting for the top dog to arrive in a similar car. As the toop-dog car pulled up to the other, the Minister of War gave a salute and announced that the army units are ready for

inspection. After this the top dog (at that time Farkas Mihály, alias *Hermann Lövy*) ordered the shoffeur to turn around and pulled in-line with the army units, greeting them, going to the next unit, etc.

The voices could be heard along the square and in the adjacent areas. All access streets to the square were closed by *T-34 tanks*. The sound was distributed through a number of loudspeakers mounted on trees, telephone poles, and everything that was available.

Now this is where I come in. The job of providing the bosses' voice to the loudspeakers were accomplished by radio transmitters, receivers, and amplifiers. I had to design and build the transmitters and assemble the receiving station which was located on the top floor of an adjacent government building. Prior to the design, we had to decide which frequency band to use for the communication. Weeks went by and we were listening to a number of probable frequencies. 4 separate frequencies were necessary because each of the two cars had 2 – 2 transmitters and microphones for redundancy – should on unit fail, the other could be immediately put to service.

Just about when we set the frequencies, we gave them to an attendant KGB officer. Did not take an hour, a *disturbing radio transmitter* using Morse code showed up on one of the frequencies – Murphy again! We had to immediately notify the KGB, the officer said he will be back soon, and left to make a telephone call. Less than 5 minutes later he annunced: *the radio signal originates from a Greek ship traveling northwest (gave the location also) on the Atlantic Ocean on way to America. It is a commercial ship, carrying '....' tons of various items, the radio transmitter is a 450-watt unit manufactured by ..... and he gave the manufacturer's name.* The Russian spy service! We concluded that by the time the affair takes place, the ship with its transmitter will be out of range, so the given frequencies are to be used.

We completed the design and fabrication of the transmitters, ordered larger generators to be built into the cars to be able to supply the extra load of the transmitters. Then we had a few days of free time – we had to be present, but little to do. While the mechanics worked on one of the cars, a friend and colleague of mine, Géza, were sitting in a *KGB garage*, a multi storey spiral garage. No other cars or soldiers were present, but the one with a submachine gun at the entrance. Géza and I decided that we can not just sit there doing naothin, so next day we showed up with sandwiches and a few bottles of beer. Sat in the rear on the seats thre big bosses use and discovered that an all-wave radio was buillt into the back of the rear seat – short wave, medium wave, long wave receiver to entertain the gurus, we turned on the radio and discovered that the *'Voice of America'* and *'Free Europe'* anticommunist - and strictly forbidden radios to listen to – were coming in excellently! We turned up the volume and listened to the transmissions which, if listened to by common mortals at home, could earn you a free trip to a *Siberian concentration camp*. This went on for days until our boss/friend shoved up and near hysteria screamed at us to turn the radio off – are you total idiots? He asked. We smiled, turned the volume lower and invied him to listen also. He agreed, gave him a beer – the problem solved our waay.

As the day of the military display neared, I had to stand in one of the cars and speak something while the rest of our troop evaluated the sound at the receiving strtation. First started to count up to 10, then back to 1, etc. Got itred of this and were looking for somethig to read. Yes! – I found my *Boyscout ID booklet* and started to read the Scout oath – to *God, Country, and King*. (Boyscouts were suspended by the Comminists, was forbidden to practice it.) after the fifth time, the KGB driver got very angry and told mre to stop that. *I started to count again*.....

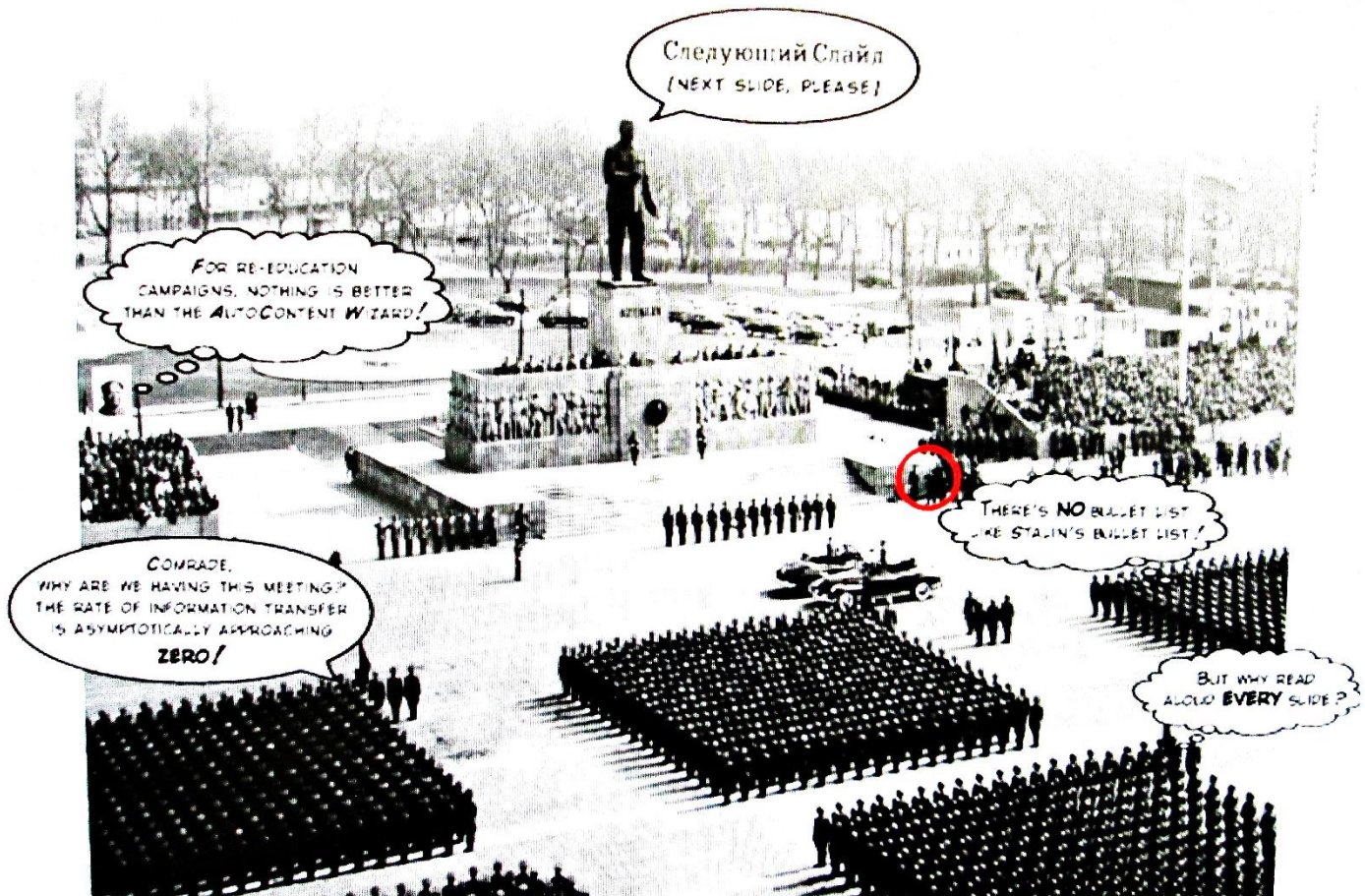
Then it was time. My friend/colleague Béla and I were ordered to stand near where the two cars meet, under the top dog's elevated place where the speeches were delivered, under the Stalin-statue. We had to be near the action – in case something goes wrong, we could be immediately arrested *and charged with sabotage*. We knew this.



Next to us standing there was a stand for foreign dignitaries, and a place where *free booze* (very good, 1<sup>st</sup> class buze) was available. Béla and I immediately discovered this and made frequent visits to the source. After awhile we got quite happy and *discussed the idiocy of the whole thing*, loudly laughing. A KGB officer immediately got behind us and wanted to arrest us. We ‘innocently’ told him, that this is an important Socialist holyday – and we are socialist Workers! He withdrew and we kept quiet.

The process was coming to an end – closing remarks, etc. but *the last sylalble of the last word was cut off*. I noticed this immediately, but others did not – it was a noisy conglomeration of mass now.

Upon examining the case of ‘the missing word’, I found that one of the vacuum tubes (were no transistors as yet) burned out. The tubes were from *WWII German military radios* – Murphy was defeated! See picture of the April 4<sup>th</sup> theater below.



**April 4<sup>th</sup> military parade in the Worker's Paradise – anno 1954**  
The red circle shows where I and my colleague had to stand during the Commy circus production

## **After the 1956 revolution.**

After the 1956 Hungarian revolution collapsed, I escaped to Austria through minefields and searchlight towers under the eyes of the secret police at night. After several places, we ended up in an Austrian village named Groß-Sankt-Florian and were put up in a butchery – restaurant – hotel. We refugees received 20 Shillings from the Red Cross monthly, what was enough for cigarettes and maybe for a couple of beers. One occasion after pay, I went down to the restaurant and ordered a beer. The owner said that there is no music because the system broke down. I spoke German, had no problem conversing with him. I told him to show me the music equipment, maybe I can fix it. My only tools were a small screwdriver and a small

slide rule – an analog calculator. Looking at the electronic amplifier I noticed that a power amplifier vacuum tube was burned out. Transistors were not in use yet those days. I told him to get one and I will take care of the rest. The tube arrived the next day from a nearby larger town, Deutschlandsberg. This is a southern area where Graz, a large city is located.

After cleaning out of the amplifier from dust, the spider webs, and a lot of dead bugs, I inserted the tube, and the amplifier worked perfectly – gave nice loud music. The owner was very happy and told me that if I want beer, just come down to the restaurant. And I did a few occasions, the free beer tasted very good.

A few days later I was walking on the „main street” when a car stopped behind me. I turned around and saw an old man in the car rolling down the window and asking me if I knew the Hungarian who can fix radios. Told him that I know him, it is me. He pulled out a 20-Schilling bill – a full month income - and insisted that I accept it. Then he said that I should go next morning to his business in D-berg. The two locations were connected by a short Diesel train; the trip took about 15-20 minutes.

Waiting for the train in the cold winter was considerably eased by the fact that there was a place in the waiting room where good tasting and warming short drinks were sold. Upon arriving in the shop of the old man, I found myself in a watch- and radio shop, very nicely kept and equipped. I was given the task to fix the radios and also to train an Austrian young man.

Everything went very well – the radios were repaired, and the young man started to pick up the technique too. After a month the government issued a new law which forbade the working of foreigners unless they are willing to become citizens, this had to be officially documented, of course.

So, the time came for me to quit anyway, we refugees were to be transported somewhere else. The boss wanted to keep me there and said that he will give me a place to live, will get regular salary, and, if I need some female companion, he has a young maid, I can marry her. It is true that she has already three children from different fathers, but that shows that she is healthy.

I thanked him for this extraordinary kindness, but politely refused to comply with his wishes. But I had a request: I found an old portable radio in the shop seemingly deserted. Asked if I could by it. He magnanimously gave it to me. See below.



We were taken to another place, an old, deserted military building. Straw bags for beds, not much opportunity for cleanliness, but we survived. I placed the radio on top of the upper bag and collectively listened to the news from Budapest concerning the aftermath of the failed revolution. The news were very bad and what made the affair worse is that the radio occasionally started to make noises, than quit working. Took the radio apart to find the problem. There was a 67-volt battery in it – that was the culprit. I used my natural voltmeter – my wet forefingers to detect the voltage. A

tingling sensation occurs if the voltage is there. Experimenting with the battery showed that if I keep squeezing it at a certain point, the voltage reappears, and the radio comes to life.

This is how we listened to the news – sadly and keep pushing the battery when needed. Then we understood that the revolution is completely lost. We gave up listening and turned off the radio.

I brought the unit with me on my traveling from camp-to-camp and ended up in my room next to my computer. Occasionally I turn on the radio and immediately all the old memories come back. One possible advantage of the vacuum-tube receivers, that they are not nearly as sensitive to electro-magnetic disturbances – like the explosion of an atomic weapon in the atmosphere. Hopefully I never have to test it in that manner.

# **VOL. 2**



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# **STORIES**

**(mostly) from the**

# **NEW**

# **WORLD**

***IMPRIMI POTES***



## New World Stories - #1



The Cessna - 150

### A d v e n t u r e s   i n   F l y i n g   ( l o w )

In my boredom abatement effort, I joined a flying club. I always admired birds - they can fly high or low, *freely* exploring the big yonder, looking (and doing other things) down on people from above. After completing the necessary flight schooling, my instructor, a very capable and experienced pilot took me up to see if I was cut out for the job.

He asked me if I was afraid. Who, me? - you must be kidding! I did not anticipate such a question to pop up, but of course I said no. On a sunny Saturday morning we got into the small Cessna 150 and took off. The instructor took the plane out over the Ocean where less air traffic was expected. He looked at me and since from the outside I have shown no sign of distress, he pulled up the nose of the plane at a steep angle and let it stall - lose its speed completely, stop in midair and allow the thing to flop over and dive down toward the water by itself. The name for this exercise is very appropriately called 'hammer-head stall'. You fall like a hammer. I learned that if that happens and no measures are taken to disallow the plane to spiral on the way down, you have time only for a very short prayer. So far so good.

Fortunately, I did not eat anything for breakfast, so my stomach could not respond in a natural way, and everything stayed inside. He looked at me, but I was too busy swallowing in fast succession and the plane by now was flying parallel to the water surface. He then told me to take the plane up and do the same thing again: '*you saw me doing it, go ahead*'. I hesitated for about a second and that was enough for him to question my intentions - *are you afraid?* Who, me? I shoved the gas lever to high rpm for which he immediately reprimanded me: handle this *ship* like you would treat a delicate woman - he said. Hmmm. I began to really like flying.

Well, I did what he said, and we were now blasting with an ever-increasing speed toward the water. I purposely let the plane sink below what is considered to be a prudent altitude for this maneuver. The instructor looked at me: what are you trying to do!? I told him that I am a good swimmer and asked him: *are you afraid?* He grinned and I pulled up the plane. Remember, *no arrogance with me!*

On my third time with him - having spent two full hours off plane - we taxied out on the runway and about halfway down the tarmac, he pulled over to the side and stopped the plane with engine

idling. To my utmost surprise (I like surprises, remember?) he got out the plane and stood to the side. I thought that this is a pretty gross behavior to take a leak in the middle of the airfield, but that was not the case. He was looking at me and impatiently asked: ***‘what the heck are you waiting for? Get going - three takeoffs and landings, get on the radio informing the tower of your intentions and then pick me up right here.’*** I still looked at him incredulously for a second what immediately prompted him to ask: are you afraid? ***Who, me? Aren’t you?*** - if I slam this contraption to the ground and demolish it? I had no intention of doing that on purpose of course, including paying for the resulting damages – if I survive. After only 2 hours total in the plane, I was to fly alone. I grabbed the steering wheel, which by now was soaked in my sweat and took off. With some errors I managed to take off and land 3 times and stop the plane where he stood. He got onto the plane and chewed me out: ‘You again handled the ***ship*** too roughly; in fact, you almost wrecked the landing gear by slamming down the plane so hard. Something wrong with your vision? Can’t you judge the distance between the wheels and the runway? And you came in to land crooked, almost jerked the ***ship*** off the runway,’ etc., etc. I sat there quietly and tried to remember the admonition. Then he smiled and said that with a little practice, I will have no problem flying. Indeed, in time I got better.

Once he asked me if I would like to have a little flying together - he has to go to take care of some business about 150 miles away. I was happy to do so - we got to be friends by now and in nice warm weather we went surfing together, he supplied the board. He was a very capable man: a mechanical engineer who designed propellers and similar highly technical things in his spare time as a hobby and side business and was an excellent airman as well.

The trip was enjoyable, we flew at 9000 feet (~ 2750 meters) altitude, the limit of the small plane with two of us in the warm weather when the air is thin, it would not go higher. As we were over halfway to the destination over the edge of the desert, he set the gas lever to idle speed. ***What tricks now***, I thought. As we descended to about 300 feet (about 100 meters) over the fields, among high voltage wires and farm fences, he told me to land. Is he serious? If we land, it will be impossible to take off again from the rough and soft plowed ground surface. Before then, the plane wheels would sink into the soil at landing, and we would flip over instantly. This can’t be true! On the other hand, have it your way, you are the guru, I like surprises anyway – and smiled. I was maneuvering to get into the most favorable attitude, avoiding wires, fences, searching for a relatively flat surface, aligning the plane parallel to the furrows on the field. I suspected that this was a false alarm; he would not wreck the landing gear and probably the whole plain with us in it for fun. He was too much of a professional. As we came down to about 100 feet (~ 30m), he pushed the gas lever to high rpm and told me to go. He was testing me if in an emergency, how would I react. No panic, just a grin – he did not know me enough. All OK.

Upon completing his business, we were heading home. The two fuel gauges of the two fuel tanks in the wings were indicating just a little over half full. It should be enough, he said, we will fly straight home. I started to say: “yes, but ...” but then I shut up – a mistake. The weather turned nasty halfway home and wind picked up, blowing against us. This head wind slowed our progress, but still enough fuel in the plane, he said. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  way home, we were supposed to fly over a radio beacon, telling us exactly where we were flying. The radio, which worked before, now behaved funny, all of a sudden the direction indicator needle started to swing wildly and uncontrollably. The radio quit on us. I grabbed the certification paperwork: the radio was serviced a week before! - not very well, may I add. It was getting dark very rapidly. We were flying by ***‘the seat of our pants’*** - as they used to do before radio location was invented. In fact, it was pitch dark now. We had to fly over a bay over the ocean to

shorten the trip in order to save fuel. From the city lights under us, we were able to estimate our position until we reached the water. It became *really* dark now, nowhere a patch of light for reference, flying compass heading in the murky haze, we could not get in touch with anybody do to the dead radio to get altimeter information. I looked at the fuel gauges, they indicated near empty tanks now. Finally, some excitement – (I like surprises, remember?). I pointed to the gauges and shoved my elbow in his side. ‘Get the manual, quick!’ he said. I found the paperwork while he took over the flying and with a flashlight I started to compute the estimated fuel still remaining, about 2 or 2-1/2 gallons. I did not turn on the light in the cockpit in order not to hinder his needed vision. We cut back the motor speed to use the fuel more efficiently. Since we had no radio to adjust our instruments, our altitude meter could have been off quite a bit, so we had to fly high enough that we would not take a bath in the drink. Finally, we arrived over terra firma, close to the small airport. He said that since we are out of the danger, I should land. The tower was closed by now, only a few dim marker lights were visible. Needless to say, I did not recognize the landing strip right away - I never flew in pitch dark before. The fuel gauges are at zero now. In search of the landing strip, I started to criss-cross, using up precious fuel. Finally, I was able to identify the place and landed safely.

It is a rule that upon landing, the plane has to be filled up with gasoline right away. This measure will prevent water laden air from being sucked in, condensing and accumulating in the fuel tanks - a bad thing to happen.

I taxied to the fuel pump smiling, relaxed, feeling safe, and patting my shoulders in my mind - a job well done. I stopped the plane at the fuel pump with the brakes and reached for the key to turn off the ignition - ***but the motor quit before I was able to touch the key: we were completely out of gas!*** Flying for a few seconds more and we would have been history! I still don’t like to go to funerals, especially to my own. Murphy, what is the matter with you - don’t you like funerals? – or flying with empty gas tanks?

## [Flying Ace Adventure No. 2.](#)

As good weather set in, I felt the irresistible urge to fly. I enjoyed flying through the cloud bank near the ocean in the moisture-laden air, sometimes I could not even see the propeller, and the cloud was that thick. Only the instruments tell you what you are doing. But when you break through and all of a sudden the bright sun pours over you are bathing in the life-giving (?) warm rays, exhilarating feeling takes over, I feel I am a bird. I found it extremely beautiful and relaxing to fly right on top of the billowing cumulus clouds (an extremely stupid thing to do), looking out the window I had the feeling that I am surrounded with huge soft, fuzzy, cuddly shimmering huge cotton balls, inviting to indulge in them, going in and coming out of them again, enjoying ***freedom*** and the virtually unrestrained three-dimensional aesthetical, exhilarating, titillating experience. On such a beautiful morning, I took off and just wanted to fly, to perfect my flying skills, frolicking in the air-sun-ray cocktail. This was beautiful but I forgot about one more constituent of the cocktail: *water*.

I flew over the Ocean, went up to about a safe 3500 feet (~ 1000m), flying in any which direction in 3 dimensions: turns left and right, hammerhead stalls, diving, twisting, enjoying myself. Fortunately, later I was at level flight at 2200 feet altitude when all of a sudden the motor started spitting, coughing, shaking and the rpm fell drastically. The propeller was jerkily trying to keep spinning in a spasmodic manner. Fuel gauges: tanks full. And then the realization: oh no, I forgot to apply ***carburetor heat!*** Under certain circumstances (like now) the moist air and the gasoline droplets

rushing through the carburetor inlet will expand before reaching the motor and such, will cool. If enough water vapor is present, the cooling will turn into ice and the ever-increasing ice layer, if not counteracted, will completely choke up the carburetor intake opening, no more gasoline can enter the motor. And that is the end.

In the flight school we learned that some people became panicky under these circumstances and crashed by turning on the carburetor heat full power at once. That can result in a total catastrophe: the ice will melt too rapidly and the whole chunk of ice will fall into the inner guts of the carburetor, choking up the gasoline flow and causing instant stoppage of the motor. The lesson of handling the *ship* like a gentle delicate woman popped up in my mind. How right he was.

I remembered now (hoped it was not too late) the instructions learned in the school and so, I cut back on the gas to idle speed, lessening the cooling effect in addition to *very slowly* applying the heat. I trimmed out the plane so it would fly by itself, tried to maintain as much altitude as possible - trying to stay up in the air as long as possible. I knew that every second counts now. The motor was still puffing, shaking, and nearly stopping. If the motor is allowed to stop, 99% sure I will not be able to restart it. So, I was playing with the heat and the gas levers simultaneously, had no other choice. I slowly turned the plane around facing the shore and tried to pick a shallow water spot without rocks to 'land' the plane if necessary on the water. The shore was full of sizable rocks; I would completely wreck the plane if I had to land there. Hopefully I will not total the machine in the process of landing in the shallow water. It did not occur to me at all that I was in danger. *This was exciting fun!*

I was sinking and sinking ever lower toward the water, wishing I could suspend gravitation just for 10 minutes. I am a good swimmer, used to swim in races, played water polo, but I forgot to ask the plane if it can swim or not, and this was no time to ask stupid questions: you have to supply the right answers and solutions. The plane was now only about 100 feet (~30m) over the water level, still sinking. I had to maneuver a bit to avoid landing on top of some divers and bathers in the water who would come to the surface in unpredictable time intervals. Some of the divers were looking up toward me and *shaking their fists* – they thought that I was just playing around.

By now I had my left hand on the door handle to jump out if necessary: I was now at a 30 feet (~10m) altitude, way below the coastline, under a cliff! At that very instance the motor picked up: I could hear the healthy humming again - the ice was gone!

I pushed the gas all the way in, but now I was facing the cliff ahead of me! The Cessna-150 is a light plane (to my luck) and picked up speed fairly rapidly. I had to make a sharp turn now to avoid hitting the cliff, I could see that the bathers and divers were looking at me with disgust from the *water*, shaking their heads (and fists) and waiting for a spectacular finale when I hit the wall. Sorry folks, no show today. When turning sharp - especially at low speeds, the plane will lose some altitude, but I was now at the tremendous height of 50 feet (~15m) over the *water!* That saved my life - and an insurance claim + funeral to be paid by somebody else. *Murphy is sure not a pilot material or undertaker*, he failed to intervene - again!

### **Affair #3 - it was not a close call at all!**

*(still had a few inches to play with – a huge margin for me)*

To comply with the rules for landing, one has to fly level at an altitude of 800 feet (~240m) approaching that airfield. Via radio contact with the tower, one gets permission to land or instructions if necessary from the safety point of view. In a straight-line approach usually, instructions are given referring to certain landmarks to observe and adjust the landing path accordingly. 'Report at the view

of the tanks', for instance. These were huge fuel tanks, not the army types. They were located parallel to the runways. On the other hand, if approach is made downwind (flying with the wind), one may make a 'U'-turn according to a controlled flight pattern recognizable from the tower, indicating the intention to land. Such was the case when I got permission to land with a warning that a plane was at a close distance ahead of me. I saw it and the tower instructed me to '*lose time*', meaning that the pilot has to make a few 'snake-like' motions, left-and right turns using up time, allowing the plane ahead to increase the following distance. This was done and the tower instructed me to land. My final approach was perfect and to further slow my speed, I engaged the wing air brakes called *flaps*. These flaps slowed the plane considerably and I was now about 20 feet (6m) off the concrete, the plane already landed in front of me, rolling down the runway. It is advisable to increase the landing angle, coming in at a steeper angle when using the flaps in order not to let the plane lose too much speed, stalling and uncontrollably hitting the ground. You want to stall the plane the instant when the wheels touch the concrete, and not before!

I felt safe, I did what the tower said and normally the allowed separation distance is adequate. But they let me fly still too close to the other plane should something happen if something goes wrong. Murphy at the helm - it did: the plane in front of me all of a sudden, in less than a second *blew a tire*, slid off the pavement and *made a 180-degree turn*, facing me now and stopping instantly with one landing gear appeared to be collapsed. The name for this gem is '*ground loop*'. The plane was at an angle, the left-wing tip touching the ground. I had no time to get on the radio; the tower could not help me anyway. To my left was another runway, it was in use, I could not just 'slide' over to the other landing strip. That is an absolute no-no. To my right, the fuel tanks. What to do? If I had flown as planned, I would have landed right on top of the other plane. I desperately gave full gas and tried to retract the air brakes which were driven by a *snail-slow electric motor*, I had to keep one hand on the switch continuously. It is nearly impossible to gain altitude with the flaps engaged. Like trying to accelerate a car while pushing on the brakes hard. The slow speed I was traveling at, the plane will actually lose a few feet during the flap operation before it will rise.

Thanks, or no thanks, I made a turn in their direction, tipping the wing to clear the lame plane and almost touching the ground with my other wing, the same time trying to adjust the flaps and gain altitude too. Being a student of religions, that *Hindu god Shiva* came to mind instantly who had at least 4 arms and hands (he used his second arms for a more pleasant experience – see below). I could have used his services at that moment. (I purchased a nice bronze statue of him while in India, and to commemorate this episode, I included the picture below.)

I cleared the dead plane by a foot or so, got back on course and landed safely. Usually, permission is given automatically to taxi off the runway or one has to ask for it. Neither happened this time - I was somewhat irritated by telling me to land so close to the other plane, I did not get on the radio. The tower felt guilty seeing the potentially deadly result of their decision to cut short of the following distance. They kept quiet too. My indignation, however, was totally unfounded: it is ultimate responsibility of the pilot to decide what to do in an emergency, even if the tower instructs otherwise. This is legal. Oh well, at least I had some extra unforeseen fun again. Murphy obviously was working for the plane ahead of me this time.





**Cessna 150 on steroids**



**Mr. & Mrs. Vishnu**

## **D a n g e r o u s   D e a d l y   P a u l   a n d   t h e   C u t e L i t t l e   R a t t l e s n a k e**

***(the snake died within a minute after she bit me)***

Sometimes my backache flared up and in times like that I used to drive to a pleasant bathing place, a warm water natural artesian well. There was a mud hole with 3 feet deep silt, the hole was filled up with the healing water. The sulfur smell was strong as the vapor rose over the well. People just sank in the mud up to the chin and were waiting for the natural, chemically loaded water to penetrate the skin and to do the healing process. I used to spend about an hour in the nice warm water, occasionally falling sleep - the treatment was very relaxing. These treatments were so successful that I did not have to go back for years after using the bath a couple of times. Locals explained that the Native Americans discovered the well long time ago and were using the mud hole to relieve themselves of the rheumatic pain they had. Finds of graves seemed to confirm this theory, bones of indigenous people exhibited skeletal deformations due to arthritic diseases - rheumatism. The water was also channeled into a nice swimming pool with branches of a huge tree overhanging. I spent many a good time in the water, soaking, swimming - and repeating the process a dozen times. This place is at the edge of our California desert with its hot sunny climate. Overall, the place was very agreeable with me. Driving up the narrow path to the bath, I used to stop the car and sit down in the hot sand, adoring Nature in action. The air was full of the sweet smell of the orange blossoms. I saw snakes, bugs, tarantula spiders and an assortment of creatures that made their homes in the sand.

Once a large tarantula spider was fighting a dragonfly which tried to sting the spider. The battle went on for quite a long time and the dragonfly came out to be the winner, as usual. I purposely did not interfere with the way Nature so wisely arranged the food chain among the creatures and just witnessed one small episode in the ever-continuing saga of the survival – and death for some. The dragonfly outmaneuvered and tired out the spider which became less responsive to the ever-increasing offensive of the fly. Then the inevitable happened: the dragonfly was able to deliver a sting to the spider which now tried to ward off the attacker, but it was too late for him. The dragonfly's poison started to take effect and the spider became increasingly sluggish, finally totally paralyzed. With incredible power, the dragonfly dragged the huge spider into an area where the sand was suitable to bury the spider alive. The dragonfly female then drilled a



hole in the body of the spider with her ovipositor and deposited her eggs deep in the spider. The hatchlings thereby were provided with food by the living but paralyzed body of the spider until the proper time arrived.

This mini-tragedy or mini-victory - depending on your preference - gave me some thoughts about so called humans who deposit deadly poison in other people's mind, gossiping, defacing, and denouncing each other. As in the case of the spider, the foul thoughts transplanted into a new brain will hatch and in due time can do their harmful act. I have seen this deplorable phenomenon much too many times.

On a beautiful evening I was the only one swimming in the pool under the gorgeous large oak tree branches graciously provided shade and beauty. A so-called 'lifeguard' was also present on the premises in the shape of a young man who instead of watching the water, was intently watching and entertaining two young girls with his stereo boom-box turned up to maximum.

It was just before closing time and decided to swim a few more lengths in the pool. As I was sprinting at full speed, something was wrapped around my neck. Thinking that it may be a branch from the tree, I tore it off my neck and kept swimming. When this repeated itself the second time, I stopped swimming and tore the thing off my neck again. *It was a small, cute rattle snake, about 24-26 inches long.* I started shouting to the 'lifeguard' but could not overpower the stereo, he did not hear me. The two girls were more exciting than a snake in the water, I have to admit. The snake started to swim toward me; he (she?) like my neck. In a defending move, I wanted to sweep away my new friend, but she (he?) was much faster and bit my thumb on my right hand, looking at me innocently: why, you mean old so-and-so, why don't you want to rescue me from the water? You got what you deserved! This was written all over the snake - so to speak.

I got out the water and confronted the 'guard' who was quite amused by the happenings. He turned down the noise machine and I asked for the snake-bite kit. He did not have one. How about a knife? He produced a terribly dull and rusty pocketknife. I told the jerk to sit on my hand on the counter until I cut the finger open where the snake bit me - just a tiny droplet of blood indicated the site. The 'knife' was so dull that it did not cut through my skin. Not very good management. I ran in the dressing room to change my clothes. As I took off my bathing trunks, I heard loud thumping noises - the guard fished out the snake - what he should have done a minute ago - and proceeded to beat the snake to death with a pole on the wooden deck. In my extended fairness, I ran out of the dressing room to save the creature, but I was too late. The poor thing started to convulse and finally gave out. I screamed at the guard about this, consequently he almost lynched me. He could not understand why I came to the rescue of the poisonous snake after it bit me! Numskull. I told him screaming that this whole thing was not the fault of the snake, it was his fault - he did not watch the water! There are millions of snakes around here - killing just this one did not matter!

I took a quick look at the girls who seemingly enjoyed themselves and were loudly chuckling and giggling. What is so funny, I thought. It was funny because just now I realized that I did not have a stitch of clothing on me, in my zeal to save the snake I did not have time to put anything on, I stood in front of them totally naked! It did not hurt them, I don't think. Neither did hurt me.

I dressed up in a hurry and saw my German girlfriend getting in her car. She said she was too scared, could not take it anymore. She started her car and left. The brave Master Race, congratulation! I got in my sweet little Porsche Super Carrera and found a string and a pencil in the glove compartment. I used the material to apply a tourniquet around my thumb, restricting the spread of the venom. The pencil served as a lever to tighten the string. Rattlesnakes are born with a full complement of venom to defend themselves from minute one after they come to the open world from their eggs. How thoughtful of Nature!

Fortunately, the closest hospital was not too far, although I had to drive through winding roads in the night for about 15 minutes. It was now too late for any effort to extract the venom, I knew it. My finger started to

swell and hurt. The manipulation of the gear shift lever just increased the blood flow, pushing the poisonous blood past the tourniquet.

Upon arriving at the hospital, my breath stopped for a second: my thumb was twice its normal size and was pitch black, pulsating with pain at each heartbeat. Entering the Emergency Department, I saw nobody. After about 2 minutes of shouting, a very sleepy young doctor shoved up, asking what I wanted. He looked at my hand and incredulously asked me how do I know that this was a rattlesnake? I told him that it was my friend. If you have ever seen a stupid expression on a sleepy doctor's face! He said that everybody knows that rattle snakes do not go in the water, he simply did not believe me. At this point I thought I should kick him in the shin to wake him up, my whole arm started to ache with a vengeance, and he is fussing around, wasting time. Finally, I told him that I was a Boy Scout and such, I know snakes and I do not lie! He immediately accepted my explanation, for which *I was* now surprised. He pulled out every drawer but could not locate the anti-venom. A hospital in the desert with millions of snakes around and no snake-bite medicine! *Another Homo Sapiens!*

The frustrated doctor called the pharmacy, but it was closed. Then called the pharmacist at home, he went home hours ago. An old gentleman showed up in about 20 minutes, producing the anti-venom. About 50 minutes elapsed now between the bite and the pharmacist. I had to let up on the pressure of the restraining string every 5 minutes or so to allow some blood into the finger (and venom into my arm) - if this is not done, I will lose the finger or worse. My whole arm was on fire by now, the lower arm was swollen and turned coal black. I could feel every heartbeat accompanied by a sharp pain.

As I sat on the examination table, the young doctor told me that he was sorry, but he has never done this before, and he enlisted my help in reading the notes on the medicine while he would prepare it. Two tubes were involved: a red one and a blue one. I got the wrapper of the red tube and told him aloud what to do. He mixed the stuff together and started to inject it around my wrist. Too late for it now, but he also injected some barrier fluids in my wrist to prevent the poison from spreading - ***the blackening was already up to my elbow!*** I perceived Murphy standing in the corner smiling.

He finished his job, and I jumped off the table and started to exit. The doctor jumped on me and physically restrained me from leaving and arranged my stay at the hospital. The head nurse came and stuck an intravenous needle in my arm; I had to retell the accident. She was absolutely in disbelief, snakes are not going in the water, you know! I told her that I know that she also knows that, ***but this ignorant snake did not know it*** and wrapped it around my neck twice before biting me. She shook her head and was grumbling about these joker liars or something. I took a look at my arm and resigned to the thought that I would lose my arm - it looked awful. Swollen to twice its normal size, black like soot and hurting a lot.

I fell asleep right away and about 1 a.m. I woke up to the shaking done by the head nurse: ***“you have to take a sleeping pill!”*** Are you kidding? – I was fast asleep. To no avail, had to take the pill what I carefully maneuvered under my tongue, drank some water, then she left. I immediately spit out the pill and went back to sleep.

An old doctor on duty woke me up in the morning. Looked at my arm which had not improved a bit overnight and asked me to tell him what happened. He shook his head with disbelief too and said that ***‘we all know that snakes don’t like the water. Are you sure, it was in the pool?’*** - he asked. I told him that I was not drunk - although I felt like it could do some good now under the circumstances - this snake must have been a dropout from high school and did not learn that he (she?) was not supposed to be in the pool. This was the time when a terrible rage of fire swept through the area igniting the dry bushes and just about everything in its path, many tens of thousands of acres burned down. The fire pushed the wild animals in front of it, some snakes ended up in the nice warm water. My little belated friend was an excellent

swimmer; I watched it after the accident as graciously but very fast swam away from me, a job well done. The old doctor kept me for another day in the hospital, the third day the swell started to subside. The drive home was not very pleasant, constant gear changing with my blackened arm, the pain was still there. In about an hour I was at home. I ate something and went to bed, listening to soothing music, not much more could I do anyway.

The next morning, I tried to wake up, my head was on fire, I felt. But it was dark, *I could not see anything*. Touching my head and face convinced me that I went blind, or similar. It turned out that the different medicines administered to me in the past day clashed and got a big dose of medicine poisoning. I had to force my eyes open to see, my face was swollen, hot, and looked like an overcooked red cabbage. Started to call around to the hospitals close by, but nobody wanted to pick me up in an ambulance. Then I was referred to a hospital specializing in poison matters - no ambulance either. I knew that hospital, I serviced some of their diagnostic X-ray machines. Since I lived alone, I had to come up with the solution myself: I cut a number of toothpicks to appropriate lengths and propped up my eyelids with them. I prepared a handful of spares too in case I lose them while driving. I arrived at the hospital without any further accidents and a young very conscientious doctor received me, I talked with him on the phone before, he was expecting me. People in the waiting room stayed 5 feet away from me, I don't blame them - I looked horrible. They probably never seen a Hungarian with toothpicks in the eyes. The doctor gave me a set of pills I must take in the next five days; he gave me a big one right away. In about 15 minutes my swollen head started to return to 'normal' and in another 20 minutes I could drive without the aid of the toothpicks. End of story, but if my little friend had decided to bite me on my neck, this story would have ended much sooner - in about 5 minutes or less. Murphy apparently is working for the snakes or can not swim.

In my wanderings in this world, I had to go to Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico on business. I stopped by a place where a man was teasing a long rattlesnake with a tool on the pavement. The snake wanted to slither away, but the guy always pulled it back to the center of attraction. From the tool he used, I deduced that he may be a professional teaser. He was, as it turned out he had just acquired the animal and wanted to be sure that the snake was healthy. It was because a few minutes later – when already about 40 people had gathered to watch the process – he put the snake into a bag and headed to a store next door. The store advertised: **'The World Largest Poisonous Snake Farm'** – or something like that. I bought a ticket allowing me to enter the exhibit, and indeed, there were a huge number of snakes answering to all denominations, religions, color, size, nationalities, etc. The snakes were kept immaculately clean in small well-illuminated and warm recesses, with glass windows. I was curious to see if I was able to identify my poor little ex-friend among the many dozens of occupants. Indeed, I found the type. Next to the Latin name of the creature, it stated: *The most poisonous rattle snake, the Western Rattler*. I testified to that effect to the owner/teaser, who got a kick out of my story. I could sleep that night very well – I encountered the most poisonous one, not just a little stinger. Would not have it any other way. That probably would have lowered my self-respect. I like challenges, remember? - *Murphy – you are a non-entity!*



**crotalus viridis**

# ALYSSUM, BEES, and Telecommunication --- A Personal Experience

By Paul Lukas – Electrical and Biomedical Engineer

--- Seen on the picture: *Apis Mellifera* bee on Sweet Alyssum flower ---

February-March 2008



The communication ability of bees is widely known – dozens of books have been written on the subject. It is generally agreed that the worker bees leave the hive in search of pollen. When one or more of the scouts return to the hive, they perform a ‘ritual dance’ consisting of figure-eight flight patterns. The length and the axis of the figure 8 are apparently indicative of the distance and the direction of the pollen supply. This happens in plain view of the hive occupants. After the elaborate dance, the scout enters the hive and settles among the colony members. It immediately starts another dance routine frantically shakes its body left-and-right, advances a bit and while shaking, turns around continuing the dance. The pattern is repeated several times, for everybody to understand its meaning.

Elements of the dance convey the particulars of the find: quantity, quality, direction, distance, etc. Their navigating ability despite of their relatively poor eyesight is extraordinary, they seem to remember the sun angle when they leave, the translated angle then guides them back to the hive. Some people speculate if the Earth's magnetic field has something to do with their precise navigation ability. All this without gps equipment, or more accurately, with the help of their built-in gps system. In a cubic millimeter-class brain!

It is regretful that in the past few years the bee population was decimated by an alleged virus-borne sickness or pesticide poisoning – we were told. Certain areas have lost 70 percent or more of the number of bees, which are essential in pollinating the crops feeding the humans. Indeed, before this disaster I would lay down next to the pool to sunbathe, and my sweating body would attract dozens of bees and wasps to quench their thirst by drinking my salty sweat. They never stung me - why would they? They are far more civilized than the humankind – *homo sapiens* - only attack when threatened or hurt. Unlike people. Often times came a thought to me: don't they get high blood pressure from all that salt? In the past 3 or 4 years in our small garden none were visible, or just a very few. Then last year, in 2007, they slowly started to come back again. This process is slowly continuing to increase as of today; hopefully the sickness had past its crest and allows the bee population to come back. Some research was done to find out the reason for the decline in numbers: air pollution, at least in part. Without pollution the flower scent spread is estimated at 3-4000 feet, with pollution: 650-1000 feet. This means that the bees will encounter more difficulty in finding the pollen.

From the end of January here in the California Southland the sun comes out and at noon for 3-4 hours, it is pleasantly warm, one can sunbathe again after the chilly winter. Such was the case one day noon in the first week in February. I sat down on a seat near our small garden, enjoying the warm rays. Then I noticed that a bee had fallen into the pool, it was motionless - no idea how long it had been there. Took it out and dried its rigid body in my hand, blowing warm air on it and later placed it on the warm cement floor. Slowly started to move and in 10 minutes it was moving quite freely, started to try its wings. Then

took off but could not make it: fell in the cold water again! After fishing it out again and drying on the warm cement, started to move again. I had to do some chores and left it there to dry. About half an hour later when I came back it was gone - hoped that finally recovered and flew away since was nowhere to be seen - not even in the pool.

The next warm day I sat down again to collect some vitamin D, when I noticed a strong sweet honey smell. This came from the small white flowers in the garden about 4 feet away. For some reason I never noticed this scent before. Looking around, I saw a bee - the same size as the one yesterday working busily on the flowers. Could it be the same one? Slowly got up and approached it - immediately flew away. Sat back and the bee came back shortly after, collecting pollen. Then the same repeated itself as I approached - it was gone.

Resigned to a defeat, sat down again, and enjoyed the sun. The bee was back at its job in minutes. Then all of a sudden left the flowers and darted directly to the left side of my head, about 4 inches away. Hovered there for 5 seconds, quickly switched position to inspect my right side, then 5 seconds later ended up on the top of my head: searching - it felt - something in my hair! Now this is getting exciting! - I thought. After 10 seconds, left my hair and flew 3-4 inches in front of my nose - looking at me in the eyes hovering! I was by now so fascinated with the whole event that I could not move, just smiled. After 5-6 seconds, as if nothing happened, the bee returned to the flowers.

I got up and ran for my photo camera - now this whole thing is something special - I just have to take a picture of my new friend! Never heard of something like this before in my whole life. I set the camera to close-up and approached the bee: *it did not pay any attention to me at all!* I was getting closer-and closer, still no concern on its part. Finally, I started taking pictures - with flash too, at about 3 inches distance - no response, just continued working without a second gap. I could hardly believe myself - this is extraordinary! I called it the "*alpha-bee*". The attached photo was taken at a distance of 4 inches!

The next day I noticed there were 2 bees present - most probably my alpha brought a friend too. And the next day after, there were 3 bees! Thereafter 4 bees were standard. As far as I am concerned, this whole series of episodes is something strange, exciting, and even fantastic! Now here comes the clincher: ***I could approach any of the 4 bees to a distance of 4 inches or less to take pictures of them without ever trying to train them separately of my proximity; they were paying no attention to me!***

Took more than a dozen pictures of them, no problem. The problem is with me: how did they get the message - if they did - not to be afraid of me? Are they radio amateurs like me (beemateurs?) or better? Communication is wonderful! If somebody is aware of such a phenomenon, please inform me. I did not find any similar *bee-havior* in the literature.

And the story continues: on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, a nice sunny Saturday, it was decided that tomato plants will be planted in place of the fragrant Sweet Alyssum flowers. The flowers were removed, and the watering system refurbished. Guess what: a bee - *the bee?* - returned and flew to the usual place - but there were no more flowers!

Then next day, Sunday, as I was sunbathing about 15 feet away from the one-time flower bed, *the* bee came. Flew back-and-forth, and then landed on the back rest of a chair less than a foot away from me. I talked to her, then slowly approached with my finger, and *gently started to stroke her* (the workers of these species are females) back! Instead of trying to fly away, she held on to the chair more strongly! I talked to her, and then about a minute later she flew away. 5 minutes later she came back and landed on my arm. That left me speechless - she looked at me and 10 seconds later she was gone. Never to be seen again - alive. I could feel under my skin the apprehension: ***'Why did you do that for? Are you happier now, that you got rid of my food supply?'***



The next night I was dreaming of the whole episode. I woke up after *REM* – but she did not come back – my apologies. I deserve it. End of story, I thought – but read on.....



### ***Apis Mellifera – My Friendly Alpha-Bee***

*On April 6, 2008, at 10:32 hours Pacific Daylight-Saving Time an expired bee matching the description of my previous sightings was found near the one-time flower bed. A script came to my mind what I read in a cemetery some years ago, where my parents are resting, stating:*

***“You Are What I Was –***

***You Will Be What I Am”***



*My Friend ...α... is a  
paperweight now – but her memory will  
live in me as long as I live ...*

*.....Sic Transit Gloria Mundi.....*

*This small insect just reinforced my long-time life philosophy:*

***“All you need in this World is Good Will and  
Intelligence. If you have both, you can have everything.”***

German Philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer is quoted saying something like this:  
***‘The more I watch people, the more disgusted I get. The more I watch  
animals, the happier I get.’*** Well said.

#### *ADDITION to the story*

*[NOTE: I am a member of most physician ham radio group which regularly meets on short wave radio every Sunday morning to discuss the latest medical advancements, cures - I have 10 years of hospital experience.]*

Apology and explanation for not joining the 2009.01.04 Sunday Grand Rounds – due to an emergency call, a lifesaving effort.

2009.01.03:

In the evening I noticed a bee in the nearly ice-cold swimming pool water. Legs tightly folded under the body, wings closed and overlapping. The significance of the position of the wings was not clear, but



according to previous experiences the revived individuals had open or partially open wing positions, only the already dead or nearly dead ones showed this condition.

Fished it out and started a process what proved to be successful in revivng several bees before under similar conditions: drying and breathing warm air on their bodies from a close distance, from 1-2 inches. No sign of life after about 20 minutes. - Then, it moved one leg just a hair. Was this a life sign or just muscle relaxation due to the warm air? Was not clear at that point.

Encouraged by the miniscule movement, continued the gentle heat treatment. Placed it on a piece of porous towel paper with a drop of honey for energy supply. Had to nudge it to the honey since could not walk. Took a little from the honey, could see the proboscis, then collapsed again and turned to its side. More warm air, for about an hour. (I was starting to get dizzy.) Slight motion again – turned it on its legs and covered it with a glass to prevent wandering off and falling on the floor. Also placed a cup over the glass to dim the light reaching it in the hope that will think it is night and going to sleep, thus preserving energy. I surmised that in this condition every bit of the remaining energy is essential for survival.

### *And now I stop for a moment - for a totally different, but related story.*

My father received a shot in the first WW I, completely destroying his right lung. The bullet entered at his throat and came out on his back - I had his military overcoat clearly showing the event. After the battle he was declared dead because showed no signs of life. As usual, a ditch was dug, and the dead soldiers were thrown in. They left my father last thinking that maybe he would regain consciousness. But he did not at that moment. My father was liked by the company he commanded because of his human treatment toward the soldiers. That explained why he was put aside to be the last one to be interned. - Well, the job has to be done, they threw my father in the ditch too on top of the other bodies and started to shovel dirt over them.

Then one of the soldiers noticed a slight twitch of his unburied hand. He was immediately taken out and put on the horse drawn wagon, and was taken back to the field hospital, covered with blood and dirt including the gaping wounds.

The 'hospital' which was blown up by a grenade consisted of the following: 1 physician, 1 pocketknife, 1 small bottle of iodine. The doctor cleaned out the wound the best he could with his handkerchief, operated with his pocketknife and – well, cannot do anything else – poured the iodine into the wound. The stinging of the iodine brought my father back to consciousness for a moment, then he was transported behind the lines to a better equipped hospital.

Years later he got his doctorate in law, became a military judge, a colonel, and several time Hungarian champion in target shooting, was elected to be a permanent member of the Olympic team. Out of the grave.

### *Now back to the bees.*

2009.01.04, Sunday.

Up early to see the condition of my patient. Although I knew it was radio meeting time, my patient's life somehow overtook all other tasks and started to attend to it. Was still alive but in a very bad condition. Warm air somewhat accelerated its movements again and noticed that started to frantically rub its body with its hind legs – both sides alternately. Is it itching or hurting from the chlorine residue of the pool water? Then collapsed again and fell on its side, seemingly exhausted. Took it up to my radio room where a strong 150 watt lightbulb is in my drafting lamp. Held it under the hot lamp, it started to move very fast.

Several tries, then was seemingly recovering slowly. By this time, it was too late for the meeting Took the bee down to the kitchen and placed it in a transparent plastic box with a cover. Dissolved some honey

in water and put the pool in the box. It started to scratch its body again continuously and frantically. Is it possible that it is allergic, or is infected? We in Europe used to put honey on our small wounds in a hope (?) to promote healing and to prevent dirt entering. Now you can buy band-aid in the pharmacies there which are treated with honey – disinfecting qualities are ascribed to the honey-treated patch. Thinking of this, I dunked almost the whole body of the creature in the honey pool and placed it under the morning California sun. Had to leave some clear surface also due to the fact that bees breathe through their bodies. Checked its condition frequently – the scratching stopped, wings nicely in pre-flight position, walking up the side of the box and falling right back down several times – I thought this is a good thing allowing the exercise of the muscles.

Started to get nice and warm in the box by now, so I opened the lid: ***with lightning speed, it took off flying to treetop heights*** and then disappeared from sight. It took about 8 hours together to get to this point. But one more life was saved. Even when it looks hopeless, it can be done. Just like in the case of my father. I respect life.

End of story – *or is it?* Less than an hour later 4 bees were seen busily working on the flowers in a pot very near the box which was the housing for my patient. Never noticed this at that location. Was it among the four? – your judgement. Was communication involved?



The next day another one of my patients  
- a wasp this time.....

*--- yes, I can talk to them, they are sometimes landing on my palm, looking around for a minute or two then hover around, talk to them again, landing on my other palm ----*

*---- and I am not a psychic or similar whatsoever, just apparently a communicator [a radio bee-ham] – they probably sense that I like and respect them ----*

\*\*\*\*\*

### ***Floating at 30-thousand volts through my body – not an everyday occurrence.***

Thinking back in time of my deeds – many of them could fall into the "misdeed" category – just remembered the following fact. Location: Army Laboratory in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Time: about 1959. Occasion: To demonstrate an aerial radar display for the Army, our company, Allen B. DuMont manufactured (among other things) the display tube which had a diameter of 21 inches.

The tube operation required among low-voltages a high voltage source amounting to 30.000 volts. This can be a lethal voltage level if the source is capable of delivering a deadly amount of current. In medical operation rooms strict measures are taken to limit the accidental current of over 5 milliamperes current or less which could flow through the human body – a small flashlight uses about 100 – 500-times that much current. If over this current level finds its way through the heart, it can cause death because the interference

delivered to the sensitive electrical circuits in the heart. The heart pulses are triggered by a built-in natural electrical generator called sinoatrial node.

The tube display unit was delivered to the Military Base to the room where the demonstration would take place. In order to limit the possible current flowing in the tube in case of an electrical fault in the tube an electrical resistor was connected in series with the tube circuit. In case of a short circuit, the current would be limited by the resistor to avoid more damage. The resistor was a 6-inch-long ceramic rod having about a 3/8 inch diameter – and it was found broken when the package was opened.

My boss was very upset because this meant the abortion of the demonstration – and possibly the sale of the system. There was a barrier wall between the display area and the supply equipment. I went around the wall and noticed a small wooden platform about a foot high. Perfect. I will stand on the platform which will provide ample isolation from the ground (the other polarity of the 30,000 volt) if I use my body for the broken resistor, electrically floating. I told this to my boss who at first refused the idea, but money-is-money, so he finally agreed. I told him to turn on the power when I said – and not before!

I stood up the platform, grabbed with my left hand the 30,000-volt supply wire, and in my right hand the wire to the display. This way the current supplied to the display would flow through my body, I became the floating “safety resistor.”

I ordered “turn on” and I could immediately feel a little prickle through my body while listening to the people inspecting the radar display on the other side of the wall. After about a half an hour, I asked through the wall if there were any more visitors. The boss said that it was enough and turned off the power.

The demonstration was a success; my boss thanked my active participation in solving the problem. The Army ordered some tubes later on. Story (and the demonstration) closed. And I am still alive. Without a scratch. Again. I am a biomedical engineer too and know that if higher than 5 milliamper current flows through the heart, that may cause death. But I was sweating too and most of the current would flow on my skin, in the sweat, saving the heart. Still a stupid idea. My body resistance is much smaller than the broken one, allowing larger currents to flow. But there was no tube defect, the current through my body was small, so I survived. Still a stupid idea.

*In the following section a mixture of Old World - New World articles are presented. They show a few of my past life's projects and achievements - and ABOUT HAM RADIO.*

Among us radio amateurs – or hams – a slang is customary, which says:  
*“One can live without ham radio - but why?”*

We do different things – help the authorities in case of emergencies, go to remote places and set up radio stations, etc. The long distance is called “dx” and the far-out activity is called “dx-pedition”. It is a lot of fun, sometimes hundreds of fellow hams call you and ask for a report. We say “73” to a male ham, “88” to a female ham for good luck! Every country has their callsign sets, each amateur has an exclusive one, like a car license plate number. We call a young lady “YL” and a married one “XYL” – sorry.

Below are two of such occurrences documented, it is always exciting to go to a foreign country and encounter a lot of unexpected problems what have to be solved in the interest of a successful operation. We send cards to each other to document the connection, they are called “QSL-cards.” the cards contain the

location, the World-time when the connection occurred, and a report of the quality of the connection. The more connections are made, your prestige raises among the fellow amateurs.

One of the *dx-pedition* is to Fiji Island, the other to Turkey and Greece. I learned a lot about the foreign countries; we consider ourselves as *good-will ambassadors*. Years ago, there was a strong earthquake in Mexico and the gas and the electricity provision has stopped in the capital, Mexico City. At my workplace I had a colleague of Mexican origin. He asked me to try to get information about his family there. The American Embassy had their own emergency power generators and one of the Embassy staff was a ham. He came on the air on a specific frequency and gave reports of the happenings. There were several Mexican hams on the bands who were asking-for and giving information on family members in both countries. I managed to establish a connection and requested the information on my friend's family. He was operating out of his car near a public telephone which worked, and his wife took the notes. He told me to come back in 3 hours and gave me several local California addresses of Mexican families with a message.

I called the given addresses and with my very minimal Spanish I was able to convey the messages, the people were very happy. He also tracked down my request and gave me a good report. I immediately called my Mexican friend at 2:30 in the morning – he was happy too. So was I, it gave me a good feeling to be able to help somebody who has no other means of getting news from his family.

**THE STORY OF THE 3D2 FIJI DXPEDITION -- OR:  
THIS WORLD IS FULL OF SURPRISES!**

12-20-89

--- Paul Lukas – N6DMV/3D2PL ---

In July of 1989 according to grapevine rumors, K6KH, Spud of Manhattan Beach, California fame, was planning a DXpedition to some remote-but-civilized part of the Globe. I knew Spud for many years from the Northrop RC, so I called him. Fiji! Sounds good, since I have never seen the South Pacific before. He was in the process by then of fabricating the portable antenna tuner, etc. He said it was not too late for me to join in. The rest is history, which pleasantly unfolded from here on with some interesting **surprises**.

To undertake a DXpedition, the prerequisite is, of course, to obtain the necessary licenses and other documents prior to departure. I immediately set out to put the process in motion; hastily filled out the questionnaire, which, among other things, had lines like these - *exact quotes* **(Surprise#1)**:

"Evidence of British nationality and two recent written references as to the character must be enclosed - see note (2)".

"Note (2): The referees should be the person of British birth and standing, not related to the applicant";

Under 'Technical Qualifications' the text reads: "Have you obtained a pass in the City and Guilds of London Institute's Radio Amateurs."

"Have you passed the Post Office Morse Test for Radio Amateurs."

It seemed at first that they were painfully aware of the Medfly menace and the radios (or the bodies too) have to be decontaminated by hosing at the Post Office. Checking my Encyclopedia Britannica failed to list any Morse Tests, so I assumed that they meant Morse Test. So, it was.

**(Surprise#2)**: a few calls to the local Los Angeles, California Fiji Tourist Bureau resulted in a sympathetic response and the 'British-business' was waived in lieu of a Xerox copy of my U.S. passport. The license fee was \$F10.00 = \$7.00 U.S. Spud suggested that I send a few more \$\$ and ask them to reply via air mail, due to the long surface (water surface) mail turnaround time. This seemed to be a very good idea at the time. A quick trip to the BofA and an international money order for \$15.00 was on the way with all the requested information.

I started gathering my stuff together and even purchased a bathroom scale for weighing my pretty heavy luggage to avoid going over the limit.

The next weeks were full of anticipation, hurrying home every day to see if my license arrived. About 3 weeks later the letter came. I opened it with excitement just to discover **Surprise#3**: The money order was not accepted and was returned, they asked *cash* instead! Quickly a greenback 15 combination was inserted in an envelope and sent off right away. Again, about 3 weeks later the expected letter came with **Surprise#4**: in it: my passport size photograph of myself apparently did not strike a favorable chord in Fiji (sorry the photo was not better than the original!), they asked for another. Ran to the closest self-photo place, off it went again!

In the meantime, I decided to have an eyeball-qso with K6KH. Upon arrival at his house, **Surprise#5** flew in my face: Spud lives across the street in a house where I used to live for many years, without knowing then - and until now - about his QTH! From here on, things picked up pace. The antenna factory was in full swing, some units were already completed. Another month flew by, and I was wondering about my license. I called KH on 600 ohms, and he suggested not to worry, we will pick it up in Fiji. I did not like the idea. The very same day, **Surprise#6** set in: my 3D2PL Fiji license arrived and was no request for anything! But do not speak too soon. The letter contained an official receipt for \$10.00 - **Surprise#7**. It did not bother me at all, it was an insignificant matter in light of the anticipated pleasures of a full-blown DXpedition! I picked up my air ticket: from the travel agency, from L.A. with refueling stops in Tahiti and Hawaii. I went over all data for accuracy and consulted my travel item list.

By this time, everything was ready to go. The K6KH ingeniously constructed antenna farm was neatly packaged and stored in his yard. Three 2-element beams were made for 10, 15 and 20 meters, 2 verticals, one for 40 and the other for 80. Extended Zepp for 10, dipoles for 15 & 20. I carried enough wire+insulators for an 80-meter dipole for emergencies. October 21: the magic day for departure arrived and we were ready for a pre-expedition party as well. The plane was leaving at late night, so we got together in the afternoon for a get-acquainted/farewell/good luck happy hour at KH's QTH. The DX party members were: K6KH/3D2KH+XYL, Al, W6IM/3D2IM+XYL Nicole from San Diego, Irv, W6GC/3D2GC, Harold, N6AXQ and 3-Delta-2-Papa-Lima, alias N6DMV, me. After the consumption of a modest quantity of bubbly DX-catalyst, everybody felt great and was eager to go. KH's generous neighbor volunteered to deliver all of us to the airport in his large van. We picked up our luggage and loaded it in the van. The antenna farm was sent away earlier by freight plane. The beams and verticals were housed in 4 thin-walled aluminum irrigation pipes about 6 feet long. With coupling sleeves, the tubes could be assembled to form two 12 feet long antenna masts for the 15- & 20-meter beams. The 10M beam had a regular push-up mast. Handles were taped to the tubes provided an easy transportation for the antennae.

The 2 seats next to me on the plane were occupied by a young couple. They just got married a few hours ago and were going for their honeymoon to Fiji, spending the first married night next to me, sleeping in the cramped space, obviously dreaming of a more comfortable place and out of the scrutiny of a few hundred people. I ordered some bubbly for us and wished good luck and happiness for their future, and I went to sleep too.

After a long flight and a pause in Tahiti, we arrived in Nadi (pronounced: Nandi) airport, on the West Coast of the Main Island, but we had to go to the East Coast (according to my plane ticket, this was not a surprise). At the inspection check point at the airport the officials asked me for the "green import license sheet". Needless to say, I never heard of such thing. As it turned out, I should have received it (I never did) from the Fiji authorities prior to my departure. This was **Surprise#8**. **Surprise#9**: Spud and Harold were allowed freely through, without a question. They looked back at me with a grin on their faces as they realized what happened and left through the exit door. It took me a lot of explanation to people who spoke



just sketchy English in justifying the “illegal” importing of radio transmitting (heaven’s sake!) equipment into a politically tense country. Forcefully sounding off *my* interpretation of *their* documents apparently completely confused them: they did not inspect any of the boxes or other luggage - this was **Surprise#10**.

We picked up our antenna farm from the cargo office and proceeded toward a hired van with our luggage. The luggage handlers piled-up our stuff to about 7 feet tall on two hand-trucks. **Surprise#11**: (not really) - one of the top-heavy luggage mountains went out of control, tilted, and overturned the truck, scattering all the luggage on the concrete. Since my 58lb+ suitcase was on top, it received the maximum impact upon landing (\*\*\*@!!””””\$\$\$!). I smiled, (what else would an American gentleman do in a friendly foreign country?) because I was absolutely sure that my very thorough protective wrapping around my TS-430S would absorb all the impact shock, should such thing happen. I felt that the radio will survive with a few more g-s to spare (you just wait).

Traveling toward the East Coast of Viti Levu - the Main Island - on an excellent highway threading through charming small towns and villages accompanied by a river along the way proved to be a very interesting, beautiful scenic drive. We arrived at our destination (no surprises this time, except we had no phone during our entire stay) and settled in two very comfortable villa-houses separated by about 300 yards, each with 2 bedrooms and hot/cold water bathrooms. The separation between the houses proved to be beneficial in that we did not create QRM for each other. The climate was absolutely delightful. Warm/hot and humid, but not excessively uncomfortably so, clean, fresh air, not a trace of smog! We happened to be there during Full-Moon, some nights only the brilliantly radiant multitude of twinkling stars shining overhead across the Southern Sky. No light pollution, no trash pollution, no smog pollution, no people pollution. In the entire compound encompassing several dozen houses on a very large real estate, not a single telephone or electric pole was visible. Everything is built underground - as it should be. Coming from smoggy Los Angeles, this place made a great impression on me.

Outside the cities, most tourists travel by taxi. They are the best places to pick up the latest gossip and the political developments of the country. We even learned some local history from the cab drivers. Fares are quite reasonable to dollar owners. The cab drivers, our native caretaker staff and just about everybody greeted us with a big smile and a ‘Bulah’. It turned out that Bulah = hello, also when raising the glasses, is the proper thing to say.

Next day the antenna-erection parties started, first we put up the wire antennae (fastest) to probe the propagation. Irv brought a G5RV along, he strung it up in no-time. Next the 40 and 80 verticals went up with 2 radials each. It turned out that in several day’s time we were unable to make a single QSO on 80 due to the 20-45 db over 9 QRM/QRN combination and loss of propagation. 40 was not much better, but we made a few contacts. Listening (really had too WWV/WWVH at 18 and 45 minutes each hour did not promise much good either due to a recent magnetic storm. Fortunately, the terrible QRM affected the low bands mostly. We were unable locate the source and had to live with it throughout the stay. The cause could have been the underground (faulty?) wiring.

The ac current (230V/50Hz British Standard) and the outlets are different on Fiji than our US ones. They have 2 prongs too, but theirs are not parallel, but arranged at an angle to polarize the plugs. Fortunately, the spacing is about the same, so I could bend our plug prongs to the proper angle providing a perfect fit! I carried a heavy 240/120V isolating transformer which helped somewhat to reduce the QRM coming through the power lines, on the high bands, anyway. Everything in place, we were ready for a test.

**In checking out my gear - not to have any surprises later during the contest - I got Surprise#12** right then. The tests revealed that my VSWR/power meter or the 430S is acting funny. Sometimes I was able to load to full power, other times only to half-power. VSWR values were different 3 out-of-five times under the same operating conditions. Checking the antenna, the coax, the transmitter did not show any visible



sign of damage. (I don't know why; I suddenly remembered the airport scene as my suitcase was taking flying lessons). I took a light bulb out of our overhead lighting fixture (230V, bayonet socket) and with two short leads soldered to it, I connected the bulb to the transmitter. After a torture test of 20 minutes, the bulb lit beautifully with full brightness. The culprit must be the meter then! I disassembled the 430S and removed the small D'Arsonval movement and placed it on a window glass louver turned horizontal. With the bright tropical sunshine hitting the glass surface and fine-tuning the angle-of-incidence and reflection of the glass, I could achieve a strong backlit condition, beautifully illuminating the inside of the delicate instrument as well, and with the help of a magnifying glass taped to my forehead + 2 eyeglasses I carried with me, I was able to inspect the inner guts of the tiny meter. First the problem did not show up (the meter was in the horizontal position!) and I put the thing together 3-times for nothing. As I assembled the meter and built it into the transmitter, the problem came up again. By taking the meter out and disassembling it the 4<sup>th</sup> time, I was able to duplicate the problem. It turned out that the overhanging end of the tiny hair spring was bent just enough during the concrete-skating to intermittently rub gently against the meter pointer, due to a small radial movement of the moving coil assembly allowed by the play in the needle bearings. A very delicate bend to the protruding end of the hairspring cured the problem - the meter worked perfectly thereafter, defeating Murphy mercilessly (big surprise for him, no surprise to me).

Since we had a little extra time on our hands now, we took a trip to the capital of Fiji: Suva. It is a hustling-bustling city with lots of cars running about on the wrong side of the streets (British heritage). Luck was on our side in that we were able to steer our cab driver to the local University where we had an eye-QSO with KH's friend, a ham and professor of physics there. With a little encouragement and some added \$\$ the cab driver was commanded to the QTH of Harold's friend Ian, 3-Delta-2-Pacific-Ocean, who is an airline pilot when not hamming, and who has a fantastic view and DX location on top of a mountain overlooking Suva harbor. After a few well deserved 807s we felt super in the tropical heat. He loaned a home brew 2M folded dipole so we can communicate with him and others in case we needed help at our QTH about 40 miles away. There were no ham repeaters of any kind on the Island at the time we were there.

The XYLS took another trip to the city for shopping, of course. Taxis are usually available if you can find a phone or walk to a place where they congregate, and they are considerably less expensive than in the States. It is customary to hire a cab for a half day or a for a full day. We, 3 of us pitched in about \$15 each for an almost full day trip - not too bad.

Finally, the time for the CQ WORLD-WIDE PHONE CONTEST - the major reason for the trip - was but a few hours away and we were ready, even if propagation was not. **Surprise#13:** my 10m beam started to fall over, we just caught it in time as it was majestically tilting over to one side, heading toward the ground at an ever-increasing speed. The guy ropes became slack due to the mast sinking into the ground because of a heavy rain (pleasantly warm) previously soaked the soil to such consistency that I could push my finger into ground without much resistance. Fortunately, I found a half coconut shell nearby and placed it under the mast. The shell proved to be an excellent bearing for the antenna mast, allowing effortless turning of the beam by the Armstrong method. This shell is serving as a paper weight on my desk, reminding me of the pleasant time I have spent on the Island, anytime I look at it. Since 40 and 80 meters were practically useless to us, we removed both verticals out of the way of the beams and dipoles. We drew a compass heading circle around the 10M mast and affixed a pointer to the mast made out of a twig, indicating the major DX directions - W6-land, W2-land, Europe, etc. It was a great help during the contest as we experienced the shifting of the propagation from one area to the other. Then came a sad **Surprise#14:** Irv, 3D2GC had to return home due to health problems - just before the contest. We missed him.

Finally, the magic hour of the contest arrived: November 29, 1989, 0000Z. 10m was perking along, despite the previous bad conditions - apparently nobody told the band that it was not supposed to be working after a magnetic storm. The big hour of my lifetime and my prime reason for the DXpedition has arrived: for the first time I could be on the other end of a huge pileup! If you are a DX-er and if you never tried the other side, you hadn't lived! It was very interesting to experience the propagation shifts between countries and continents as the gray line proceeded to continue its endless journey around-and-around the world. A typical 10M phenomenon repeated itself several times a day: "this is 3D2PL - QRZ?" - about 2-300 simultaneous responses from W-land. Had to call 3 times QRZ just to be able to pick out one letter of this cacophonous call sign soup. (What a joy!). This condition prevailed for about 45 minutes, then I called QRZ? - 2 stations came back. Next: QRZ? - nobody! Some Higher Authority pulled the plug suddenly. But only for a short time, because the same thing repeated itself with the JA-s and with Europe. I needed an European zone and spent about 10 precious minutes calling an OH who came in 9+. No reply. **Surprise#15:** a ½ hour later no less than 5 OH-s were competing to talk to me!

Some remarkably serendipitous moments happened during the contest. At one time Germany came in very strongly and I could pick their accent indicating the area they are from (I speak fluent German). They probably expected an English-Fijian-who-knows-what accent on my part, instead, I replied them in their own dialect! This caused an about 3 second delay in their responses after overcoming *their surprises*. Some operators (I would not call them hams) tried to force the QSO so they would rattle off their data without me recognizing them, stepping over ongoing QSOs. One guy was so arrogant, that I told him that I will not recognize his call, will not be on the list and will not talk to him during my stay in Fiji - and QSY-d. I devised a method of handling pileups. I announced that I would listen for exactly 5 seconds and will call the last letters of each station. Call only once in the 5 second gap, or I will not recognize them. This seemed to work well.

The 180° great circle runs about 100 miles east of Fiji and the Island is 12 hours ahead of UTC, which facilitated the time conversions. Actually, we lost a day on the way there, but (not surprisingly) we were handed back a different unused one on the way back home. 15 and 20 meters were plagued by poor propagation and hence **Surprise#16:** the anticipated workhorse band was not 20, but 10. I count under the same Surprise#16 the fact that the contest went on fine, Murphy was not seen frequently on the bands, so I worked 27 of the 40 CQ zones. Results will be revealed in April of 1990, or so.

After the contest, a big party was called for, and indeed it was! Some of our newly acquired neighbors and people we met here-and-there were invited, and they came. A young Scottish engineer + XYL (I thought, I had an accent - wow!), a very attractive native neighbor girl + American businessman boyfriend, a German artist lady, several other native people, the Security Chief of the Villas we occupied, the General Manager of the nearby Cultural Center, a Hawaiian transplant Japanese-American real estate businessman, the 2 local cleaning/cooking ladies, who produced a very tasty assortment of exotic (for us) native dishes for the party, etc., etc. The Security Chief, who probably never traveled more than 50 miles away from his house, was very impressed by our demonstration of ham radio, what he never heard of before. I got on the air, and he talked to 6 countries in 3 continents in 20 minutes. At this point he decided that he will have a ham station!

The party was a total success, and this was no surprise. But the world is small, and one can expect some more to come for sure.

Nasty **Surprise#17:** deliberate jamming. Why? I am trying to be nice and accommodating to my ham friends around the whole world to give them a rare one (on my own expense) and now I - and everyone else - is penalized by a sick operator. Very sad. But only for a moment, because I immediately improvised a little nonsense limerick titled: Poem for Jammers:

“Tuning, jamming to no end -  
FCC gets upper hand.  
They will fine you  
When they find you.  
So, tune-and-jam  
To no avail,  
See you later  
In the jail!”

**Surprise#18:** the jamming stopped!

After the contest we had some time to try the bands. One radiant morning after I finished a QSO with W6-land – California - somebody came on and said: “you are Hungarian!” This was **Surprise#19**. I asked for his call, he was a VK2, Australian. Asked him, how did he know I was Hungarian? He started laughing and said: “are you kidding, with such a thick accent?!” **Surprise#20:** This fellow married the daughter of one of my friends who was living 2 houses down from me in Hungary after immigrating to Australia!

After all the radio and partying responsibilities were duly discharged, I decided to place a phone call home to my YL in Long Beach, California. Warm rain started overnight and gave no indication of letting up. So, I set out to walk to *the* Post Office about a mile away. I arrived at the office at 11:46 AM, soaked to the bones. The Postmaster declined to accept my phone request because of the approaching lunch time at 12:00! I was the only customer in the office. The office is closed between 1200 and 1300 hours, he said. With all the wet charm I could muster I very politely pointed out that it is only 1146. He said he knows that. Leaving the office, I wandered about a little and stumbled upon a nice place nearby, called the Cultural Center with restaurants, shops, and a small ethnic museum and curio shops. After a well-deserved hamburger, I hurried back to the Post Office to arrive 10 minutes before the place was supposed to open, so I could be the first in line. Of course, there were 4 locals waiting already outside, sitting on the steps, enjoying the fresh warm rainwater trickling down their faces. The Postmaster returned from lunch at 13:15 and unlocked the door. He took the natives first. Some of them could not operate the telephone, a blue-colored huge box - surely a collector’s item. After about an hour of waiting, Spud rushed in to make a few urgent calls to arrange our transportation back to Nadi. Finally, I was next. The Postmaster came out of his office to place the call himself. I felt very important. I handed him a paper with the phone number written on it, had to pay \$5.00 in advance. In the next 20 minutes, he was throwing in all sizes and shapes of coins by the dozens into the huge blue box to get a connection. Some of the coins came right back, others stuck in the contraption. At the fifth inning, with a radiant expression on his face he handed the phone over to me, indicating that the phone was ringing. Indeed, it was, with the European double-ring pattern. It was ringing somewhere. I held the phone faithfully for about 5 minutes, but nobody picked up the phone. I could have no claim against the Postmaster, after all, he did not say *where* the phone was ringing. I sadly replaced the receiver, cast a warm thanking glance at the Chief and left the office, leaving the \$5.00 at the office. I surmised that he would not believe me that I was not talking, after holding the receiver for 5 minutes. The rain continued and now came down like a curtain. On top of this, I missed a turn because the dirt path was erased by now by the rain, so I prolonged my wandering in the tropical rain by an hour. After drying up at home, I got on the 430S radio and put out a call for W6-land. **Surprise#21:** In 6 minutes I got through to my YL on 10 meters. A Long Beach, California ham - whom I met at the local club meeting patched in my call to her. Free. The next day too! Moral: less is more, 50 ohms is better than 600!

73/88 de 3D2PL/N6DMV/HA5CCV



The antenna bearing coconut with the flag of Fiji



The bearing

### THE STORY OF THE 1991 CQ-WW TA-SV - Turkey-Greece - DXPEDITION.

DX = log distance.

- or - Murphy is alive!

--- Paul Lukas - N6DMV ---

Enthused by the successful and fun-filled 1989 Fiji DXpedition, all the "gang of 3" members decided to participate in the CQ World-Wide Phone Contest in TA-land, with an after-trip to SV-land. The participants were: Spud, K6KH, the organizer DX-czar, Harold, N6AXQ and yours truly, Paul, N6DMV.

The departure from LAX was smooth and uneventful, not foreshadowing the events to follow later. Considering Murphy's gloomy omnipresence during our trip, I wonder how it was possible for us to sit in a British Airline jet where the stewardesses were very polite and accommodating, offering FREE libations in ANY quantity throughout the flight. From this point on, I will indicate with an (M) where Murphy was suspected of having done his dirty work. He started to show his colors when we decided to purchase a bottle or two of DX-catalyst fluids - alcohol - at the "duty free" shop at Heathrow airport. We were told previously (I wish I could remember by whom?) that the prices at Heathrow are quite good. Good for whom? For the sellers for sure, as we found out that any respectable label was about 50 to 75% higher (British pounds converted to US \$\$ at the going rate) than the US store prices! (M). So, we delayed the DX aspect momentarily, and I attempted to place a local call to a Hungarian ham friend of mine in London, G0FDI, Steve, on 600 ohms (telephone), whom I talked a day before on 10-meter shortwave band indicating my stay-over at the airport. He was not home (M) but had a nice chat with his British XYL – Ex-Young-Lady, wife.

We flew from London to Istanbul, a very busy place. Observing the locals on the streets, one could not help but think that there is a 24-hour permanent marathon going on. People almost ran, not walked. It was very easy to pick out foreigners from the crowd, as they did not run. After 30 minutes of searching, we were able to secure a large enough cabby to hold our 13 (M?) luggage, including some antenna gear packed in a 6-inch diameter long aluminum tube. We made a deal with the driver, we thought his prices were reasonable at the time, without immediately converting the Turkish liras to US dollars. We set out to find our hotel. It turned out that the driver did not know where the hotel was (M). After some inquiries from the natives, we have arrived. In-between, I converted the Turkish liras (4900 or so to a dollar!) to dollars



and got quite concerned about the \$120 fare for a 35-minute drive. We dragged the driver - who did not speak a word of English - into the hotel, where the manager, in a 15-minute heated argument got the price down to \$12. That we could live with. Zeros apparently don't mean a thing over there, that is the reason they are zeros.

Our 4th floor apartment was roomy, management put in a 3rd bed. We were surrounded by tall buildings, but looking out the window and consulting my compass, I determined that on the narrow street we were looking out was facing north-northwest, W6-Land - California! This gave me the idea to stick a 15m whip right out the window supported by strings, also attached a 1/4 wave wire to the base. To our delight, we made a few contacts to the US barefoot with my TS-440S radio. During the 1st QSO - talking - I had to jerk on the radial wire, because it touched the metal bed frame and was drawing a beautiful blue RF arc (M), I did not want to burn down the place the first day.

Due to the nice weather, we decided to leave the window open. This act allowed us to gain some insight into the local life. About 4 in the morning, cars, trucks, motorcycles and all other noise generators known to the human race started screaming under our window, and since the street was at a steep incline, all this happened in 1st gear at full throttle and at the desperate screeching of brakes, depending on the direction of travel of the vehicles. At 6 AM sharp, the noise decreased all of a sudden. In a distant voice, a muezzin's embellished prayer song became audible, calling all faithful true believers to prayer. The muezzin is the guy who gets up early, goes to the mosque, climbs up the minaret tower and starts the service. He does this quite accurately. This pattern is repeated in the evening and also at sundown. I found this practice quite beautiful and thought provoking, although I am not a Muslim, as the country's majority is. To my knowledge, Turkey is the only Mid-Eastern country which is Muslim but not Arabic. Due to the advancement of science, the muezzins are being replaced by amplifiers and loudspeakers - too bad - placed at the towers, leading to an unemployed muezzin population (M for them). This was told to us officially and is not intended to be a pun.

Istanbul is a fascinating city with an enormously complex and long history. I have never seen taxicabs in such profuse quantity and density any place! Looking out the rear window of a bus, I saw at least 300 cabs - all the same yellow color and size, oozing down the 5-lane boulevard, among them maybe 10 private cars. First I did not understand the reason. Soon I learned, as we stepped off the bus. Although my calculations in physics contradict my the on-the-spot derived applied theory, I had to conclude that the cabs were driven by a novel sound pressure generator called the horn. I told one driver to shut off the engine, maybe we can save some gas, just lean on the horn. When you hear a horn nearby, jump. No matter what direction just jump. The horn will sound a few feet from you while the car is approaching you at 30-40 mph and will not slow down. Surprisingly, I did not see any accidents or an unexpectedly high number of wrecked automobiles. Now I understand why the few private car drivers: They are afraid to drive.

After 3 days of roaming around and sampling the very delicious local cuisine, nostalgia overcame us: we visited Pizza Hut and MacDonald's. The pizza and the hamburger tasted just the same as at home, both places were full almost all the time.

The next stop on our schedule was another large city down the West Coast: Izmir. The city is situated in one of the 3 major wine producing areas, it has a large Naval base, and the regional HQ for NATO. The otherwise comfortable bus ride took over 10 hours, with a halfway stop at a very modern and surgically clean shopping center-restaurant complex, out in the nowhere. It operates apparently 24 hours a day, as we were there about midnight and all shops were open. We arrived at Izmir in the early morning hours. Fortunately, Spud had written to each of the area hams if they could give us a hand upon our arrival. One ham responded: Mustafa, TA3B. He came to the bus depot to pick us up in his compact car. Mustafa is the Chief Signal Officer in Izmir in the Turkish Navy, speaks Greek and English as well. After some careful

planning, we could actually load all our stuff on, in, around, on the hood, strapped to the bumper, etc. and arrive at his QTH. He showed his well-equipped shack to us. The main attraction beside his radios was a large piece of gear attached to the wall adjacent to his station and two large lead-acid batteries under his table. We were wondering why he did this extra complexity. For this doubtful attitude of ours, we received Murphy's well-deserved punishment later. He explained that the city power had quit several times while he was on the air, leaving the other hams puzzled. So, he is running his rigs now on pure DC from his batteries, the wall unit is the charger. The logical solution.

We got acquainted with his lovely XYL, who is an art teacher in the local school. Actually, Mustafa had called some of his relatives also who came and celebrated with us. The ladies cooked up a terrific lunch for us. If you like fresh, fully ripened, chemical-free super tasting vegetables and fruits coupled with honest hospitality, go to Turkey! We did not expect such a cordial reception and we were deeply touched. They do not overpay the military personnel either. After a short table prayer, Mustafa explained during the very tasty lunch that by the dogma of the Muslim religion, guests must be accommodated to the fullest, even if the host goes broke in doing so. This was not the case for sure, but we appreciated the friendly reception in a foreign country, where the host can talk - quite well - English. We had time to visit a QTH where a German crew, The Rhineland Radio Club comes every year to do the CQ WW contest. We met some very busy German and Turkish hams putting up their tower and tri-bander antenna. Very rarely did I see such a full assortment of top-class equipment and tools these German fellows brought along. We made some nice friendships at the pleasant tune of a few 807 bottles (where there are Germans, there is beer, and vice-versa) and by saying 73 to them, we headed further down the West Coast to our contest location, to the charming seaport city of Kuşadası. Mustafa volunteered to take us down. He needed about 2 tanks of gas for the trip, and we had a hard time making him accept the compensation. At \$3.50 a gallon, it is quite an expensive affair.

Actually, our hotel was about 10km (6 miles) from the city, majestically perched above the Aegean Sea. Traveling to-and-fro is by taxi or by small buses every half hour (or so, +/- 15-20 minutes). The fare on the bus is a fixed 50 cent US. The cab is higher, but we could knock it down to size every time. We found very little correlation between the trip meter and the negotiated price throughout our travels in Turkey. The workhorses of the Turkish cabdrivers were the 1958-63 Chevrolet cars. A 1975 cab is considered to be a luxury item. They all seemed to run, some leaving considerable smoke behind.

The first two days in Kuşadası were spent setting up the antennae and the two stations. It was discovered at this time, that instead of a full range of antennae, we had only a 15m 2 element beam and some wire for emergency dipoles (M) and an assortment of whips. Spud and I brought extra coax and lots of wire. The weather was just absolutely the ocean-swimming type. I decided that next morning I shall try the beautiful blue waters, I am a good swimmer. Overnight the temperature dropped about 35 degrees (M), freezing arctic air swept through our "closed" windows picking up pieces of paper, strewing them across the floor of our room. To the north of us, according to the local English newscast, was snowing. The windows had about 1-1/2-inch gaps (M) while "closed", we had fresh air all the time – but no smog! This was not noticed until now due to the nice warm days before. The weather did stay cold and nasty from now on (M).

We tried to tune up the 15m beam, but it behaved like a piece of unmatched resistor (M). The antenna was not tested before departure (and that is a no-no!), replacing the coax did not help, any attempt to adjust the element lengths and the gamma match was futile, so we concluded that the UHF connector is bad. Probably was, we left it as it was since we did not have another socket (M) or much time (M) to burn to find out. The contest was about to start. We erected dipoles, verticals and tried to find the 10m whip in our assortment of goodies. We did not have it (M).



Access to the antennae on the roof was with the help of a shaky ladder we found laying around. One rung was about 32 inches from the next. Must have been used by very light-weight Turkish giants. One day I went up to the deck over 28 times (M). If you see me taking huge steps and leaps now and then while walking, you know why.

With all this suffering we went to bed (by putting on double clothing in the freezing, heaterless room) with the feeling that despite Murphy, we would show him! The contest started at 0000 Zulu; we were 1-hour local time ahead. We decided to start a few hours later to have energy to spare for the next 48 hours. At about 0500Z I jumped out of the bed and turned on the light. Darn bulb has to burn out just now! The other light: same result. This led me to the conclusion that the electricity was off. It was (M). Running to the head office revealed that the whole area was without power and had no idea as to when the power would be restored. "Maybe somebody ran into an electric pole" I was told. Up to this time we have had no power failure problems. All of a sudden I remembered Mustafa and his batteries under the table! We got our punishment. Nothing to do, we went to town to look around.

The town is definitely geared to the tourists, and we all bought trinkets, leather ware and carpets to bring home. Almost every day a different Russian passenger ship showed up in the harbor. The Russians are in the tourist business around there, bringing European, mostly German tourists to the shores. Shortly after our return to our stations, the power came back. We tried to operate two stations simultaneously, but the proximity of the antennae and other factors prevented it (M). So, I operated alone, desperately trying to make up for the lost time and lack of the second station. Spud and Harold got the message, they retreated to their beds and indulged in paperback novel reading for the next 2 days.

I hoped to make some 10m contacts next morning when the sun gets up. Experiments with the 15m whip tuned up on 10m worked but was not very good (M). I found a piece of #12 electrical wire in the trash. By pruning it to about 28.500 MHz and having shoved it free standing into an UHF female socket, I found it to be far superior in both bandwidth and transmitted signal strength over the 15m whip. This conclusion was established by two willing stations who gave me comparative reports on FM.

Next morning, I got up with a great anticipation, but the electricity was off again (M)! A few hours later, when the power came back, 10m band was going out (M). I begun to feel that we would not place first in the contest. Worked a large number of stations, mostly Russians on 20m. With the contest nearing to the end, tired, frustrated, I decided to take a hot shower and call it a day.

The hotel derived its hot (actually just luke-warm at best) water from a solar-powered heater system. An electric pump pushes the water up to the reservoir and through the pipes. Since the electricity was off for a very long period of time, all the warm water was used up. When the power returned, I had to wait hours till the ice-cold water was pumped up the pipes, and, since there was no sun, it stayed that way (M). So, I took a cold shower, just to show off Murphy!

Somewhat mad, we decided to go to town and participate in an evening event which included a 4-course dinner, wine, (no women), music, singing and of course, belly dancing. It took place in a hotel yard which conveyed the appearance of a medieval castle from the outside with its Bastille type towers and walls. It was very entertaining. We also made reservation at the government tourist bureau for a large taxi to take us to our last station in Turkey: the charming seaport of Marmaris. This town is the closest to the large Greek island: Rhodes, our next destination. The bureau called the would-be cabdriver, who agreed to pick us up at 3 AM next morning. The tourist bureau also informed us of the ferryboat schedule which will take us to Greece - they assured us that it is a cinch, we can expect no problems. Sure.

We had to get permission from the hotel we stayed at to remain open till our planned departure, due to the closure of the place a day before: the end of the tourist season. (The owner of the hotel was a ham!). Guess who did not show up (M) next morning! The management was able to summon another taxi, and

there we went. It was a somewhat shaky Fiat station wagon with two young people, the driver, and a helper. For a good measure, for longer trips 2 people are better than one. We were told that the trip takes about 4 hours. As we started out, it begun raining. At first just slowly, picking up volume at a rate of about 3dB per hour as we went further (M). By sitting in the seat next to the driver with a heavy box on my lap, two local chaps were seen in the dark poking a shotgun at us, it turned out to be rabbit hunters. With a wide grin on their faces, we parted happily (for sure) and started climbing up a mountain range. The rain was very heavy by now, we were traveling in cold rain, mist, and quite dense fog. The winding, pitch dark 2 lane road offered excitement as huge trucks were coming at us, clearing our car by just a few inches. Fortunately, our driver had definitely steel nerves, maybe lost them altogether previously. About 1-1/2 hours in the rain, the windshield wiper on my side fell off (M). The driver got out in the heavy rain trying to fix the problem. After 5 minutes of fruitless effort to affix the wiper, he picked up a good size rock and hammered it into place. A little bending here-and-there and we were ready to go again. At this point I noticed that the right headlight is throwing the beam up about 60 degrees from the horizontal (M). I pointed to the light and our driver, with the most natural and detached stoic manner he adjusted the loose bulb with his fingers, and we were off again. We had aligned headlights now for a few minutes.

A little after 7 AM we arrived in Marmaris. No one knew where the ferry station was (M). We found it shortly and sat down on the steps of the ticket bureau, because it was closed. The rain subsided somewhat, and the cab driver and his aid were busily unloading the car, but when they came to my suitcase, I tried to handle it myself. It was 44 kg - about 90 pounds with my radios in it - and did not want to load down the poor guy, as he was rather skinny. He forcibly took the luggage from me and proceeded to carry it ashore through a 6-inch-deep puddle. In doing so, he slipped, fell on his right arm, and almost broke it (M). I tried to catch him, but he was too far away. I picked him and my suitcase up from the water, the poor guy excitedly started poking in the water, pointing at his mouth with his other hand. One of his tooth was knocked out (M) by my 90-pound luggage! We all tried to find his tooth in the water, but we did not find it. It was too murky. I felt terribly embarrassed and sad and gave him all the Turkish liras I had left in my pockets.

The ferryboat was supposed to leave at 8 AM, but the ticket office was still closed at 7:45. Then a clerk showed up, opened the door and we told him about our plan to go to Rhodes. With a grin, he said that it is not possible since the tickets have to be bought a day before departure (M). I pointed out that yesterday was Sunday, but this fact did not upset him a bit. At this point a porter dashed in and volunteered to talk to the captain of the ferryboat on our behalf to delay the departure. Please do. The ticket agent somewhat reluctantly took our charge cards and rejected mine immediately (M). He said it is not good. I used it the day before and next day too, it was good. The boat's horn was sounding now with a detectable impatience since it was now 0810. We naively dashed toward the boat, just to have been steered away by the porter: We have to go through Immigration.

Two Turkish policemen looked at us and the huge pile of luggage alternatively, the beautiful bright blue painted boxes and the long aluminum tube. After a short consultation among the themselves, we got our exit stamp on our passports. We tried to rush to the boat but were retained and channeled into an adjacent building for inspection. I went first and the very serious looking official piercing in my eyes with a blood chilling quality asked if I had anything to declare. No sir! Go! I carried my heavy load to the porter's hand truck. Spud and Harold in the meantime tried to pass the rest of the stuff through. The eyes of the official became fixated on the bright blue boxes - Spud's all-time masterpieces - and wanted to know about the contents. Quite naturally, Spud declared our radios. I wish I had a camera ready, looking at the inspector's face. He was about to levy export taxes on our "spy" equipment! I swore to him that the radios are used, (no lie) and practically useless, worthless (lie). Spud had difficulty at first finding his license (M)

and spread out about 20 pages of paper on the inspection table and floor. I found mine and tried to explain the whole thing to the inspector who spoke very little English. Spud and I both obtained the TA and SV licenses earlier. The official apparently has never seen a document like our ham licenses - written in the Turkish language - and after a dragged-out explanation by the three of us simultaneously, he let us pass. As I was excited, he called me back. Wanted to see the paper again. I unpacked, produced the paper. He nodded after reading it, we can go. The porter loaded all our luggage onto his truck and started toward the ship. Running toward us was the inspector in the company of one of the Immigration policeman, demanding the licenses a third time (M). They jointly studied the papers and a few minutes of consultation followed. The boat was waiting for us now for about 35 minutes.

Finally, we must have worn out the officials because they gave up and let us go. We could feel the hidden hostility on the faces of the people in the boat who were waiting for us now for 40 minutes. One could hardly see from the dense cigarette smoke inside the ship as we entered. So, we went out to the side, where was room for a single line of passengers. The boat hooped happily and started out on a two-hour trip. The Marmaris-to-Rhodes distance is about 40 km (25 miles). Both the rain, the wind and the waves too have gotten progressively worse (M). We were about halfway there, and the Island of Rhodes became visible in front of us. I kept fixating on the land, and all of a sudden I discovered that somebody apparently attached a line to the Island and started pulling it to the right with great speed! I am a very appreciative and admiring student of Mark Twain, and immediately recognized the gravity of this phenomenon as he in his book described a similar event. At this time the waves tossed the ship like a toy in the pond. About 25-foot waves started flooding the boat from the side, a foot deep or so. I also noticed that in about a minute, the Island was directly behind us! (M). I had to postpone the explanation of my scientific discovery about the Island movement because we had to egress from the boat - at the same port we started out. The captain simply decided that the sea was too rough for his ship and turned around. We fully but unhappily agreed.

After a long wait in line for re-entry stamps in our passports, we had to collect our luggage and look for a place to spend the night at. Our ubiquitous porter (at \$15 a shot) took us to a small hotel named Pena (actually, the “e” was an “i”) just across the street, or more accurately across a small ocean, because the heavy rain and debris clogged up the sewage system, allowing the water to rise uncontrollably on the streets. We walked in 8 inches of water (better than in the ship with 12 inches of water) and settled in the small hotel. This hotel had two stories, each having one toilet and one shower. It was very clean tough, and at \$8.00 a shot, we did not complain. With a name like that, I knew we were in the right place.

I noticed before, as we stepped off the boat, that a military band passed by in front of us in snow-white and totally wet uniforms beating out a drum rhythm. I knew right then and there that we, US hams have a great deal of appreciation abroad and the country is paying its respect to us, even if some inspectors do not agree. After all, what else can it be? It can. I learned that the day was the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey by her first President, an army officer called Kemal Atatürk, the modernizer and uncontested benefactor of the country.

We settled down and dried off a bit. It was noon, the sun came out, so we decided to get something to eat. In midway, an unexpected downpour drenched us (M) again. We found the Turkish food to be quite delicious. Went home to dry up. Later the rain stopped, and the sun appeared from behind the clouds again. I decided to take a short walk down the street where the President's bronze statue is erected, sitting on a bronze horse (obviously). I wanted to take a picture of him, the one who introduced democracy to Turkey. As I raised the camera, the rain started suddenly and I was soaked (M) to the bones again in a few seconds for the third time that day, but I took the picture, nevertheless. A fifteen-minute hot shower at the hotel (finally!) never before felt that good!

After a good and well-deserved sleep, we set out to try to get to Rhodes again. The crowd in front, around and behind the Immigration office was quite huge. About 40 minutes later we reached the magic window (again). Everybody and all nationalities passed right through, I was ordered by the police to stand to the side and wait (M). So was Spud and Harold. (M). At least we were not lined up against the wall. After everybody passed except us, the boat started hooping its foghorn - come on guys! A policewoman and a policeman were laboriously sifting through a number of typewritten lists, occasionally casting some quite expressive and unmistakably chilling looks upon us. The two, after leaving the building to the Inspection place and consulting him (you know who) they returned and called us twice each to explain our presence in Turkey. We were not on the lists! Since they spoke only a few words of English, it took quite a while to explain why we are still in Turkey, when we already left yesterday! Why us? (M). Everybody else shared the same fate. I'll never find out. Don't want to either. After the third stamp, we were - again - channeled to Inspection. Please allow me to leave out the details of the unpacking and re-packing of our luggage (M) again for the official.

The trip this time on a larger ship went smoothly; it was indeed a beautiful voyage. We were supposed to meet Charley, an ex-US Navy ham at the harbor of Rhodes who knows all the ropes in Greece. Since we were a day late, he gave up on us (M). He was supposed to pick us up at the harbor. With our new porter's help (another \$15.00) we went to Immigration. 35 minutes and another stamp later we were ready to face Inspection, but they were not there. All the officials left by then, we were free - we finally defeated Murphy! Obtained a taxi and drove to Helena Hotel, where we had reservations. The driver of the Mercedes taxi was somewhat concerned about the overload of the luggage/people combination and was hesitant to take us. The long aluminum tube with our antenna in it could only be accommodated by having it inserted through the left front window, crossing diagonally back into the car, between Spud and Harold, who had to buffer the end of the tube with their hands to prevent the tube accidentally knocking out the rear window. I held the other end of the tube, sticking out about 3 feet, with a beautiful blue box on my lap. The cab driver said that the combination of overload and illegal arrangement of the parcel can result on each count in the losing of his license. I advised him to drive very fast racing through the streets, thereby reducing the time we have to spend on the road, thereby reducing the probability of detection by the police. He agreed!

Upon our arrival at the hotel, Charley was surprised at our arrival - he thought we'd never come, but we explained the problems we had. He spends a few months in Rhodes in the summer, otherwise spends his time with his XYL in Athens.

The manager of the Helena Hotel is an SV ham, and we had no problem securing an overnight stay despite the hotel being officially closed for the year - the end of the tourist season, you know! We were assured that although the bar is closed, there exists a sizable emergency ration of dilute happiness, DX spritzer. He called up some other SV hams and we had a terrific time sipping very good beer and ouzo, the national drink of Greece, discussing ham and other topics. The word 'pain' totally disappeared from our vocabulary. Next day Charley asked us if we could take his tower and vertical down for the winter from the rooftop. So, we did, and a sudden burst of water above made us thoroughly wet (M), neutralizing the internal fluids taken last night. Before this maneuver, however, I made some radio contact with Charley's rig. We also learned from him that *the ferry we took was the last one of the year!* (Almost M).

Next day we took a 1st class ship to Athens. More than half a day on water, but it was enjoyable. We arrived in Athens and Charley took us to his QTH, where he introduced us to his elaborate antenna farm on the roof (10-160M) and his XYL, not necessarily in that order. The rest of the story is uneventful, standard drudgery - waiting for planes, loading, checkpoints, demonstrating that my HT is not a bomb, we are not American spies, etc. Twice I had to turn on the rig to demonstrate the hiss of the loudspeaker to confirm

that it is indeed a radio! After all these calamities, we have won over Murphy after all! By now, at the end of our trip, we were able to wear out Murphy completely; he could not interfere with us anymore. (Until next time.)

gud luk es 73 de N6DMV/3D2PL/TA/SV/HA5CCV

### *From the Early Days .....My Early Radio Experiment ....*

At the age of about 12, I became interested in the history of radio – I made my first radio at age 7, a crystal set. Found an article which described the first experiment proving the existence of electromagnetic waves. The experiment was carried out by the famous German scientist Heinrich Hertz, based upon the theory of another famous mathematician: the Scottish Clerk Maxwell. The article described how to duplicate the experiment with a simple setup.

After reading the article, I decided that I will build the experiment. With no previous experience in building a transmitting-receiving station, *and no money* - I had no idea at that time how will this be possible. Where can I find the necessary parts? I had an old burned-out transformer that had enough wire on it for the antennae. Also located an old, rusty, and heavily damaged electric bell. With care, I repaired the thing, removed the beat-up bell itself - now I have a spark transmitter. But where can I find another bell? Also, I need a wave-activated "switch" to turn on the receiver bell. The article described a switch device called the "*coherer*". The coherer is a glass, or some other insulating material cylinder filled with fine metal filings - if subjected to radio frequency current, the particles will experience microscopic, small sparks and develop a bond, a weak weld among themselves (cohering), making it conductive. This way the coherer becomes an electrical switch. The article nicely described the details, but now I needed the parts for the coherer too.

With a thrifty life mode, I started to save enough money (saved the pennies instead of spending them on food in the school) for two 4-1/2-volt batteries. These batteries were popular, most flashlights employed them. Managed to salvage a wall switch from a deserted, nearly collapsed house. Since the article strongly suggested the use of lead particles in the coherer instead of other material, I set out to acquire enough lead for the project. Fortunately, I could find a plumber, who donated a piece of old, dirty lead pipe, the ones used those days for the water supply. OK, one more step achieved! Started to file the lead pipe at home - my hands were black from the lead, I knew that lead can be poisonous, but it did not matter for me in my enthusiastic frenzy to assemble the experiment. Managed to find a suitable glass tube which could hold the lead filings, but before filling up the tube, I provided plugs for the ends by rolling up newspaper slices and fitting one of them into the tube. Then filled up the tube with the lead shavings and applied the other plug. Two wires were pushed through the paper-roll plugs at both ends, contacting the lead particles. It was a masterpiece - I thought and added the coherer to the collection of parts. As time went by, I could buy the two batteries needed, but I needed another bell too! The price for a bell was totally prohibitive - I could not afford it. I turned every nook and cranny upside down but could not find another bell. I ran out of luck – I thought. But only for a short time - serendipity solved my problem.

One evening guests came and ..... you guessed it .... *they rang the bell!* Why didn't I think of this before? The rest is just waiting for the appropriate time when my parents return from the visit, leaving for hours. The right moment arrived, and I went to work in fury. Our house bell got removed with lightning speed and became part of the experiment! With some foresight, I previously mounted the antennae on both sides of the walls behind the furnitures; adhesive tape for mounting the antennae was rescued from our first-aid box.

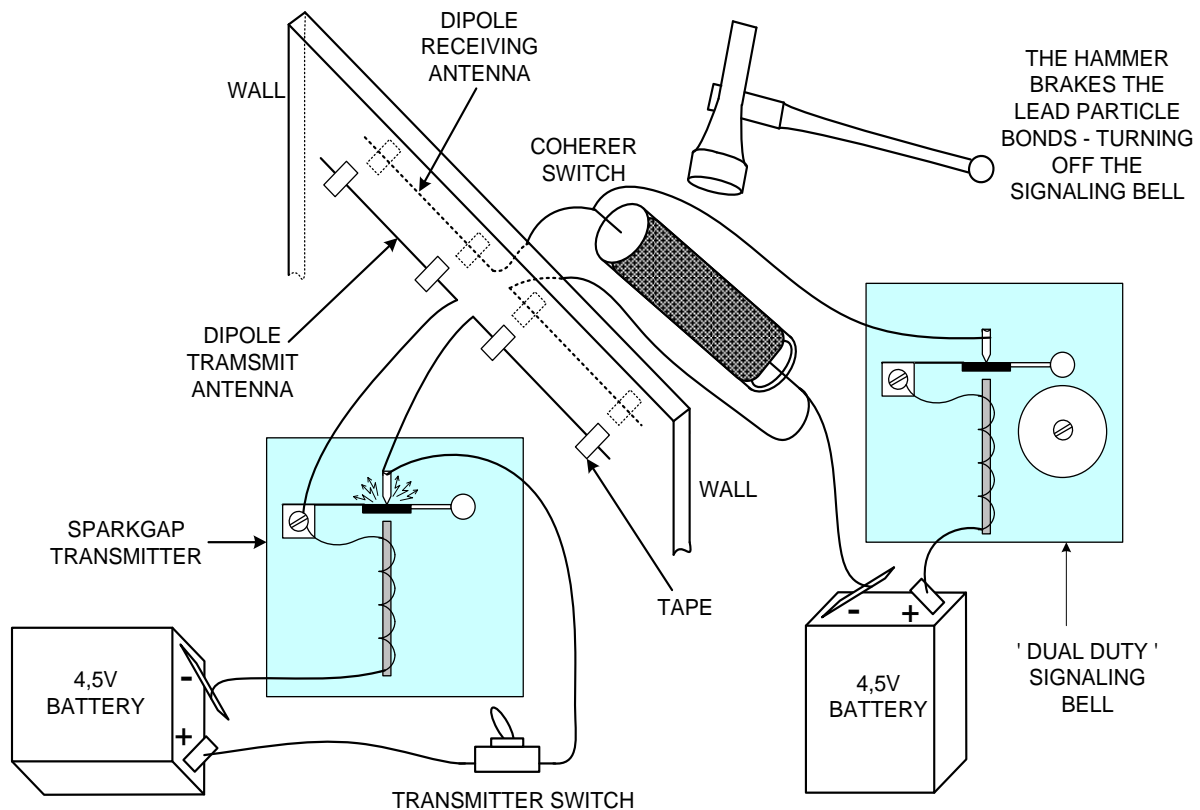


Worked with lightning speed to assemble the circuit and to make it work - playing with the spark gap, adjusting the antennae, coherer manipulation, etc. Eureka - finally it worked! Turning on the spark transmitter in one room triggered the bell circuit in the other room. My breathing stopped for a few seconds, I stood there speechless and motionless, looking at the setup. Then I turned off the transmitter, the bell was still ringing! Ran to the other room and gently tapped the coherer with the hammer. The bell stopped ringing; the receiver was shut off. Total success. I repeated the feat a few times; just to be sure I am not imagining things. Just about that time my parents came home, and I demonstrated the contraption to my father, who displayed a wide smile - very good - he said. That was the maximum approval from him.

In the following days when people came, they did not ring the bell (obviously). More accurately, they tried, but it did not work. We had a bell button, but yes, we had no bell. They knocked on the door instead. Mother became irritated at such occurrences, and remarked: 'don't they [see](#) that we have a bell?' No, they did not see [that we don't have a bell](#). When the situation started to turn serious, I had no other choice but put the bell back on the wall, where it came from - the Maxwell-Hertz-Paul experiment came to a grinding (grinding teeth) halt.

Such is life - but I could sleep much better thereafter – I could prove the existence and the propagation of electromagnetic waves too – without any knowledge of the Maxwell equations! I am still trying to prove wave propagation bu using my ham radio, but in view of the terrible propagation these days it is not esy. The drawing below shows the setup.

73 - Paul - N6DMV – my ham callsign.



## EXPERIMENT TO VERIFY THE EXISTENCE OF ELECTROMAGNETIC WAVES



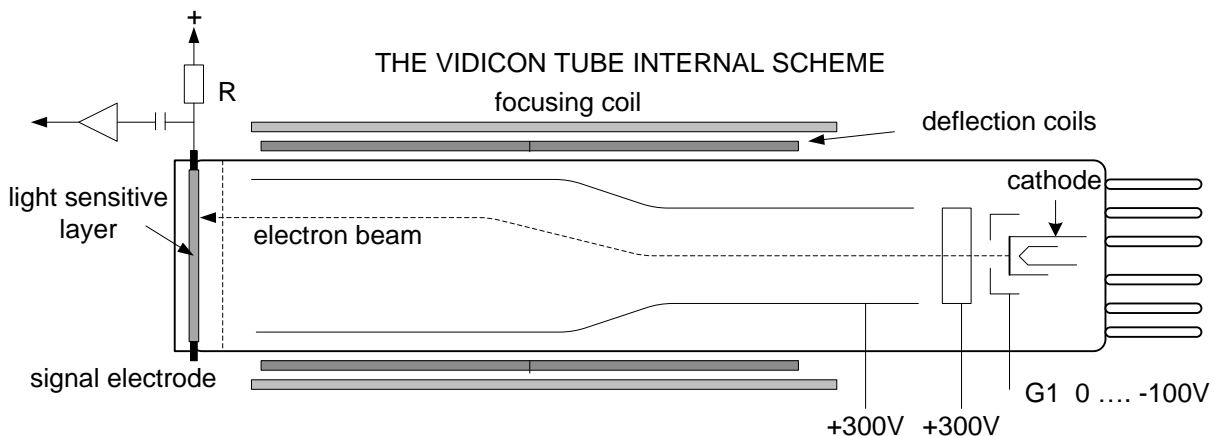
## My Early Computer Experience

*I arrived in America in 1957, got a job on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day I arrived at the Allen B. DuMont Laboratories in New Jersey. It was in the 'old times' the largest television and vacuum tube factory in the world. Among my first projects was computer development. Did not have the slightest idea at that time about the subject, but by burning the midnight oil daily and consulting my almost only possession: an English-German dictionary - since I did not speak the local language - got me started and worked my way up. I picked up the dictionary earlier in a dirty ditch while hiding from the Russian machingun. I was even introduced to Dr. DuMont, was a great honor. He started his enterprise in his garage by building an oscilloscope. The rest is history. From the distance looking back more than falf a century, I discribe below from memory the computer system.*

The 'sole' of the machine was a small size vacuum tube, a TV light pick-up tube where the 'bits' could be stored and read out. Hence came the idea to use a vacuum tube as the data storage hardware. We produced special picture tubes called 'storage tubes' that were used by the Army as well as in radars.\* The tube could 'remember' or store the applied information for almost any length of time. The image retaining time was controlled by electronic means to suit the application. Our 'computer tube' was a television image pick-up tube called 'Vidicon'. We modified the tube to suit our purpose, to make a storage harware out of it. The picture of the tube and its internal components are shown below.



The picture shows the Vidicon tube. These type of tubes were made usually with 12 – 30-millimeter diameters. The larger tubes had higher resolution, giving sharper images. The electrical structure of the Vidicon is shown below.

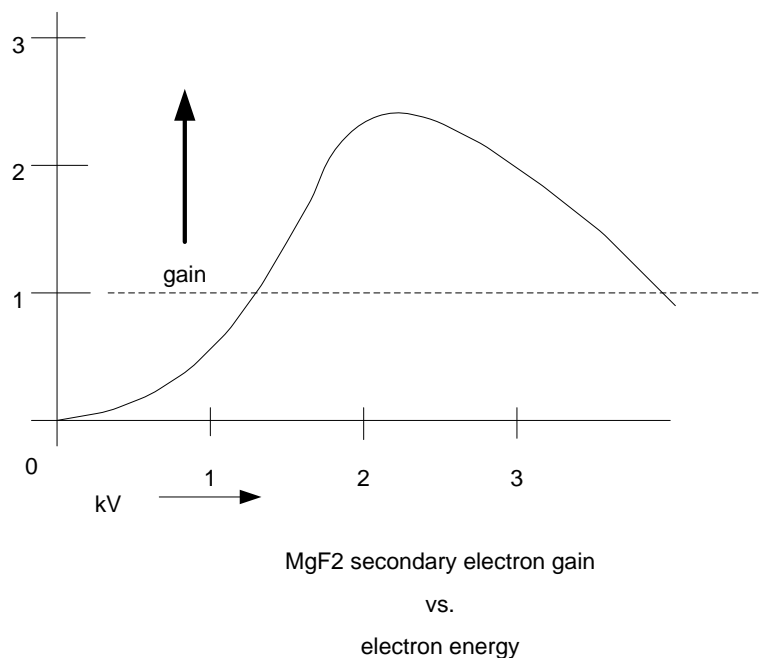


Similar tubes were used in TV cameras even not too long ago, several types existed to match the requirements – faster response, higher resolution, infrared sensitivity for dark image pick-up, etc.\*\* The first Vidicon to be used in the computer was re-worked by installing electrostatic deflection electrodes which did away with the bulky deflection coils. The magnetic deflection system has several disadvantages in comparison with the electrostatic one. The deflection coil inductances did not allow a wide frequency band scan what means that it can not be made to swing fast enough to record fast pulses. Other disadvantage is the radio frequency harmonics interference of what the magnetic system radiated. That could be undesirable if sensitive merasuring instruments are operating nearby.

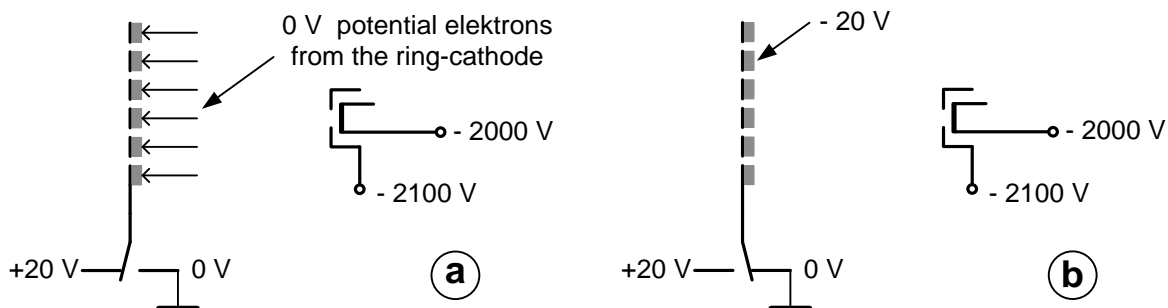
The first (and as it turned out to be the last) computer utilized the American standard 60 Hertz/525-line deflection system. The electrostatic system had another advantage: the write-in and read-out systems could be more easily accomplished. For instance, one could load the data in with the regular TV lines and could read out with PPI (Plane Position Indicator), what is used in most radar systems or vica-versa, theoretically one could use any combination.

The storing of the information within the tube was accomplished with the secondary electron phenomenon. Certain materials produce excess electrons upon receiving an electron beam, the beam has to be in a certain energy domain. The process is shown in the picture below.

The connection between the secondary electrons and the beam energy is indicated below for the magnesium-bifluoride ( $\text{MgF}_2$ ) material. “kV” is “kilovolts” – thousands of Volts of the electron energy. The picture shows the secondary electrons emitted from the ( $\text{MgF}_2$ ) layer as indicated on the vertical axis. It can be seen that the maximum number of secondary electrons generated happen around the 2100-volt cathode potential.

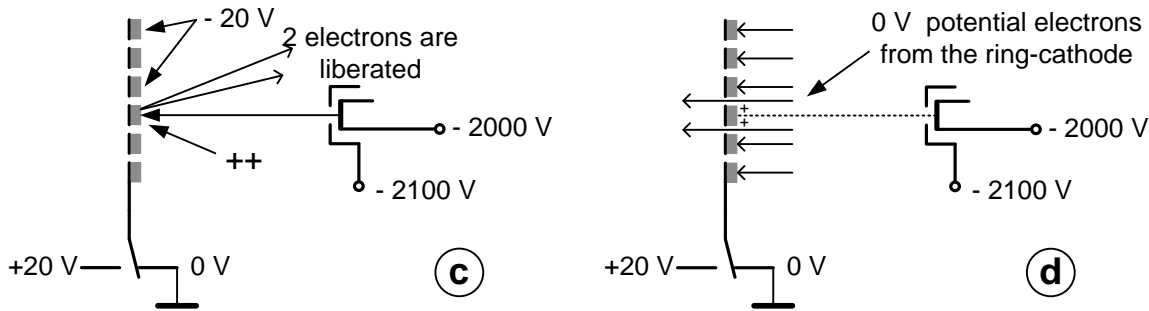


The method of recording data and the readout process is shown in the pictures below. Picture ‘a’ shows the ‘ready’ condition with the magnesium-bifluoride layer (a capacitor) surface is charged to 20 volts by the low enrgy beam. The next step is shown in ‘b’:



The capacitor layer was vacuum-deposited on a fine nickel grid - 600 holes per inch. Now the surface facing the writing-electron gun is charged to -20 volts. Similarly, to a conventional vacuum tube, the

negative potential prevents the slow electrons emitted by a torus-shaped cathode to reach the collecting electrode. Now the data read-in can commence what is accomplished by a focused electron beam having a 2 kV energy – see picture ‘c’.

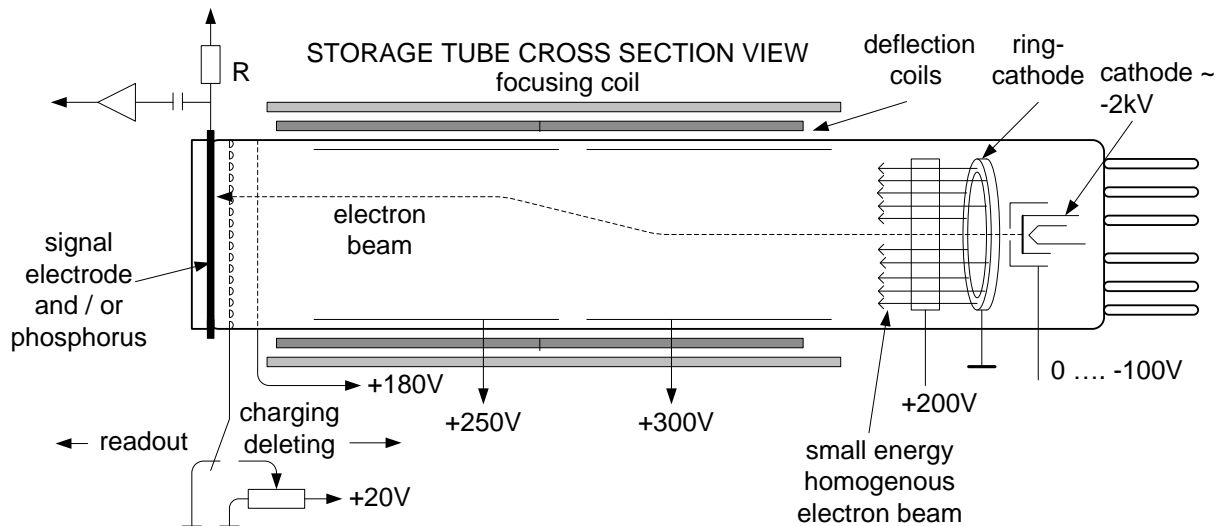


The location where the writing-beam had hit the condenser, locally the area became positive due to the leaving negative secondary electrons. Picture ‘d’ indicates the read-out process where the accelerated slow electrons are streaming toward the screen, the dotted line shows the writing electron beam previous track. The surrounding areas where the writing beam had not hit the surface remains negative, blocking the transfer of electrons to the collector electrode, at the place where the writing beam hit, that area became positive, allowing the electrons to penetrate the grid.

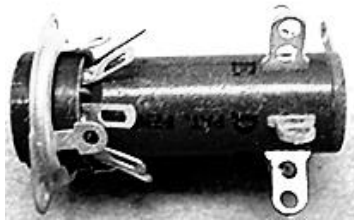
The readout was accomplished with a digitally provided scanning system looking at each spot on the screen synchronized together with the decoder which at a command could read out the data. The system could only perform some elementary mathematical tasks – adding – multiplying – but for us it was a great success, the result of hard work for months. This seems ridiculous in comparison with the modern multi-million transistor and chip governed machines capable of doing calculations we could not even imagine then. We used vacuum tubes although the transistor already existed, but those days they were not only very expensive, but their reliability was not very good. But progress took over and the transistor was made reliable, could perform multi tasks, used far less energy to operate, and of course, the prices came down. What this meant is that by the time we completed the operational computer it was already obsolete!

Some details – the write-read process was accomplished with an automatic relay switching program, by the pressing of the ‘delete’ button, the machine was ready to take new data in a few tenths of a second. One of our prototypes used a light-sensitive signal electrode. First a thin metallic layer (inconel) was evaporated on the signal electrode upon which the phosphorus layer. This way one could read out the data electronically, or by detecting the light spots on the face of the tube. The light spots were visible for quite a long time, if we turned off the machine, the light spots were present on the next day too. The reason for the gradual fading of the image is the gas ions left in the tube. Despite the evacuation of the tube to a  $10^{-9}$  Torr low pressure, enough ions remained to do the discharge. Achieving lower pressure is possible, but not easily and from the intended operation of the tube it was not required.

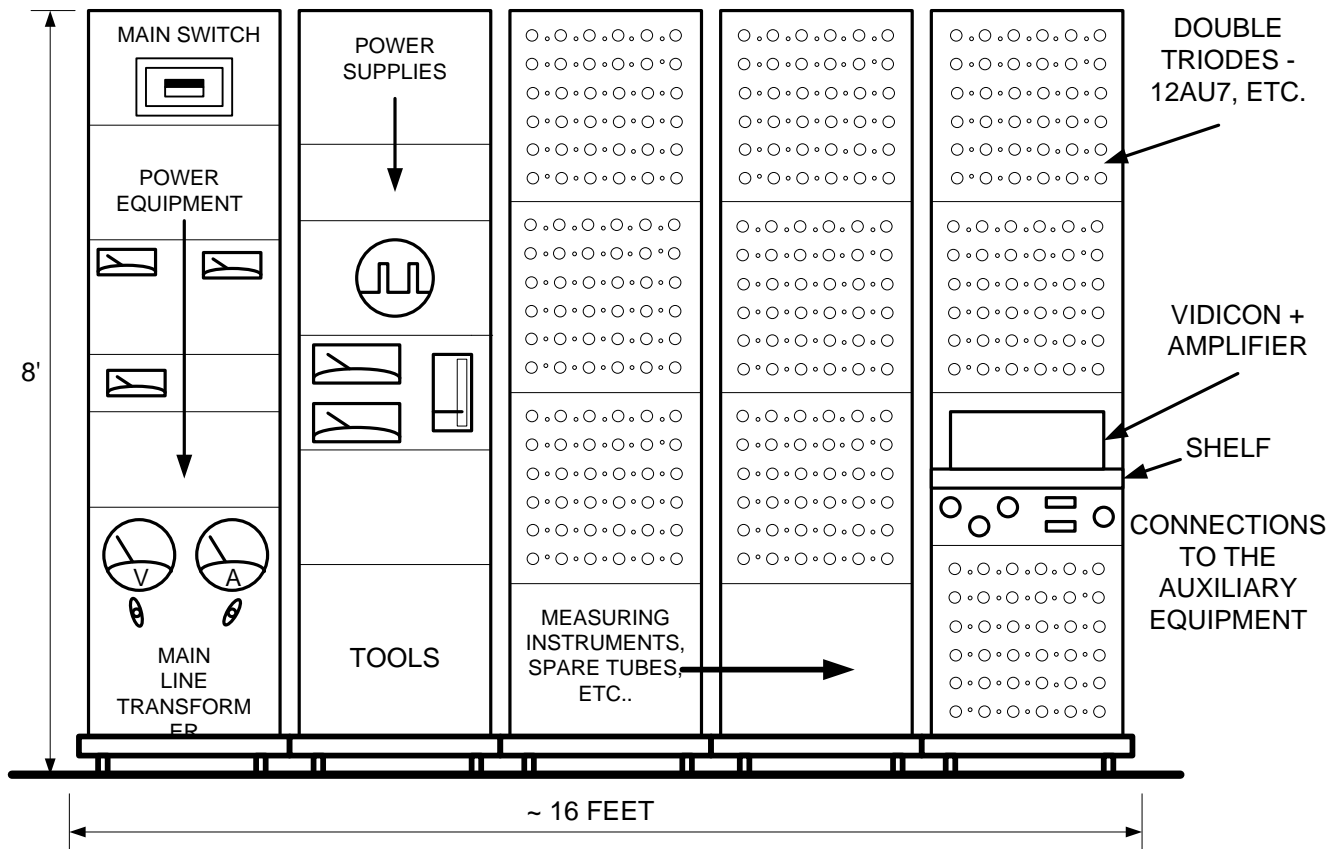
As an interesting historical achievement, I will show you one of the first tubes for computer application we experimented with. Later the magnetic deflection system was substituted by the electrostatic one for reasons mentioned above.



For the new generation – people who know little or nothing of vacuum tubes, I show you a component mounting device – resistors, capacitors, diodes, etc. - with tube socket attached for the multitude of double-triode processor tubes we used. The part was made by Vector Electronics Company – long gone – and it did a great service. The photo is shown below.



And finally, to give you an idea of the physical dimension of the machine, I made a drawing from memory. In the factory department where I worked heavy, 3-phase wiring had to be installed to be able to furnish the power requirement for the system. It used about 15 kilowatts! – Compare that with the modern milliwatt machines! In cold winter months we could hardly wait to get to the factory and have the computer turned on. The large number of tubes and other electronics radiated so much heat that by standing in front of it we got warmed up in a short time. There were almost no days when at least one tube did not fail. The troubleshooting was somewhat assisted by the dozens of test points installed between the tube sockets. Part of the setup was also a cart with the data writing equipment. This unit was connected to the main unit. See the picture below.



So much to the story – the closing of an era (vacuum tubes, etc.) and the beginning of a new one, the transistor era. Just imagine, what the next era will look like?

\* At the DuMont factory we supplied the American Armed Forces with storage tubes capable of radar performance in the 4–5-inch category also. The tubes were outfitted with heat-resistant phosphor due to the heat generated by the high currents in the tube in order to achieve very bright images. The brightness was about 10-times stronger than the Sunlight reaching the Earth. These tubes were mounted in military aircraft in such a manner to project the images on the pilot's front glass window. This brightness was required to overcome the light over the reflecting clouds (albedo). In addition, we produced 21-inch tubes too for ground radar and other uses.

\*\* While working on the computer, I put in an application for a patent – with my meager English language knowledge. For a long time, I heard nothing about that, then a few months later I found the invention in a technical journal – [under the name of my boss!](#) I put a question to him – for which he said laughing: *"This is Life!"* It sure is.

### ABOUT "ATOMIC CLOCKS" by N6DMV

The so-called "atomic clock" designation is a misnomer. I would not carry on my wrist an active atomic device – we receive enough radiation from our environment and from our doctor's office. The correct term for the devices in question is Radio Controlled Clock, or RCC – even if it is only a wristwatch.

These clocks operate and synchronize themselves on a radio frequency of 60 kHz, kilohertz, 60-thousand oscillation per second. The radio wave is transmitted by a government operated station by the name of WWVB.

I recently acquired an RCC, a wristwatch which did not synchronize with WWVB on 60 kHz about half the time, but some days were OK. The synchronization takes place usually at night when the wave propagation is better. Tried different rooms, different orientations - with different results. The RF, radio-frequency pickup is best when the receive ferrite rod antenna in the clock/watch is at broadside to Fort Collins, Colorado, where the transmitter is located. The watches I have seen have their ferrite core antennae in the 9 o'clock – 3 o'clock direction inside. I checked out my orientation, which is at 58,6 degrees from Fort Collins. I had my watch before the coil in the N -S direction over night.

Then I got an idea. Although WWVB does not recommend an outside antenna (why – lightning strike?), I made one in the form of an air-core tuned coil. The details can be seen in the attached pictures.

( Data: coil diameter (center-to center) = 7-1/4", inductance: 2,935 mH, tuning capacitors: two series connected mica transmitting caps (for low loss)= 9,217 and 3,033 nF, resulting in a total of 2,282 nF. I picked the caps out of my junk box to make the coil resonate at 60 kHz. Q (quality factor) of the coil is = over 220 at 60kHz. No particular reason for the number of coil turns, when I ran out of wire, the coil became finished. WWVB recommends the clock receivers to have a capability to pick up a signal of 50 microvolts if the signal-to-noise ratio is in excess of 20 dB. )

The best time to expect synchronization is when both the transmitter and receiver sites are in darkness, at night. It takes 1 minute to synchronize, provided the field strength is sufficient. Just for convenience, I positioned the coil leaning against a plastic box on my dresser, the coil axis is about in N - S direction, the watch is positioned about 1" from the coil. This means that in this direction I am picking up only a fraction, about half of the available power, because:  $\cos 58,6 = 0,521$ . But the 'thing' works and the watch synchronizes every night now. Apparently I needed just a few more microvolts to overcome the local absorption.

To check the frequency on my Boonton 260A Q-meter, I used my Icom 706MkII ham radio because my frequency counter did not go down to 60 kHz. By alternating between USB ("upper sideband) and LSB (lower sideband) one can get a fair idea of the correct frequency. Used a 3-turn pick-up coil about 4 inches from the coil to avoid detuning. It worked very well. I had to suspend the coil over the Q-meter to decouple it from the top metal part. Turning the coil parallel to the long axis of the instrument resulted in the decrease of Q – quality factor - from 223 to about 185.

Recommendations: align the coil and ferrite antenna axis broadside to Fort Collins and keep metal objects away from the setup. Originally I made this coil for a 12" diameter clock I had problems with, hence the large diameter. It seems logical that a much smaller coil would work too (time permitting I will make one). Tie the coil with lacing cord very tightly because the coil is sensitive to mechanical changes. The best would be to cast it into a good electrical quality resin for stability. If you have problem with the precise tuning, it may help to solder a resistor across the coil: it will reduce the circuit Q along with the gain, but the tuning will be much wider. The Q reduced to 105 with a 220k resistor. This arrangement should still be acceptable for most QTHs where reception is difficult. The pictures below show the setup.

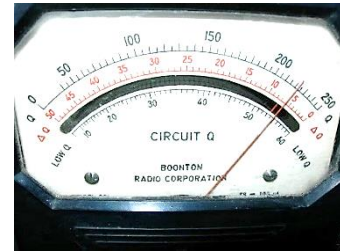




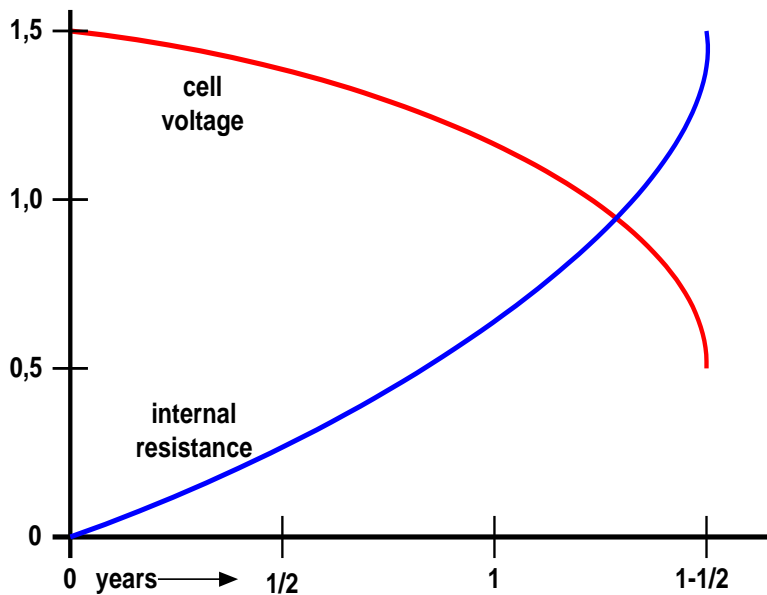
The pickup coil with capacitor



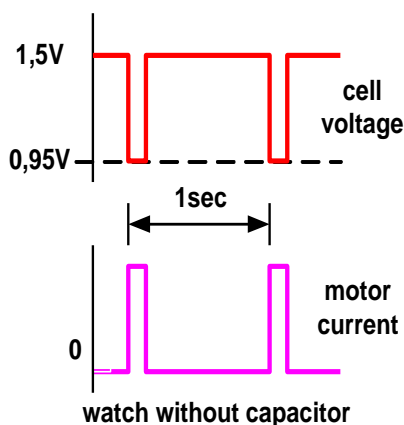
The coil suspended over the Q-meter



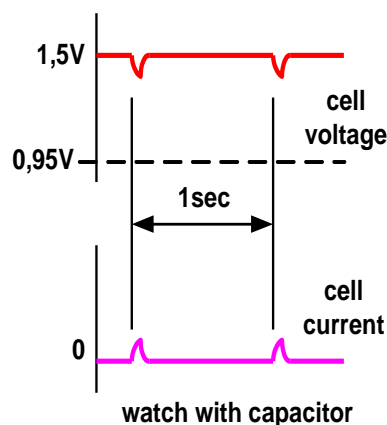
Q-meter showing a Q of 225



Relationship between cell voltage and internal resistance.  
The curves may vary with battery type.



watch without capacitor



watch with capacitor



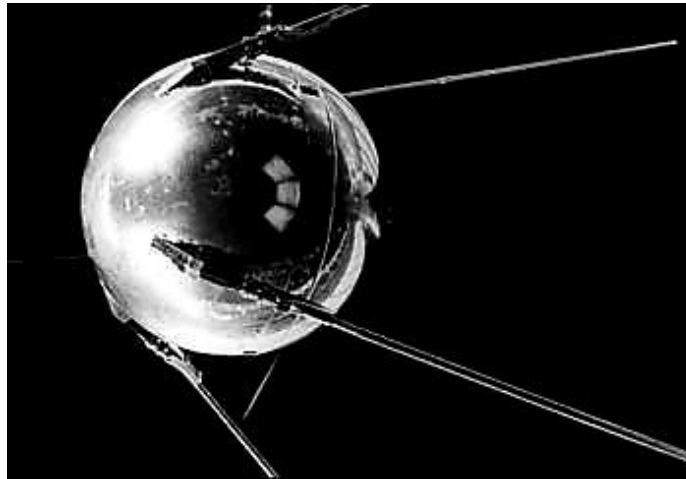
*A large capacitor – 100-1000  $\mu\text{F}$  or larger – connected parallel with the battery can prolong its useful life – see picture above.*

*The capacitor presents low impedance to the motor and absorbs the majority of the pulse current.*

*A clock stopped working due to low battery voltage came to life for about 6 months by installing the capacitor. Be careful of the capacitor polarity when connecting.*

MY AFFAIR WITH СПУТНИК (SPUTNIK) - or  
SOME HISTORICAL FACTS - or  
THIS IS A SMALL WORLD WE LIVE IN - or

Under ‘Sputnik’ on the internet  
where the 50th anniversary of the launch of the world's first satellite is described. The picture below  
shows *one version* of the spacecraft.



It was a stunning feat, but there are more stunning facts with funny and unexpected details which were not revealed so far as I know. Read on.

In 1958 I had the fortune to officially attend the “Atoms for Peace Conference and Exhibition” in Geneva, Switzerland on behalf of the American Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), representing the United States. Dr. C.G. of TRW (where I worked later, and who hired me later) was the Responsible Scientist of the demonstration in the American exhibition section of a new physics tool invented and produced at the University at Ann Arbor, Michigan, [the Bubble Chamber](#).<sup>5</sup> As a newlywed, Dr. C.G. asked me to operate the demonstration, since he will go skiing in France to Camonix-Mont-Blanc with his new wife. After borrowing my overcoat, he left, and I was [the](#) demonstrator. My enthusiasm throughout kept me warm – no overcoat was needed!

The huge exhibition hall was divided in 2 halves and consisted of the exhibitors and behind them an (almost) empty space. The American exhibition was the largest and the most impressive by far. The latest physics advancements were displayed such as plasma-pinch tube which contained the magnetically compressed glowing ionized gas filaments within glass envelopes - drawing a lot of spectators along with the large number of other nuclear physics experiments. One wall was covered full of oscilloscopes – must have been several dozen – to display the signatures of the nuclear phenomena. I was trusted with the demonstration of the bubble chamber several times per day. With the Atomic Energy Commission's smock on me embellished with the circulating atomic particles around the central core and with my quite limited English (I came to the US just a year before) I did my best. The visitors were asked to stay clear of the chamber at about 20 feet in a semicircular line. Apparently they understood me because they complied. At triggering, the machine made a loud noise – the escaping high-pressure air.

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<sup>5</sup> See description and explanation at the end of the article.



At one demonstration, I noticed a familiar face among the bystanders – it turned out that an engineer I was working with in the Communist dominated Hungary's Army Lab, an escapee like me, was a microwave expert, recognized me and was keenly watching – can this be? After the demonstration we met with mutual amazement and went to lunch together with his engineer friends. I have announced that the next demonstration will be at 3 p.m. *due to technical issues* involved.

Between demonstrations I took a walk to see what else is there to be seen. A small area housed the Hungarian exhibition, displaying very elementary items, among them a radiation detector used on the Space Station. 4 people assisted with the exhibit; my keen nose detected that at least one of them was KGB. After listening to the explanation for several minutes in English, I, with a perfectly natural voice replied to them in Hungarian. For about 3 seconds they could not speak – they were totally stunned. Then a big smile and handshake. Indeed, the world is small.

Then I visited the Russian exhibition. Among insignificant small items, a cutup mockup of a Russian Tupolev passenger aircraft's cockpit was displayed. As I stopped, a young Russian female in black uniform approached me and started to explain 'the latest Russian technology' incorporated into the plane. She explicitly emphasized the radio equipment, the latest high-tech products of the Russian Socialist People's Republic. After she finished, she asked me if I had any questions. No, I did not have any, but I had some answers. I told her, that those "Russian Hi-Tech" radios are re-painted World War II German military radios,<sup>6</sup> the FuGe (Funk-Gerät) 10 series short- and longwave transmitters." I told her that "those radios have each 3- RL12P35 type transmitting tubes in them, the shortwave unit operates in the 3-6 Megahertz, the longwave unit in the 300-600 kilohertz frequency band." <sup>6</sup>

She *ran* back to two civilian-clothed KGB officers and hysterically screaming, she discussed the matter with them. Then all 3 approached me and one of them asked: "what is the problem?" I replied: *"I have no problem, but she has, because she has no idea what she is talking about – maybe a psychologist could help."*

The two KGB officials looked at each other, then at me with teeth grinding, then I turned around and left. I felt under my skin that they would like to kill me – well, later they almost did – read on. I smiled and continued my journey to see what else was there. Having covered all other exhibitions, I went behind the main exhibition area. All of a sudden a loud crash was audible with several seconds of loud reverberations. An object was bouncing off the floor – what could it be? Going closer I found in the distance (the hall is huge) two suspicious characters near a bird-bath stand with a spherical object on top - they replaced the thing. As I further approached, the two greeted me (my AEC smock, really) and were pointing to the shiny mockup of the *Sputnik spacecraft* – "this is the first spacecraft of the world" (and this

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<sup>6</sup> I worked with those radios, knew them inside-n-out.

is the first and perhaps only time the Soviets did not lie) "by the Socialist *People's* Republic of Russia" - I was told. (*Is there somewhere a 'Socialist Dog's Republic'? – or - Cat's? - I leave it with the Rat's.*) Looking at the shiny globe, I met other familiar things: a Wehrmacht (WW II German Army) light-blue coaxial cable feed to the antenna and the black matching connector. Unmistakably German hardware. Why unmistakably?

An interesting and unforgettable picture was very clearly visible on the connector underside, the quality control stamp of the German Military – the German Eagle holding a flower wreath in his talons, within the *swastika!* - see below.



Possibly this was a message from the enslaved German engineers in Russia who were forced to work for them in concentration camps after the war ended. So, the Sputnik most likely a satellite made by the Germans. *After the first jet fighter, the Me-262, now the first satellite too?.....*

After all this, pointing to the swastika, I informed the KGB that I always held the German technology in high esteem. Their faces turned red (like their bloody flag) and told me that it is Russian. I said Goodbye in Russian - *До свидания* - do svidaniya – and walked away, pointing again to the swastika.....

Some time later back in California, the FBI warned me that I have a 'contract' on me – better watch out – some agents want to kill me! The FBI offered to post a guard in front of my apartment door what offer I respectfully declined. Started to carefully watch my steps, I eventually met with my would-be executors – and solved the issue. *"I did it my way!"* Maybe they found out that I am a qualified Civilian Marksman shooter. After all this, I am still alive – but the KGB does not forget. If I am eliminated, now you know why.

#### *And now the explanation of the Bubble Chamber:*

It was invented by Donald A. Glaser, a Nobel-Price winner professor, and was used for the detection of high-energy nuclear particles, including the ones arriving at the Earth from outer space, for instance from other galaxies. It consisted of a small, approximately 4x5x7 inch (as I remember) dimension heavy glass-walled enclosure filled with a fluid. This fluid in the chamber was held under very large pressure and was heated to a high temperature. The fluid could not boil because of the high pressure.

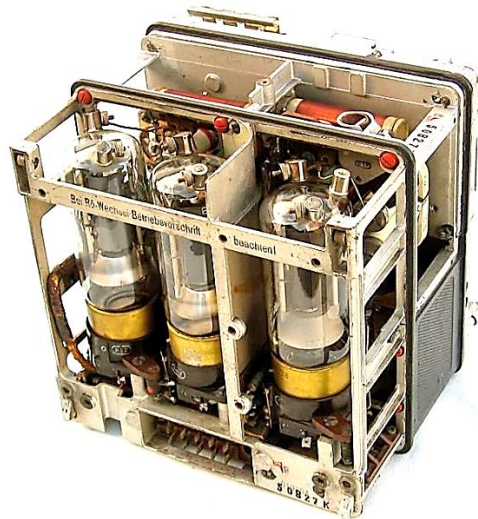
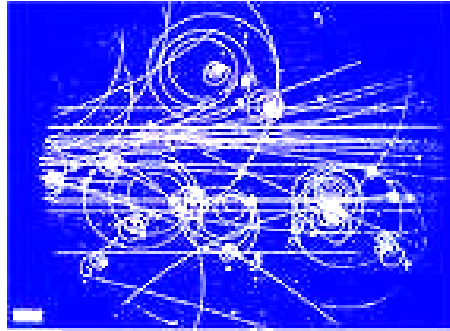
Under and above the chamber were nuclear particle detectors – coincidence counters. If a high energy particle crossed both detectors – and the chamber, of course - the pressure was quickly relieved from the fluid, which almost immediately started to boil. Since the passing particle deposited energy (heat, even though only a very small amount), the liquid started boiling along the trajectory of the particle first, since that area became somewhat warmer. This fraction of a thousandth of second allowed the scientists (and me) to take a picture of the event for analysis.

A sensitive timing device was provided which – at the exact right moment – turned on a strobe light behind the chamber and an electronic recording device, in this case a special TV tube and circuit. The special picture tube would display the trace for minutes, if required. It made me feel good that the electronics and tube I designed worked flawlessly during the whole exhibition duration. My past experience in designing radar tubes helped a lot! You never know.

P.S.: At that time, I was working at Allen B. DuMont Laboratories making special vacuum tubes and designing electronic circuitry. Used to know Dr. DuMont, a distinguished scientist, who started to work

out of his garage, designing oscilloscopes in East Orange, NJ. At one time, DuMont was the largest TV manufacturing plant of the world, producing over 2000 different kind of picture tubes, oscilloscopes, as well as various radio tubes. My favorite radar tube had 7 electron guns in it, allowing independent data display of 7 data streams on the tube face. Now, with the digital technology, no more such tubes are necessary.

*some nuclear  
particle traces*



The “Russian” FuGe-10-SK 300-600 kHz, or 3–6 MHz German military transmitter with the original German paint job.  
FuGe: Funkgerät – radio.

### **Some people say there is no God, a Higher Authority.**

I take no issue with them; everybody can believe what he/she wants to. I leave it up to you know what you believe in after reading this treatment.....

The description below is a true story, as accurately conveyed, as I can. Time: 1944, Easter. Location: Western Hungary, a small town named Kámon, near the city of Szombathely. The general custom around the World is to make jokes on the first of April, the day Easter Sunday happened to be that year, but it has nothing to do with this story, although I wish it would have been just a joke.

The Germans resisted the Russian Army as it was coming to take over toward the end of the war despite it was clear even to a kindergarten child that the war was lost. Actually, the war was lost even before they started it. But soldiers have to take orders, period. So did the Germans.



My father was a high-ranking Hungarian military judge and was ordered to the small town with his department in the hope to escape the Russian Army – for a while anyway. On that memorable day when the Russian army took over the area, a Hungarian colonel judge committed suicide. Why? Because after World War I, he sent the mass-murderer Communists to jail after the Communist era was overthrown. He knew that the Communists do not forget, and he would be captured, he would be tortured and executed (like over 100 million innocent people) by them.

My father – a 100% soldier – asked his 14-year-old (young?) son, me, to go to the other side of town and report the suicide to the lieutenant who was in charge of the personnel, if I want to go, that is. Since I grew up, my father's wishes were my orders. I could have said no, but I did not. Our family was living with the village people; their house was opposite the house of the colonel's. I knew the colonel; my father asked me if I wanted to see him for the last time. I wanted and walked over to see. He was locked in the bathroom, lying on the floor in blood, his brain blown out by his service pistol; I could see him through the keyhole.

By this time, we could hear tanks trundling through the other side of the village where the main thoroughfare was into the city, we did not know at that moment if they were German or Russian. Our cross street and the main road was separated by about 300 feet, or about 100 meters. As I started out, there were 5 German soldiers with submachine guns looking through their spyglasses toward the tanks. They were Russian tanks. I kept walking and saw the tanks running toward the city. About 50 feet before the tanks, I decided that it was not too safe to get in the way of the tanks and climbed over the wooden fence separating the road from the house yard. At the bottom of the fence was a 4-foot-deep ditch with foul water in it – this was for the ducks – but it saved my life.

I entered the house from the garden by climbing over a wooden fence but was nobody home – they all fled from the Russians. More foolishly, I wanted to exit through the main gate where the tanks were running – I never saw closely a Russian tank. As I opened the gate, a grenade hit the corner of the house over my head and my eyes and mouth were filled with parts of the house. Spat out of the stuff and headed for the fence I climbed before. By this time the Russian army took up position and apparently tried to shoot the Germans at the other end of the street. I jumped off really fast into the mucky ditch just in time: *a machine gun round hit the ground over my head*. I have been waiting for minutes before jumping ahead to reach home – trying to figure out of the shooting pattern.

Then, while sliding in the mud, a large stone was ahead of me. When the machinegun fire reached its high peak, I jumped up and ran a few feet, dropping down back again into the ditch – machinegun fire again over my head. I figured that when the Russians concentrate on the Germans, it will take seconds before can aim their guns on me. This strategy (apparently) worked, and I was getting further away from the Russians and closer to the Germans, trusting, that their excellent Zeiss spyglasses will reveal them that I am not a Russian soldier and will not shoot. They did not.

This went on for a while, several times jumping up and dropping. But the Russians noticed that they did not kill me, therefore *started launching grenades* to kill me. They were generally good at that but not in this case. Altogether six grenades were launched, some in front of me, some behind me. In the school before, we were instructed for such occurrences: if you are caught in a grenade round, put your head into one of the grenade craters to protect your head. It worked; I survived so far without a scratch. Thank you, professor.

Then the time arrived: I had to cross the road in order to go home. Slowly looking out of the ditch, saw no more Germans in front of me. They must have woken up and run away. Closed my eyes and it seems that my whole life was running in front of my closed eyes. Psychology was taking over, I concluded. But I must get up and run across the street. That is what I did. Jumped up and ran at full speed *ran across the*



road. The Russians opened up with their machineguns and *I could hear the bullets buzzing near my ears and feel the hot air stream near my face* at the passage of every bullet.

The few seconds across the street felt like minutes, at least. I jumped in behind the corner of a house just in time: *a grenade demolished the corner* throwing the stuff all over – just at the moment I took a big breath – and my mouth was full of the debris. Could not breathe and I fell to the ground. Was looking for something to excavate the debris and fortunately found a wooden stick of the right size. Shoved in my throat and *was able to dislodge the house corner from my mouth*. I nearly suffocated, but I did not.

A few minutes of rest lying on an empty lot behind the house did some good. When I got up, cleaned my clothes and my face the best I could and started to walk home in the shadow of the house which saved my life. Not a scratch.

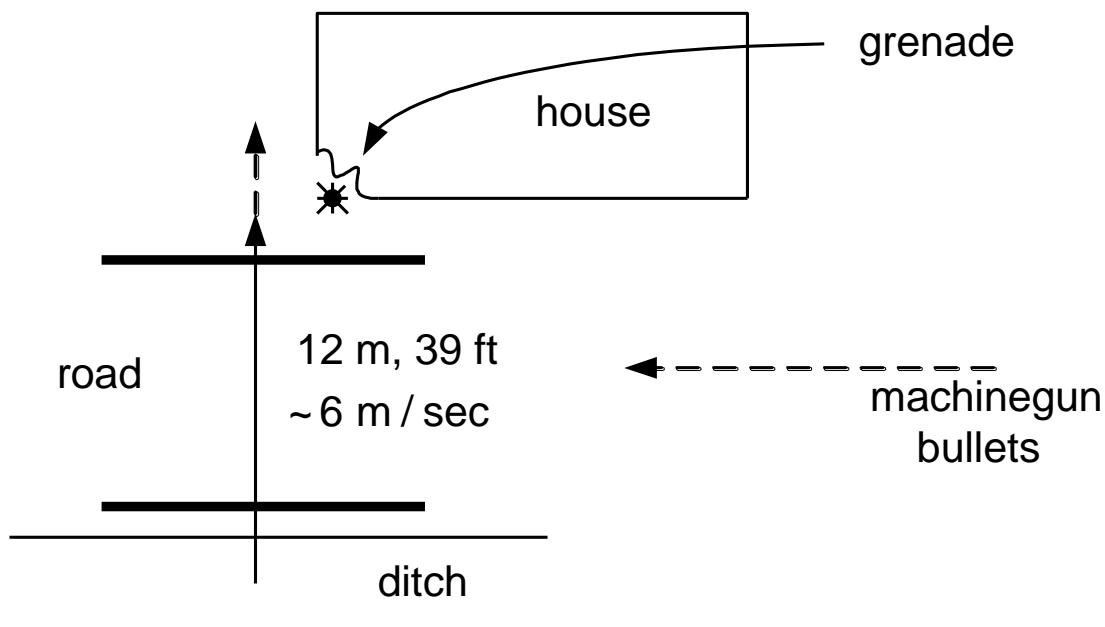
When my father saw me, he asked what the matter with me is: why are you so filthy – playing around again? I calmly said that unfortunately I could not carry out the order because the lieutenant was not home. Father said, that is all right, no problem. I never told him of my experience with the Russian Army. Did not want to have him feel guilty.

My mother remarked that I should wash up – where have you been? Of course, I did not tell her either. After washing up a bit, I noticed that I could not comb my hair – on both sides of my head the hair a half inch or closer to my skull was *scorched by the machinegun bullets!* BUT NOT A SCRATCH on me!

Can you explain logically this series of occurrences – and ‘not a scratch?’ The treatise below is a way to illustrate the transpired history in light of physics. How much ‘correction’ the Russian soldier handling the machinegun would have to make to hit me? How many thousandths of an inch? For several bullets? This story was in my head for a long time but one day I decided to apply physics to determine how close was I to death, what was the gunner’s error’ to hit me. Looking at the results I was very surprised.

Facts:

Machinegun distance to me was estimated to be about 100 meters, or 330 feet. I ran across the 12-meter road in about 2 seconds, noticing about 2 sets, or *4 bullets at both sides of my head*, the picture below shows the layout.

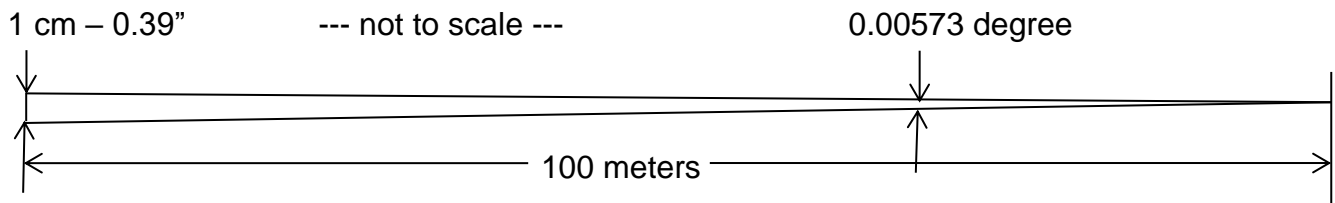


At a 100-meter distance 1 cm between the bullets and my head is 7/16 inch, the enclosed angle comes out to be about **0.00573 degree**, and the soldier followed me exactly at that speed, turning the gun at 3.42 degrees per second, or a total of 6.84 seconds *with an accuracy of 0.00573 degrees!* I estimated the gun caliber to be 50, a standard gauge. I was lucky because of this larger gauge – the projectiles per second are much slower than the smaller caliber submachine guns. The 100-meter distance warranted the use of the larger caliber gun because the submachineguns, although shooting much faster, their efficacy at that distance is poor. Had I been exposed to sub-machine gun fire; my chances of survival would have been even smaller. To further illustrate the incredibly tight error band between my head and the bullets, if the gun had been pointed **only 1 degree different** from the followed path, the bullets would have been passing me by **1.75 meters, or about 5 feet 8 inches away!**

This makes no sense mathematically, the probability of such occurrence is practically nil, *but it happened. I lived through about two dozen similarly improbable situations (bomb exploding between my legs, ship keel pushing me into the bottom of river, buildig collapsing ½ second after I exited, hiding from an Ameican P-38 plane shooting at me, etc.) where a small fraction of a second made the difference, in all cases I came out without a smallest scratch.* It is your judgment now as to whether this makes sense or not in the everyday life without high technology instruments, without a domineering higher authority. Digital technology was not around as yet, it was 1944, but other factors were present for sure – your guess.

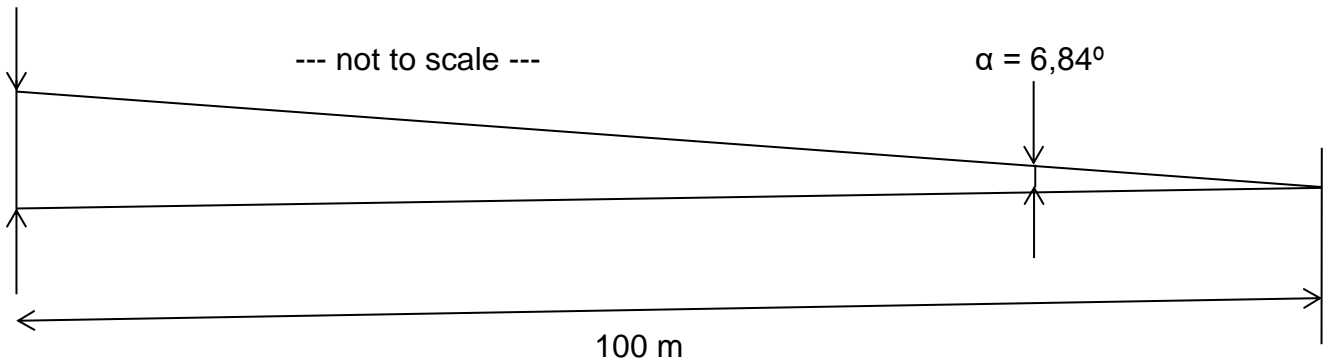
The rest of this story is devoted to physics, it illustrates the happenings translated into numbers.

This is the ‘error-band’ at a 100-meter distance, the distance between my head and the bullets. (‘Error’ of the soldier because he missed me.)



The machine gun aim as it followed me across the street (not to scale):

12m ~ 39' in 2 seconds – arc velcity: 3.42 degrees per second.



The bullets kept the 0.00573-degree distance from my head through the 2 second run, the total gun swing was: 6.84 degrees.

If you divide the total angle with the 'error-band,' you get  $6.84/0.00573 = 1194$ , (the 6.84 degrees consist of 1194 sections of 0.00573 degrees). *It would have taken the gunner to move the gun 0.00573 degrees in the proper direction* to shot me down. But he did not. Who or what guided the gun with this accuracy? I went through the calculation more times, because at first I did not believe the results. Still wondering.

Some day I may estimate the mathematical probability of the results of the event, but now I have given up. If you did that, let me know.