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POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

No. 1319

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HUNGARY

ANTAGONISM BETWEEN WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT REVEALED

An Interview With Two Workers

Budapest MOZGO VILAG in Hungarian No 4, Aug 76 pp 66-74

[Interview by Ferenc Halmos: "We Productive Guys"]

[Text] We are sitting in a room on the fifth floor of an apartment building in the 13th district, and I am interviewing Nandor K. and Lajos D. Eight to ten years ago, the three of us were working in a factory on Vaci Road. They as skilled workers, I as an unskilled worker.

Lajos D.: I completed the fourth grade of upper elementary school in 1945. Dad remained a prisoner of war. There was no other solution than to get a job quickly and earn money. Further study was entirely out of question. I had a sister, and a grandmother paralyzed by a stroke. The family needed a breadwinner. The others were in worse shape, so it was I who went to work.

[Question] In what kind of an environment did you grow up?

Lajos D.: There were two settlements in Ujpest: one a barrack where the people, the poorest members of prewar society and of the prewar regime, were living in wooden shacks. We lived here first. In 1937 we were moved from here to another slum, on Baross Street. We were assigned a room measuring 4 by 4 meters. A family of four was fortunate. But in a family of 11 there were even hammocks hanging from the ceiling, for the younger children. This is where we grew up, without a kitchen, bathroom, pantry, attic or lean-to. Everything happened here, in this one room. A sister died, another sister was born. In other words, this apartment was a combination of everything. Well, this was my basic schooling. This is where I started from. No wonder I was unable to study further. For my parents it was quite a hassle even so to ensure four grades of higher elementary school for me, from this environment. Indeed, they called me a child of upper-class parents, because I was the only one in the building, out of all 70 apartments, who completed the fourth grade of upper elementary school. I was the building's upper-class kid. Well, this building was dilapidated. Incidentally, it was torn down only in 1967 or 1968. This is where I had to start from. Unskilled worker for six months, and then for another six months. The essential thing was that I had to earn money fast. And then

in 1948 my mother, too, went to work. We put grandma into the poorhouse, and things were much easier. My sister attended school. My dad was a prisoner of war. He liked it there and stayed. And this is how I became a blue-collar worker. Incidentally, I never excelled in studies. I was a student with passing grades.

[Question] What about your vocational training?

Lajos D.: I wanted to be an automobile mechanic, butthere was no such trade at that time. There weren't even any automobiles or engines. I came here to the factory, because I always wanted to work with iron and steel. And I guess I will stay here, unless something happens. A good private vegetable store or pub. Then I would leave the factory immediately.

[Question] Do you like what you are doing? Your trade?

Lajos D.: Gradually we are forgetting what we learned; now we are working in a slipshod manner, hacking, plundering and chewing the work.

[Question] Why is this so?

Lajod D.: This is one of those things that result from the time, the machines. And I myself am older, unable to work as hard as I once did. Now I rev up the machine, at the expense of quality. One tries to get the work through quality control. It barely passes.

Nandor K.: Lajos, let us go back a few years, to before the 1950's, when our company was not yet nationalized. Your trade involved more-diverse work, perhaps even installation . . .. Now our work has become so simple: for years you have been milling, and I turning, motor cases of the same type. And we are repeating constantly the same operations. In other words, the trade today does not require any brains.

[Question] Perhaps this is why youths do not find these trades appealing?

Lajos D.: As I see it, there is an enormous shortage in our trade, in machining. This might be a question of income. The pay is not adequate. Or perhaps youths today start out by being told: "Son, I'll kill you if you become a miller or turner. Continue your studies and perhaps you will amount to something. We will find you a nice place somewhere." Anyone who goes into the shop today can see that there are no young turners, millers or grinders. You find citizens who are 35, 40 or 50. But no youths. They prefer to be chauffeurs or vegetable dealers.

Nandor K.: I think that in youths dedication to their trade has been destroyed. They refer to it as being a slave beside a machine. And there is some truth in this. We no longer round off the material, we are not creating something beautiful. Instead we are producing much of something quickly. Of some type. If you do beautiful work but produce only five pieces while someone else makes ten, you will be told: "Mate, this doesn't go." And we understand, but a 20-year-old kid will not understand.

[Question] You, too, lack dedication to your trade?

Nandor K.: I am dedicated to my trade, because I decided to become a turner.

Lajos D.: You did then. But today you would not want to become a turner. Neither one of us would.

Nandor K.: If I were 20 and had as much sense as now, I would not . . . .

Lajos D.: Hold on, Nandi. Just imagine that a kid of 18 or 20 comes to the factory and asks you or me to tell him what the score is there. I would say to him: Son, you come here at 6 in the morning, start up your machine and drive yourself. If you don't drive yourself, you will not have enough time accumulated. And if you don't have enough time, you will not get your money. And they will tinker with that money, if not this year then next. They will not add to it but deduct from it. Why? Because you have become older. But that's not the trouble. For they reduce the earnings of even those who are only 40 or 50. But when someone has wasted his life beside a machine, after 45 years also his legs are weak. He is more tired. The unfortunate new worker starts with such a handicap that I simply will not persuade him. Why? Should I persuade him to struggle here so that when he reaches my age his legs will be full of varicose veins, just like my legs and those of the others? Let him find something else where he can make money. He should not be an idealist. You can't live on your laurels. The Kozert sells everything for money.

Nandor K. If they assign a young kid to you, you would teach him . . .

Lajos D.: Every trick I know. Selflessly. If for no other reason, so that he would never be told: your instructor sure was dumb. But I would tell him in advance: Son, this is how much I have been able to get together in this job. Others who have not chosen this job have managed to get together more. Look around! Don't be dedicated to your trade! Those days are over. They bring a boy up from the provinces. He lives here in Pest for 2 years as a roomer and finally succeeds in obtaining a resident registration card as a family member. You are of the same age, and as a young journyman you are hammering away here for 2500 to 3000 forints a month. He goes to the Budapest Transportation Enterprise and earns twice as much. A loyalty bonus, uniform, and free pass. Without vocational training, simply on the basis of a three-month course and two years of experience as a truck driver, he becomes a bus driver. How does he compare to me in terms of vocational training and loyalty to his job? He simply left his trade and became a bus driver. And they expect me to hold out and love my trade? I am doing this because I have to. This is my livelihood. There are many things that make a person bitter.

[Question] What do you have in mind?

Lajos D.: I am talking about local gripes. For example, we have a messenger who got his 18 forints per hour in the Italian way. He pushem da wheelbarrow. In other words, he was an unskilled worker. But he trained himself in the trade union to where he is now getting 18 forints. Incidentally,

he completed the Jutas school for noncommissioned officers under the Horthy regime. So by definition he is supposed to know the turner's trade, I beg your pardon. His boss, the shop foreman, was a lathe operator at the Ganz Factory, so he claims. OK, I believe him. But when was that? We complete our apprenticeship at the age of 17 or 18. At the age of 21 we are inducted into the Army. He, too, was 21 when he joined the Army but stayed on. So when was he a lathe operator? He reenlisted and became a professional army officer. He worked on a lathe at most for three years. And from these three years he has been able to profit so much that now he is giving advice to me who has been working on a lathe since the age of 17? I don't buy that. And if he is arrogant, I tell him where to go. I feel that I am better qualified than he who has done this work for only three years. Perhaps since then he has seen what the others are doing. But I am the one who is in the rhythm of the work. He may be a good theoretical expert. But in practice I am the one who is good and is working on the lathe. I will always maintain this statement in relation to anyone.

[Question] In your opinion, is there any antipathy among blue-collar workers to white-collar workers? How do you regard the work of the clerical and of the engineering and technical employees within the factory?

Lajos D.: I could give you a 100-percent judgment only if I were able to put on a smock and spend some time in the offices. If I were to see their scope of duties. I assume that no work norms apply to them. How would you solve, for example, the revision of their work norms? By using up two more ball-pen refills than up to now? If in the course of a wage adjustment I get a wage increase, they, too, necessarily get a raise, in accordance with the national average. Well, what is the plus that they have to work? For I always have to work more whenever there is a revision of the work norms. In the end a person steals, cheats and robs, often not even quite realistically. But I must do this, for my take-home pay. Brittleness, softness, fractures, rust do not count. A persons tries everything to get his take-home pay. They do not have to do this. But we are always pressed by time. By time and the percentage. I always want to log my time. For that month, for those 192 hours. Plus the tacitly approved percentage.

Nandor K.: At our factory an intellectual worker (in other words, a nonproductive worker) receives a monthly salary. You know what this means? He would be glad if a month were to consists of 13 days, and not 31. Our wages, unfortunately, depend on the number of workdays in the month. If the month is shorter by 8 hours, it means that we are earning 200 forints less. Am I right, Lali? We are looking forward to a day or rest, but we also need the money. We earn less. While my boss would like eight Sundays and nine Saturdays off a month. He would get his salary anyhow. But, unfortunately, we productive guys are tied to the hourly wage system. We get paid for as many hours as we have actually worked.

Lajos D.: If I stop to chat for half an hour, I must make up for that time, otherwise I do not get paid for it. I might be wrong, but it seems to me that so long as there are two types of people at an enterprise, workers and those who employ them, there will always be conflict.

It looks good on paper when there is talk of awareness and pledges. But I find it hard to believe that anyone will go into a Kozert store and pay 25 forints for a bottle of Kovidinka wine when the price is posted as 22 forints. I have yet to meet such a person.

Nandor K.: Imagine a brigade in the shop. We, too, are working in a brigade. In addition to ours, there are five other brigades of blue-collar workers. The guys vary. But there is also a seventh brigade within the shop. It consists of foremen, gang bosses, the deputy shop manager, and a roustabout or whatever he is called at our enterprise. He comes and goes, bringing or taking a piece of paper. They constitute a brigade. And believe me, last year they were photographed three times, because theirs became a gold wreath brigade. A blue-collar brigade has never yet achieved this distinction. A silver wreath was as high as we could go. I became sick when I saw these six guys stand by a lathe, on which perhaps . . ..

Lajos D.: I sometimes feel as if we were being ridiculed.

Nandor K.: Or is it worthwhile to innovate? You go to an innovation conference: there is something that cannot be made of castings, and the enterprise would be able to produce it only 2 years later. Fellows, let's try to come up with something. And Jancsi D., a lathe operator, figured out that the thing could be assembled of different types of metal and welded together. This earned 27,000 forints for the enterprise. They said that Jancsi D. should get a reward of 100 forints for this. But since he alone could not get a reward, the foreman also was proposed for a 100-forint reward. Such things do not motivate me, and I am not racking my brains anymore. If I innovate, I do so for myself, to make my work easier. And tomorrow I will deny ever having innovated anything. Fellows, all these are things that hurt. So don't joke. We are no longer babes in the woods or what. And these things depend mostly on the managers.

Lajos D.: I think these people are practicing their posture. They come into the shop, wearing a hat or cap on their head, and a factory-issued quilted coat, carrying the schedule book in their left hand, almost as if it were too heavy to carry. They look at the blue-collar workers and then say, this or that is necessary. But this in itself is nothing. Three of them come and go. But then the fourth one arrives and says that this must be done, not that. They are as far apart as Mako and Jerusalem. They are working in the same factory but do not know what they want. Weird. And each one of them earns 4000 forints. And they are paid 4000 for this. The schedule book in his left hand, he opens it and says: Mate, this is what I need very urgently. And then I look at him and say: Sonny, your friend was here an hour ago and said that something else was needed . . ..

Nandor K.: One thing is certain. You have to work much in the shop for what you earn.

[Question] What do you mean that you have to work much? The workday is 8 hours. During 8 hours you can do only 8 hours' work. Or do you work also overtime?

Lajos D.: This is a very interesting thing. It varies by individuals. I cannot say that we are living in poverty. Anyone who claims that we are is lying. He is either an alcoholic or a scoundrel so opposed to the regime that it is almost unbelievable. In other words, there is no poverty in Hungary. One can live on the money we get. But demands vary. There are people who want more and undertake more. The trouble is that they undertake more not by fighting for it, but by putting more brute force into their work. They work more and wear out faster. My father was a Social Democrat. He belonged to the legal workers' party at that time. The movement was the strongest in his trade, among the shoemakers and the iron- and steelworkers. And they were fighting for an 8-hour workday. Such a workday suited them, and they wanted to earn their wages in that much time. Even today I say that working more than 8 hours means extra pay, but it also required extra energy. This will take its toll somewhere. Don't tell me that a person working 11 or 12 hours a day isn't stealing from somewhere. He is stealing from his family, he is stealing from his own rest and recreation, in other words he is again wearing himself out faster. And what for? For a miserable weekend lot? For a used car? Is it worth it? No, it is not. I am sticking to 8 hours; that is enough for me. During 8 hours I would like to earn enough to live on decently.

[Question] And yet more and more blue-collar workers are buying lots and cars. Although you are right in that all this is at the expense of much extra work.

Lajos D.: Wait a minute. I, too, have seen car owners who were turners, milling machine operators or grinders. They either had no children or their children had already left home. They are not living up all their money and are able to save up enough for a lot or car. But if somebody has two or three children and buys a car, that is not healthy, because he cannot afford a car from his wages. Either his children or he will be suffering from rickets. He will become prematurely old if he works 12 or more hours a day. A 24-hour day is too short to live with my wife, spend time with my children and also save for a car. A blue-collar worker's wages are simply not enough for this. Of course, you can skimp on food or clothing; there are a million possibilities. But then the individual will always be lagging. Either in his health or behind the average level. In short, we are not dressed poorly and are not living badly. The wages are enough for the person who works. They are enough for all those who are working. When young, a person leads a happy-go-lucky life. Until the age of 23 or 25, when he kicks the bass fiddle, gets mixed up in a row or two, goes here and there, has love affairs. You have to pay for all this. The next 20 years are very tough. But then the children grow up and leave home. They get married. When you have reached the last third of your life, you are again able to think of yourself, and of your grandchildren. I know from experience, because I, too, have enough. Another thing: after a time a person's fashion demands subside. And so do his cultural demands: he is satisfied with TV. There is no longer a night at the theater, or a supper at the Sipos Restaurant. Such expenses, over four or five hundred forints a month, can be cut back. Not because I wouldn't enjoy a night out, but because I find it more

comfortable to stay at home. This money can be saved up, and I think such saving is sound. But it takes time to save up the money for that lot or car. But I could not undertake to work 12 hours a day. Physically you lose as much of your life as you gain financially by working more. In my opinion, one can live on 8 hours' wages, and one can also spend 10 hours' wages.

[Question] And yet I find that people in general put in extremely much overtime. They do not share your views on overtime?

Lajos D.: Very many people work overtime. Extremely many. They have become hooked on appearance. They want to show off. This might not sound right, but in my circle the expression for showing off is "to bloom." Well, the citizen is showing off: look what I have. And before whom does he show off? Before the others. Before his colleagues, you or me. My foreman came up to me this week and congratulated me. I said to him: Jani, be glad that I have been able to buy a jalopy even though I have never put in one hour of overtime in my life and up to now have been shivering on only two wheels. I have made the grade. Neither I nor my wife has ever had even a single hour of overtime. I am opposed to it in principle. The 8-hour day was achieved for me through struggle, and I am sticking to it. And I feel that it is enough to work 8 hours a day.

[Question] Let's leave work a bit. You work 8 hours. But the day has 24 hours. How do you spend the remaining 16 hours?

Lajos D.: Those 16 hours are like a funny mirror, distorting. I may not be of advanced age, but I sleep seven or eight hours. Furthermore, the 16 hours are not 16 to begin with, because you have to get to work and come back from there. This is lost time for which nobody will ever pay me anything. At home there is rest and life in my surroundings. We have certain cultural demands, but these are satisfied inexpensively if possible. On the principle of eating our cake and still having it. We go somewhere, but it does not cost too much. I board the express for 7.40 forints to Vorosvar or perhaps to Piliscsaba. I cross the mountain, an 8-kilometer hike, in 2 hours, drink a bottle of wine and then come home.

[Question] Nandi, you have a lot. What does the lot mean to you?

Nandor K.: Should I be frank? Momentarily I do not find much enjoyment in it. Yes, there is a lot, but it was bought by my parents. Now when I am planning with my brother-in-law what trees to plant, I have to ask my father whether the trees may be peaches if I buy five trees. He might say that I should buy cherry trees instead of peach trees. But otherwise it is not a 100-percent weekend lot. Lali knows, he has visited us there. But in my opinion, a lot does provide enjoyment. I enjoyed vacationing there last summer. Lali came out on his motorcycle. We talked for three or four hours, over two bottles of beer and three strong drinks. But I am not a slave to that lot.

Lajos D.: I will tell you what is bothering me about this lot thing. Perhaps I should say that it is a status symbol. In Hungary it all began with

having a dog. Then a car, and now a lot. This is a kind of Hungarian malaise. We always take up some fad. And another thing: I will go out to rest. I'll buy that psychically it is entirely a different kind of work for a lathe operator to go out and, say, take care of his raspberry or gooseberry bushes, or to prune his grapevines or cherry trees. All right But what I would like to see is a friend who owns a lot ask me: Lali, could you come out? It all depends, what for? I would like to set up a pingpong table. Great! Finally a good idea. We will play and relax. Commensurately with our age, but we will play. Not like Sido or some National Championship I player. We will bend and turn our potbellies. But we will be playing, not working. Forget about work, leave it behind in the factory. And if we hoe, then let us hoe only as much as the crop requires. But not in haste, to do also this and that. In other words, take it easy. This seventh day is a day of rest. But the owner of a lot goes out and hacks away at it and measures how much the corn or beets have grown. And the owner of a car maintains and repairs it, crawls under it and washes it. I would like to see a lotowner say: Fellows, I own a lot and have poured a concrete basin on it, 2 by 2 meters square and 50 centimeters deep. Come out and we will splash around in it. Something like this I have never heard. Only that now I have to spray the grapevines. Alright, the grapevines do have to be sprayed, but this should not be the main objective. What we need is rest. Well, we are back to work . . . . Work is necessary. But occasionally let the grandchildren come out, fill the basin with water and watch how the kids float their rubber ducks. This is what we should enjoy! Rest. Without work there is no life or recreation. But work is not everything. Six days. I am not religious. I will say in advance: there are two things I do not believe in, because both are merely promises. One promise is that we will reach prosperity. And the other is that yours will be the kingdom of heaven. I am living today and would like to enjoy myself now. I will leave the kingdom of heaven for the hereafter. And what will be under communism I will leave for my grandchild. He will live to see it. I would like a bit more enjoyment today. I hasten to add that I am not hungry and am not dressed in rags. But if a person does not strive and aspire for something, if he were satisfied, he would be incapable of developing. If you do not want anything, you stop; and if you stop, you have given up your life.

[Question] What would you like to achieve in life?

Lajos D.: I am 45 years old. I have always been a happy-go-lucky fellow, perhaps this explains my dissatisfaction itch. My private life, my marriages have been adventurous. Children, wives here and there, both at home and abroad. Twenty years ago my dream was a small car. Perhaps it was a reflection of this dream that I wanted to be an automobile mechanic, and that I felt I would be on top of the world once I had a car. Well, I now have a car. But the trouble, fellows, is that I am already 45. This is terrifying. The time has flown by. I do not mean that I would like to pick up 20-year-old girls and show off, let the others envy me. I have already outgrown this.

Nandor K.: But this is what you would have liked when you were 20.

Lajos D.: No, because nationally there were hardly any cars at that time. But I would have liked to do this 8 or 10 years ago. When I would still

have been able to do more. Even so I enjoy the car now. The motorcycle kicked up so much dust and horse manure in your face. But at what price do I have a car? The apartment isn't what it should be. I refuse to skimp on food. I love to eat, thank God. But the money had to come from somewhere. Look at the fancy coat I am wearing, Eight years old. The hippies rub their coats with sandpaper to get this effect. I didn't have to, it just turned out this way.

[Question] Let us go back to work, to the factory. Both of you have been working there for more than 20 years. On the same milling machine and lathe, we might say. What kept you there so long if, as you have said, you are not dedicated to your trade?

Lajos D.: Force of habit. First of all, force of habit. And secondly: they say that the capitalist felt the worker's muscles before hiring him. To see whether he was still in good physical condition and young enough. And this is an eternally valid law. If at the age of 45 I go to work at a new place, first of all I have to break through a barrier. The barrier of the natives. Secondly, my physical strength will no longer increase, only decline. It's nonsense to get another job when you are 45. It is impossible to gain acceptance there. Of course, there are people who gain acceptance in a mere three months. But what does this involve? In Hungary there is a very widespread disease: alcoholism. An occasional drinker cannot endure going drinking with the gang. For there are those who tell themselves that three or four drinking bouts with the gang will gain them acceptance. This is a very bad thing in Hungary, and fairly widespread. It is common in the metalworking industry. The boys will drink, thank God, they sure will drink their share. This is a sort of curse on the trade.

Nandor K.: You are absolutely right. The good craftsman, the good lathe operator is the one who drinks much. This is literally true. In my opinion, there are two types of blue-collar workers. One is the jobhopper who changes jobs every year. The other is the one who decides to stay put. He likes the gang; they have been working together for five or even ten years. After ten years it is very difficult to leave. You better believe it.

Lajos D.: You get used to the crowd, with all their whims and trouble.

Nandor K.: If I were to change jobs now, I would not be welcome anywhere. They would just ask themselves: where has this guy been working for the past 25 years? Thus I must decide either to change jobs every year and try to drive up my hourly rates in this way, or to remain an organ-grinder. Because that is what I am, literally. I have to accept what my foreman gives me each year, a raise of 0.30 or 0.50 forint. On the other hand, I remain among friends, in the accustomed collective.

Lajos D.: You feel like a member of a family. Your coworker is as close to you as your own flesh and blood. "Have you heard, Aladar's wife is sick." And the 20 other workers share his concern. They say the workplace is your second home. This is debatable, because you actually spend less time at your first home, mostly to sleep and recover your strength. Over the years

you have absorbed the problems at the workplace. The problems of the others as well. You know that Pista is getting a divorce, that Micike is getting married, and later that she has given birth to a son. You see the worry on her face when the child is sick. As if they were your own family. This is what they call the old guard. These 20 years.

Nandor K.: You are right. This is what holds us together. These little things. Not the brigade, but these million little things. That his affairs are also my concern.

Lajos D.: Brigade? Nonsense. It doesn't hold us together. The people were together long before there was a brigade.

Nandor K.: Ocsi came and told us he had bought a weekend cottage, its foundation had to be poured, but he had no money. There are ten of us, we will go out tomorrow morning and . . .. But I am unable to . . .. You don't have to. You have bread? We will bring the food, and 10 or 20 bottles of beer, don't worry. Your foundation will be ready. We went out. One of the bosses who also bought a lot there was surprised to see us. For he had stolen everything for this lot from the factory. And here friends were going to lend a hand, not the brigade. We laughed and joked on the train to Vorosvar. In the pub at the station we each had a wine and soda, or a hard drink. Later on we mixed the concrete. When we ran out of drink, we all chipped in and one of us went and brought some more. And we continued to work on the foundation.

Lajos D.: Another example. Three of us went out to Joska H.'s place. We were dead tired, we had worked so hard. We would have been unable to work so hard for pay, even if someone had been driving us. The three of us went out there: Nändi, Ocsi, and myself. Joska had said: Boys, everything is ready, all we need to do is to shovel the slag onto the roof. We worked 12 hours, from 7 AM to 7 PM. Joska had bought 20 bottles of beer and proudly showed us what a lot of beer we had. And Nandi said to him: Did you buy this for Lali and his wife? For we came by motorcycle [and cannot drink].

Nandi K.: That's how it was. We made two more trips for beer, 20 bottles each time, for our own money. We finished 60 bottles by nightfall. But the slag was on the roof. And Joska said: Boys, you must come out for the dedication of the cottage. We? Never. It's at the end of the world. But when he needed help, we went. This is something difficult to express in words. For friendship I will work for him from dawn to dusk, to the breaking point. Lali, the only thing I cannot understand is why we are unable to this when they are willing to pay us 50 forints an hour?

Lajos D.: Wait a minute. There I would be exploited. Here I ate a goulash and drank. It didn't matter that my tail and ears were drooping for the next two days. I did it out of friendship, but I would have refused to do it for money.

[Question] How do you get along with your bosses?

Lajos D.: Somehow the blue-collar worker has gotten out of control. He has a big mouth and dares to bark back. He does not nod approval as much as he did in the past. There was a time when he did nod, with a sly look in the corner of his eye, but he did not dare say anything. But now the blue-collar worker does not hesitate to talk back to his boss: if you don't like it, come and do it yourself. It seems that blue-collar workers have finally recognized that they are worth something, that their pay is for the work they are doing. And they dare to mumble back.

Nandi K.: I would put it this way: The blue-collar worker realizes that he can have a big mouth if he is able to do the work that is expected of him. He does not achieve much by having a big mouth. He will not get more money because of it. But at least he unloads his gripes. And the boss tolerates this: Yes, the blue-collar worker barks but he also does his work.

Lajos D.: I have already told the others. Nobody is shoving and pushing to come to work on my machine. They do not want to take it away from me. Not the machine, and neither the vise nor the monkey wrench. There among the desks, among themselves, you will find jockeying for positions. But here? I have never yet heard of a lathe operator who was not allowed to work because the foreman came and took his lathe away from him.

[Question] Then why does public opinion hold that the blue-collar workers are loafing, are not working their full day? Just think of Geza Honfi's jokes.

Lajos D.: If you mention Honfi, consider also his father, Janos Komlos. According to Komlos, there are two types of workers in Hungary. The working worker, and the nonworking worker. If only the real ratio between the two types could once be reported accurately. A factory has, say, 1000 employees. This includes 400 productive workers. And 200 are the paper shufflers. They prepare a voucher in five copies for a single reject. One copy is retained by the person who reports the reject, and four copies go through accounting and are filed. This makes work for four other persons. And this is merely the voucher for a reject. How many are the nonworking workers? We don't know. Again Janos Komlos comes to mind: the highest unemployment aid in the world is paid in Hungary. What would happen if this ratio of productive workers to other employees were to change? By machining the name plate for a motor casing, I am producing money. This requires material, machinery, and marketing. But how many persons are absolutely necessary for this work? In other words, how many parasites are living off my work? I don't count the Army and the police, for they are necessary in every society. But how many people are necessary for this? That is what I would like to know. And when machines costing 300,000 to 400,000 forints are idle in the shop because there is nobody to operate them . . .. The machine is simply idle. There is no operator. The previous operator retired, and they are unable to hire someone to replace him. The fact that this machine is idle, I don't know how you call this officially, how much does it cost? And out of what is this cost paid? Out of what I produce. In the meantime the machine is being serviced, greased, procured, sold, entered in the books,

written off, etc. All this is necessary. But the servicing personnel is not declining at the same rate as the blue-collar workers.

Nandi K.: This is evident also in the shop. Over the years our shop has shrunk from 70 to 30 workers; instead of two shift per day, we are working only one shift. But the size of the managing and servicing personnel is the same as before.

[Question] I would like to interject a question that seemingly does not belong here. What do you personally mean by plant democracy?

Nandor K.: Look, there are many things in which we could interfere, but you are sorry for the guy involved. He is about to retire. I see that he is stealing everything. I could report him. But I also see that the boss is stealing everything in the same way. One boss even had the gate to his weekend cottage welded here in the factory. In other words, I fail to notice the big guy so that I will not have to report the little guy.

[Question] Let us approach this question differently. What do you get for your work? How much would you consider equitable? What do you expect of your bosses, of the factory?

Lajos D. These are tricky questions. Well, let's start at the beginning. What do we get?

Nandor K.: We get our wages . . . ..

Lajos D.: The wages we have fought for. Excuse me. Our wages depend on many things. On how you get along with the boss. On whether you are one of his favorites. On whether he is afraid that you will open your mouth. They say that the boss is above you. The hell he is! They do not take into consideration that you have been with the enterprise, say, 20 years. They look at you as an old piece of furniture, as someone who will stay on even if he is kicked three times in succession. The boss prefers to give something to a new worker, to butter him up, so that the worker will stay.

Nandor K.: What do we expect? More appreciation.

Lajos D.: I would be satisfied if the boss were merely human. If he were to come to me and say: Look, Lajos, my neck depends on it. Please do this. But he should not assume an official tone: Comrade, this is absolutely essential in the interest of fulfilling the plan . . . .. Forget it! This is something we have outgrown in more than 20 years. He should come and say: Look, pal, there is a target premium of 400 forints on this. If you don't do this quickly, I will be taking 400 forints less pay home. Then out of friendship I would do the extra work. But when he comes to me with the sermon on the mountain? Sonny, forget it. We know each other too well to believe this pitch. He should say what it's all about. He should not come to me with empty phrases and a lot of hot air.

Nandor K.: But if he were to say: Boys, I have 400 forints hanging on this; I'll give you 200 . . . ..

Lajos D.: I don't want it!

Nandor K.: But I'll give you . . .

Lajos D.: I don't want it!

Nandor K.: You know how I would do it? I would even take it where it has to go.

Lajos D.: Boys, I have done work like this. I did churn out the work like a crazy sheep. The dust sure did fly. So that the fellows in the assembly shop would have it as soon as possible. This was not the trouble.

Nandor K.: Five days later, the workpiece was still there. It was no longer urgent.

Lajos D.: Excuse me. I would put this differently. The boys received a telephone call from the competent officials who manage us. And I have found out that their telephone has no transmitter, only a receiver into which you can say only one thing: Yes indeed. No opinion, just yes indeed. And then what happens? The boys come running to you saying that they need this, not that. A new man does not notice this and does it. But the old foxes say: Boys, you have lied to us, many times. It reminds you of the old story about crying wolf. I no longer believe them.

[Question] You have the opportunity to speak out against these and other things.

Nandor K.: There was a very ugly case here. Our foreman was called in for military duty, for a week or three days, I don't remember. He came into the shop drunk, telling me and Jancsi D. that we were fired and no longer with the enterprise. The next day eight of us appeared before the chief of the production department, the chairman of the plant committee, the plant manager, and similar people. The eight blue-collar workers came to say that if we two were fired, then all eight were fired. Thereupon they apologized. Actually they did not apologize but said that we should disregard what the foreman had told me the day before.

Lajos D. The only flaw was that the foreman himself was not present. He simply did not appear, and the chief of the production department apologized in his name. He said: You are not fired, and the person concerned does not accept responsibility for what happened yesterday.

Nandor K.: He does not accept responsibility. Do you understand? Was this all there was to it?

[Question] But why did he want to fire you?

Nandor K.: I told you he was drunk. We had a quarrel. Do this, he shouted at me while we were standing by my machine. And I didn't do it, because I was told to do something else previously.

Lajos D.: Well, if you have told us this much, let us add a bit more to it. This Zsuzsi Kaposztas type. You know who Zsuzsi Kapsoztas was, don't you? A barker in the Varosliget Park. She would tell you that here we have a giantsnake, so many meters long, but only 30 centimetres can be seen of it, due to a shortage of space. Well, this Zsuzsi Kaposztas type of a chief lathe operator had worked for one year in his trade, in 1950 and something, until he was inducted in the Army. He comes in drunk, gives orders, and fires without notice someone who has been working here for 20 years.

Nandor K.: I simply went crazy. Lali and the others had to douse me with water in the men's room. Just imagine, he yelled that he was firing me without notice. You firing me? Well the signs are out everywhere along Vaci Road that lathe operators are wanted. But there is no sign out for a foreman. It was a nasty affair.

Lajos D.: Another thing. In our country the blue-collar workers usually do not stick together. They leave a wedge through which the workers can be turned against one another. Just imagine, after this incident Nandi comes to me and say that he will resign, quit. I told him: You are a fool to resign, let the enterprise give you notice if it wants to. But if they give you notice after 20 years, and not only you but also a few others, then they must justify their action. And when it comes to justifying your dismissal, we will invite a reporter of NEPSZABADSAG or NEPSZAVA, let him hear and publish why you are being dismissed. Why did he fire you? Because he was drunk and did not know what he was doing. You do your work, there has been no disciplinary action against you, you did not commit any work violations. Why do you want to give notice? I was browbeating and scolding them. Don't run away. We are producing our money's worth. We are at home.

Nandor K.: Remember, Lajos, after the meeting one of the managers told us: "Look here, boys." (By then we were already boys.) "Had this happened 15 years ago, all of you would have been taken away." You know where?

Lajos D.: To prison.

Nandor K.: They said this was a conspiracy. I told them this was no conspiracy. This was merely this. Well, this is how it happened. And my friends said that if I was fired, they were coming, too.

[Question] There is one thing we have not discussed so far. Both of you have children. How are you getting along with them?

Lajos D.: One of my sons is 26. He is dissatisfied with everything. I told him: Shut up. You are 26 years old. You have a two-room apartment with all the conveniences. He just got it. He came to me and said that they wanted him to join the party. I am not telling you to join or not to join. If you feel that you belong there, then go ahead. You got an apartment

apartment, you have a job, you don't know what it is to be unemployed, your child has been admitted to the day nursery. This is your personal civic right, your problem. But I asked him: Sanyi, why do you want to be a party member? Do you feel, do you think this will be good for you financially? But if you regard party membership merely as a springboard, then I will tell you frankly, I couldn't do it. Because I either believe in it or I don't. But if you can do it, then go ahead! Sit down before a mirror and talk it over with yourself. What you will give, what you will get. What you expect and what you are able to give. Commit yourself to something honestly and then hold out, or don't even start. I am neither persuading nor dissuading you. It is your sovereign right to decide.

Nandor K.: Why don't you talk about your other son?

Lajos D.: He is different. He has never come to me with such a problem. A different type of kid. He is not living at home. He is a wild offshoot. Should I tell you that he beats up policemen and does things like that? He is quick-tempered, would kill his own father and mother. He comes once a year, on my name day. Hi, Dad. But as soon as he enters the apartment, he is as meek as a lamb. An Ujpest rascal, a bum. I have scores of friends and acquaintances who are detectives. They say: Lajos, that is not your son. But I tell them that he is. Once his arm was broken, another time he had a cracked skull. He is tattooed all over. My other son is not bright, but he is diligent. A bourgeois type. This younger one, he is a rascal. Who if not me. A showoff and a fighter. His arm was tattooed. I told him: Son, come here only if I don't see that tattoo on your arm. The next time he came, the tattoo was burned out with cigaret butts. I noticed it but didn't say anything. The terrible thing is not this but the fact that a significant proportion of the younger generation are like this. We somehow have lost control over them. And what do you do with him. If he goes berserk and attacks me, I can defend myself. But how do I protect you from him? For I have to protect you, too.

Nandor K.: What will happen 20 years from now? We will amply support this generation. But who will earn the money for our pensions?

Lajos D.: Let us hope someone will.

Workers' Reactions to a Controversial Play

Budapest MOZGO VILAG in Hungarian No 4, Aug 76 pp 52-62

[Article by Robert Devenyi: "Young Performers Before Worker Collectives"]

[Excerpts] In January 1975, the Imre Csili Soos Theater presented a documentary oratorio whose script was based on Sandor Bencsik's sociographic work "Tortenelem Alulnezetben" [Bottom View of History]. With the approximately 40 minutes of playing time, the theatrical company under my direction strayed onto fairly uncharted ground. Not from the viewpoint of form, style or content, but in terms of its audience orientation.

Our earlier programs were mostly on youth problems, for youthful audiences and in their tone. This characteristic had developed spontaneously. Partially because of the players' age (it is common knowledge that in Hungary amateur players are in their teens and twenties), and partially because in recent years the youth club movement has been the constant market for amateur productions. On the other hand, we intended "Tortenelem Alulnezetben" specifically for blue-collar workers, or more accurately, for the members of socialist brigades. An ever-greater sense of "claustrophobia" prompted us to make this switch, which was by no means without its risks. It seemed that the amateur movement had no social prestige beyond a narrow audience stratum, and that we did not notice this merely because we could not see farther than this audience stratum. This "special interest," typically youthful way of seeing things, which was the basis of our feeling perfectly at home on the stage, increasingly became our blinder. The members of our company often were unable to perceive the problems of their age group within the coordinates of entire society's problems. While they were living constantly under the spell of wanting to influence changes, this "revolutionariness" remained rather abstract because it was not confronted with experiencing the social demands of the masses. From the viewpoint of the company's further development, therefore, I believed that it was essential for them to meet and debate with adult workers at the performances, so that the fruitful exchange of views that was characteristic of the performances at youth clubs could now unfold in a broader social sphere.

In the following I wish to report on the experience with such meetings, placing emphasis not on an analysis of the esthetical effect, rather on the establishment of intellectual contact, on the questions that were raised in the debate. In the talks that followed the performances we strived to avoid the ominous "Well, how did you like it?" question of meetings with audiences. On six occasions the debate was recorded on magnetic tape. Thus I am relying on these recordings, and on the notes which I made after the debates.

II. The seemingly random and scattered life material in Laszlo Bencsik's book actually crystallizes around a single dramatic question: to what extent does the Hungarian working class live its history-shaping and society-forming role? What historical experience has compelled the passive cautiousness of "viewing from below"? What germs of new, collective opportunities of social activity does the brigade movement harbor? These questions keenly interested the members of my company (who were youths from worker and intellectual families).

Because of space limitations, I am unable to present the entire scenario. Therefore I shall proceed to describe it. Our adaptation was not play-like. It contained no dialogs and roles. I merely placed in logical sequence several selected texts that were confessions or of a documentary nature. These texts are subdivided into five movements. We named the first movement "Autobiographies." Seven autobiographic memory traces are linked together in such a way that they can be conceived also as the stages of practically a single worker's life, from 1945 to our time. The second movement sums up the reflexes of a worker who is able to handle his tools and his strength.

In the third movement (entitled "Evening Talk") seven women--as the seven wives--discuss the problems of their everyday lives and families. In the fourth movement we divided into voices the packaging brigade's diary. And finally in the fifth movement all the players recite in chorus a train of thoughts pondered by brigade leader Szegvari, arranged in a prose poem in the vein of Peter Weiss. Because this prose poem is typical of the entire scenario's tone, I will quote its first four lines:

> At the seminars we were constantly prodded
> To discuss politics from real life,
> And yet they nevertheless wanted to know
> Whether we had learned our lesson.

Instead of democracy's formal opportunities, the chorus demands a real say in tasks both large and small.

As perhaps already evident from this brief summary, the movements are built on one another in a definite sequence of thoughts. The first movement condenses the experience that often discouraged the blue-collar worker from actively participating in the historical process. The points of convergence are World War II, fascist terror, and the excesses during the period of the cult of the individual. The second movement exemplifies that all the worker has left is his ability to work. But the usefulness and meaning of this ability to work seem to evaporate amidst the problems of supporting a family, according to the "Evening Talk." The fourth movement again calls to the field of social action: it depicts the first hesitant steps of a collective's formation, in an atmosphere of senseless bureaucracy. And finally the fifth movement demands for the worker collective a forum commensurate with its importance. We framed the second and fourth movement with abstract depictions of work, with movement expressing joint effort. (According to the critical comments of Imre Kerenyi, director of the Madach Theater, the style is excessively rambling abstract ballet.) The audience surrounded the stage on which there were seven crates--workpieces and seats simultaneously--and a tape recorder. The movements were linked together by taped commentary texts.

V. The audiences of the performances for blue-collar workers accepted as realistic the picture presented by the performance.

Naturally, the discussions did not follow any pattern planned in advance, nor could any pattern be recognized subsequently. However, we did discern certain regularities.

It became obvious, for example, that from the viewpoint of effect the program functions in two ways. In the mirror the viewer recognizes himself, respectively his immediate past. And since we did not spare the darker tones and we brought up with suitable emphasis the burdens pressing his shoulders, he excitedly discovered that the program was biased in his favor, and therefore he accepted us as his spokesman. This part of the production functioned as a sort of navigation lock: everyone willingly added to what he heard his personal experience and, naturally, also his grievances. Particularly the anomalies of the Rakosi period evoked extensive

associations. Probably because middle-aged workers began to work and established families at that time, and perhaps also because it was unusual to spread out these "jolting" memories in public, and now they responded to the encouragement provided by the play.

But at the same time we found that the workers, too, unquestionably regarded all this as the distant past, and that they recognized the conflicts of the present only in the last two movements.

"The situation at present is not entirely the same. Admittedly, there still are petty tyrants, here in the management of our factory or anywhere else. But things really are not that bad. Of all the socialist countries, the situation in Hungary looks the best. I have been in other countries and am able to say that we are fairly well off. I am not saying that our rise has been spectacular, but things really are not too bad. We are building, people are well dressed, night clubs are full. In other words, everything is all right."

"I do not wish to comment as a critic, for the play depicts realistically also the past. Everything happened the way it has been told here . . .. But I would like to note that the homemaker's lot is not as bad as described in the play."

Especially a discussion with a Gypsy inmate of a bunkhouse for construction workers left a deep impression on our company.

Inmate: My childhood under the old regime was miserable. Sometimes we had store-bought bread to eat, and sometimes we didn't. The truth is that there weren't many job opportunities in the country. It was not possible to build a home at that time. People were living in shacks. In the socialist state I just built a two-room home with conveniences. You are able to do this if you are willing to work. But there is no opprtunity if you are unwilling.

Actor: How long have you been working here?

Inmate: This is already my eighth month.

Actor: And before that?

Inmate: I worked 9 years for the Concrete and Highway Construction Enterprise.

Actor: How much are you earning here?

Inmate: I earn 3500 forints a month, plus a family allowance of 2560 forints.

Actor: Wow! How many children do you have?

Inmate: Nine, the tenth one is on its way.

We could not help but notice that even the least educated blue-collar workers were imbued with a sense of ownership and were very much aware of the benefits they acquired during the years of working-class rule. But specifically these reflections brough to the surface also the conflicts. From

most statements it was evident that the workers felt a substantial additional burden on their shoulders. The sympathizing aspects of the program triggered a virtual avalanche of critcism of others. The workers interpreted the production as a sort of concentrated confirmation of the grievances they had been voicing all along, but which had been lightly dismissed as imagined wrongs or personal gripes. Now the workers would have liked to rub these truths in to the "persons concerned." (The use of quotation marks is justified because the criticism was directed fairly impulsively against anyone in the production hierarchy above the blue-collar worker, ranging from the foremen through the "white-collar employees" to the management of the enterprise.) This is why the workers emphasized repeatedly that also "those" should see the performance:

"Let also the managers see under what conditions those miserable blue-collar workers a living, and how much they are earning, while the managers are pocketing hundreds of thousands. Well OK, they are the ones who direct and organize production and have an overview of it, but at least they should try to make our lot a bit easier. They should see this play and then perhaps they, too, would understand that the living standards ought to develop somewhat more in parallel."

The criticized conflicts, of course, were different everywhere we went. In the bunkhouse for the workers of Ferroglobus, for example, the debate was on whether wages reflected only the performance or were there "also other considerations."

"In my opinion, there are honest foremen, and there are also honest workers. But it happens even today that I am, say, a member of the workers' militia, a party member or a shop steward, and I get ahead whether I do my work or not. But if you, my friend, are none of these and merely do your work, then in the end you get nowhere. Isn't this true? In this respect, with minor variations, we are still where we were in the 1950's. But if I am unable to applaud sincerely in the same way as that other one, then I will not applaud."

"Hold on. Today it is not a question of whether you are applauding in the right way. Today the boss expects you to say good morning to him, but he does not return your greeting and merely walks on. But if I greet him twice this way (demonstrates), then at the next wage adjustment I am certain to get a raise of 0.30 forint or something. (Loud laughter.) Believe me, this is how it goes."

"There was a fellow at our factory who in the morning, when work was being assigned, began by saying 'Kiss your hand. How fresh your skin looks,' and things like that. He got the best work assignment. And I didn't get a raise, although I have been here longer, because all I could say was 'Kiss you.' (Loud laughter.) It didn't matter that I worked twice better than he did, that my performance was at least 20 or 30 percent higher than his. He still had an advantage over me, because he was able to loaf all day. And even today, anyone who is able to fawn gets ahead better. But anyone who voices his opinion is bumped from his job. Not me, because I have the worst job (laughter). Should I give you an example? I really don't know whether it may be told."

(Shouts from several directions) "Everything can be told."

"A big problem at our enterprise is that materials are so inferior it is difficult to work with them. Now why doesn't the enterprise buy better materials? That would cost more. The fact that the product would be more durable does not count. All they are interested in is that the materials do not cost much. And it does not interest them how much trouble the men have with the materials. Anyone who dares to voice his opinion that it is impossible to work with such materials will sooner or later get his work assignment, in some form. When I was attending trade school, a person did not have to point out how well he was working and did not have to ask for a raise. Instead, everyone's work was monitored. The bosses came and said, 'These fellows are doing good work, let's give them a raise.' Even now, I shouldn't have to be asking for a raise. Even though the foreman is there among us the whole day, I have to point out the shortcomings to him. I tell him that the machine is running and we need this and this. He, too, knows the problem and yet does nothing. And if we tell him, he just scratches his head and walks away. And I can't go anywhere over his head."

Moderator: If the picture is so dark, how is it that your enterprise is nevertheless exceeding the plans?

"We are working for performace wages, not hourly wages."

Moderator: At the beginning of the discussion you said that things weren't going badly. But if you haven't received a raise in 8 years, in what respect are things going well?

"It is true that we haven't received a raise. But in the meantime we have been producing more and more. Only seven people are needed now to do the same work that previously was done by 20 persons."

Moderator: In other words, your incomes are growing commensurately with your performance?

"Yes, that's right. Nobody can take away our performance."

Although the motivation of these grievances occasionally was strikingly personal, it was easy to see that these grievances prompted the worker to look around carefully in his environment and to form an opinion. The most frequently voiced complaint was that their production status detracted from their status as individuals.

"There are managers who know much less than many old blue-collar workers do, and yet it is his opinion that gains acceptance, because he is the boss. But then you would at least expect them to accept responsibility for the orders or plans that they issue. Or they should not be ashamed to talk things over with an older worker who has more practical experience. I have already offered to establish contact with the engineers and technicians. Very few of them came to ask me about anything, because they are ashamed to

do so. And yet it was pointed out at the recent party congress that a simple worker is not that simple, because everything depends on him."

"I am a metalworker at the enterprise and see what mistakes the Planning Office is making in the plans. Because of them, in most cases we have to do the work twice but are paid only once. And when our performance reaches 120, 130 or 140 percent, they pay us for only 109 percent. The mistakes made by the Planning Office affect the incomes of the entire metalworking crew; we have to tear down something when it is already installed. And yet the most important is economical use of materials. But we must install new materials, because the plans have been changed. Take, for example, the market hall in the 5th district of Budapest. It should have been ready by 15 July of this year, and it will not be ready even by the same time next year. About one-half of the work that we installed has to be torn down. An enormous amount of material has been ruined and is being dumped. In this case it does not matter. But if a worker were to take home a handful of nails, that certainly would be regarded as theft."

A question that follows from the preceding intrigued the members of our company the most. It was obvious that the problems arose not as social anomalies but as workplace anomalies. Why didn't the workers bring up these problems directly at the workplace, before those who were immediately concerned? The following are some typical dialogs:

"It is useless to speak up against the management; nothing is ever done."

"Who is the stronger? Who produces value?"

"You are right, we are the ones who produce value. We produce it, and then our norm is tightened."

"This is where the collective could take action. Who is the stronger? The collective is the stronger."

"That's obvious. But this is one of those things. It is always one person who speaks up first, and twenty others tell him not to preach so much. That is the truth. The rest is hypocrisy."

"That's right."

"This is the situation everywhere. One person starts to speak. The others try to shut him up: 'Don't talk so much. When are we going home?'"

"At trade-union meetings the members are urged to speak up and comment, but nobody is willing to do so."

Actor: Then actually you have the right to comment but do not exercise this right?

"That's right."

Actor: But you could avail yourselves of this opportunity?

"We could but we don't. Because if somebody starts to speak up and utters one or two awkward words, the workers themselves ridicule him. Thus someone might be wanting to speak up and comment but thinks better of it, so as not to become a laughing stock. Why do we ridicule ourselves? We should not be ashamed. Not everybody is able to complete the university, the

special school of the National Council of Trade Unions or some training course. We must say everything in our own words. One worker should not laugh at another. What a person says in his own words comes from the heart. And where did the management come from? From the working class. When someone reaches the point where he can give orders to Peter, and through Peter also to Paul, then he thinks that nobody can order him around. And if someone dares to say anything, he is told to shut up, or they take care of him in some other way. Do you understand what I mean?"

Actor: If I understood you correctly, you said that people are reluctant to speak up because they might easily be accused of harboring sentiments opposed to the regime.

"That's correct."

In most debates, then, the blue-collar workers responded with outspoken criticism and self-criticism to the question as to why they were reluctant to adopt standpoints. And we regarded this fact as a very great success. We felt that the program provided a noninstitutional forum for the workers, which could be a school for the socialist democracy of the institutional forums. The political leadership of the Ventilation Works held an entirely different view on this. In this factory we would haveliked to present our play in a series of performances, to all the socialist brigades. However, the management authorized only a private performance to which party, trade= union, and KISZ officials were invited, together with all those who in general were concerned with cultural work. But in the end, performances for the socialist brigades were not authorized. The debate with the management was very edifying, and therefore I will present it in greater detail.

"I will tell you what I feel. Your performance is brilliant. Everything that you played was good. But should I add that I would like to cry? I have lived through all this. It does not entertain me, it depresses me. It literally depresses me."

"This is our objective."

"It is not a good objective. It is not good at all. You should depress with these things where they belong. You do not achieve much by reminding me of all this. You merely make me downcast for three days. I went through all this: the war, my father in captivity, the poverty without bread, the heavy physical labor, the peace loan subscriptions of the 1950's, everything that you have narrated here. But is it good to stir all this up?

"You feel that there are no unsolved problems today"?

"Yes, there are. But not these problems. They are a thing of the past, so much so that the young people do not understand them, and those who have lived these problems through are better offif they forget them. The play itself was very good, and I am not criticizing it. I am merely telling you what it evoked in me. In no case was it entertaining and relaxing. For there are other shortcomings, but not so depressing, believe me."

(Another speaker:) "Well, I read through the scenario. Not once and not twice. I read it and began again, because I had the same feelings as now when we watched the play: we are not living in this period, we have quite

other problems. Then why show this play to the brigades? What will we achieve by doing so? Actually to whom should this play be presented? To the blue-collar workers? The ones who have no apartments? And if we present this play and debate it, will they get apartments? Will their problems be solved? This is not the objective. They themselves cannot solve this problem. In my opinion, if the play is presented here in the factory, then we should not start with the blue-collar workers. Present it to those who can help solve the problems."

"With this play we merely wish to say that the working class is indeed the leading force and is able to intervene in everything that is happening in the country. This is what we wanted to talk about."

"All right. But then you really should perform the play for the benefit of those people who do not take cognizance of this fact. What I mean is that in Hungary there is no blue-collar worker, no Hungarian citizen, who cannot express his opinion anywhere, before any forum. If he has the ambition to present his case and is organizing the workers in the shop, then he can state his opinion before any forum."

"At one time I was a transportation worker for two years. Almost a related trade with this one. I, too, was a blue-collar worker. So I know that there are problems. But if someone wants to solve the problems, he is able to solve them."

"Look, I still think this was a brilliant performance in every respect. But if you wish to achieve your objective with it, then you should add something to it. Something rosey, a bit of optimism, a direction in which the spectator should think."

The party secretary summed up the debate's conclusions as follows:

"Here, at the end of the debate we are able to establish, I believe, that there is by no means any question of our not daring to talk about what was said in the play, of our reluctance to present the play before the general public. Rather we might say that the reflective person of today, the reflective blue-collar worker says what he said out of fear for the cause; he slightly fears the present from what echoed here in the play from the past; and he is slightly ashamed of that period. It is positive and favorable that today we are able to speak differently, and the speakers in the debate fear this present, what now exists. But we must accept from the realistic writer's pen what happened, and so let us talk about that. I on my part see no particular danger in it. I have merely one comment regarding the play. In my opinion, its message is perhaps too one-sided.

"A stratum of our present society is alien to culture and does not show much interest in self-improvement. Unfortunately, this stratum is still fairly large. Perhaps the contributions to this debate were made out of concern that the stratum, for which the play's message has been intended in practice, might utilize this message in its consciousness in a negative sense. Prior to approving the presentation of the play, we talked and debated at

length what to do. I, too, have read the scenario and did not have any qualms about seeing the play. But I, too, felt immediately that we have something to be concerned about. I am unable to define what this is, perhaps the projection of what this play may trigger in certain strata."

"Excuse me. But just what do you mean by this"?

"What I have just said. That there still are culturally backward people who might interpret the message in a negative sense and transplant it that way into their consciousness. You who are sitting here now have been invited specifically because we have nothing to fear in our case. At this level there is nothing to fear, not even if we talk about this. We were concerned for the time being about presenting this message to another level. That is why we said that first let us watch the play at this level, and then we would be able to say whether the message, in our opinion, could or should not be passed on below, not in a pejorative sense. Can we pass this message on below, and does its message trigger a suitable reaction? I somehow feel that something is lacking in this play: it raises and illuminates a problem, but it does not help to direct thinking in this or that direction. It merely raises the problem and then drops it."

"If you will permit me to say so: when a problem is raised, its solution has already begun."

"But the blue-collar worker is not the organ to solve this problem. He is not the one who sees what has to be done."

"He is the one to solve the problem to the extent that he produces goods for society."

"In this sense, Yes."

Actor: I don't think there is a single factory or plant where organization, bribes, rising costs, the manpower shortage and loafing are not causing problems. And I don't think that middle managers should hear about this first. The draft of the present congress resolution states that plant democracy must be perfected specifically because in its present form it is unsatisfactory.

"This was the very essence of my contribution just now. The competent organs are aware of the problems, and they certainly will solve them if problems do exist. But there are constitutional procedures for this solution."

VI. The performance at the Miskolc Cement Works was attended by the workers of the night shift, together with their foremen and shop manager. The argument erupted over grievances in conjunction with a furnace breakdown. It turned out that last winter the workers' teeth were chattering from the cold in the shop, because effective measures were not adopted to repair the breakdown. The furnace was ready only by summer. And to burn up the fuel prescribed in the plan, the shop was senselessly heated over the workers' protests, to such an extent that the workers could wear nothing more than

swimming trunks. The foreman became so incensed by the rehashing of this grievance that he fled from the performance into his cubbyhole. At the performance in the machine hall--incidentally, here we found the most impressive background for the play: the audience was clinging from the giant machines that were several stories high--the antagonism between blue- and white-collar workers flared up. The purchasing agent was reproached for spending hours of his working time over lunch in the Avas Restaurant. In other words, "he is a parasite living on the necks of the workers supporting him." One word followed the other. The purchasing agent argued skillfully, but in the end he lost the debate. His excuses were drowned out by the laughter that expressed the workers' unimpeachable opinion.

Has not the public always sought such an experience in the theater? Yes, the production seems to have awarded the public a sixth sense: it sensed the fault lines in its ranks.

1014
CSO: 2500

JAROSZEWICZ SPEAKS AT RECEPTION FOR DANISH PRIME MINISTER

Warsaw TRYBUNA LUDU in Polish 27 Oct 76 p 4 AU

[Speech by Premier Piotr Jaroszewicz at the 26 October reception in Warsaw in honor of Prime Minister Anker Jorgensen]

[Text] Mr Prime Minister, we are pleased to host you, your wife and your entourage in our country.

We welcome you as an outstanding statesman of a friendly country, which reciprocates our efforts in favor of a steady development of Polish-Danish relations.

Your visit enables us to show you our heroic capital and other regions of the country. I wish to assure you that you will encounter everywhere the respect, praise and friendship that our people feel for the Danish nation.

Mr Prime Minister, we are pleased with your visit to Poland. Your visit is an occasion for tightening our traditionally good contacts and for continuing our lively political dialog, which our governments initiated at the summit level some years ago.

The history of Polish-Danish relations is rich. Our mutual contacts stem from our Baltic neighborhood and from the frequently common fates of our nations in the past 1,000 years of our states' history.

Our people and the Danish people love freedom, as attested to by the fact that during the last war our states and nations were on the same anti-Fascist side of the barricades.

Your visit is an important event in Polish-Danish relations. We hope most profoundly that it will provide a new impetus for our further drawing closer together, will stimulate cooperation between our countries and will contribute to the development of international cooperation in Europe, to the consolidation and deepening of detente, which we all need so much, and to making the process of detente irreversible.

Poland and Denmark have made a considerable contribution to this cause. We in Poland attach great importance to the further comprehensive development of the contacts between our states and nations in the interest of peace and security. This is consistent with our needs and with the assumptions of Polish foreign policy.

Together with its socialist allies Poland has never grudged and will never grudge any efforts to insure that the CSCE principles become a permanent feature of international relations and that the CSCE resolutions and decisions are fully implemented. We are vitally interested in consolidating detente and developing international cooperation. Together with the Soviet Union and other allies we will continue our efforts in favor of the constructive implementation of these ideas and in favor of enriching the practice of peaceful coexistence.

Joint efforts to search for solutions to international problems were and are the essence of the process of detente. This is why we attach such great importance to a further and speedy progress in the Vienna talks on reductions of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe and in other disarmament talks.

Relations with the Nordic countries occupy a special place in our international activities. The rapprochement and broad cooperation with these countries are the permanent elements of Polish foreign policy. We note with satisfaction the considerable, mutually advantageous achievements in this regard on a bilateral and all-European basis.

We are pleased that Polish-Danish relations are developing in the spirit of the time. Poland wants to continue to expand and deepen its comprehensive political, economic and other cooperation with Denmark.

The fruitful and traditional Polish-Danish political dialog has contributed numerous stimuli and constructive values to international cooperation.

Poland and Denmark are neighbors across the Baltic, which is a sea of peace. It is our wish that the cooperation among the Baltic states becomes an even better example of peaceful, neighborly relations for all other maritime states. We count on the further favorable development of our cooperation in all the maritime areas.

It is in the common interest of our countries to respect and take into account the traditional interests of all the Baltic states, to better exploit the natural resources of the Baltic, to protect animal and plant life and to improve the transportation and communication systems.

We attach great importance to developing economic cooperation. A rapid increase in our trade has occurred in the past few years.

We estimate, however, that there are great possibilities for further stimulating our trade, technological exchanges and industrial cooperation. In the past few years our country has greatly stepped up the rate of its economic development. We are expanding our industry, agriculture and transportation, we are raising our living standards, we are for expanding the international division of labor and for cooperating with all nations. We want to export more and import more. We are convinced that the elimination of the still existing barriers and restrictions in trade and economic exchanges would benefit all states.

We attach a significant role in developing our relations to scientific and cultural exchanges. They are developing favorably, but I take the view that we have still not exploited all the possibilities in this regard and that there are still areas which call for specific activities. Our governments can help by suitable encouragement and support.

The ever better direct and indirect contacts between the Polish and Danish peoples, between various social and other organizations, between young people and between trade unions are of essential value and significance.

We are pleased with whatever promotes our mutual understanding and deepens the friendship between our nations.

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END