

first 21  
pages seen  
by Dr. Domonkos.

WWII

This is a tape recorded interview with Professor Leslie Domonkos for <sup>H</sup>Youngstown State University ~~H~~Historians project by Donald Hovey in Dr. Domonkos' office in the History Department, ~~on~~ May 15, <sup>1975,</sup> approximately 1:15 p.m.

HOVEY: What I 'd like to ask you to do if I could was to start out by just giving me a general overview of your life what has happened to you up to now,

DOMONKOS: Do you want me to proceed in a chronological order?

H: Sure.

D: That <sup>obviously</sup> would be most logical. ~~And~~ How much detail do you want and what emphasis <sup>do you want?</sup>

H: What I <sup>would</sup> like to figure on is about an hour and a half getting a basic, general picture and subsequently we'll go back to various things with greater detail. Obviously, the emphasis should be on what you feel have been the significant events or events ~~you know~~ I'd like to know what kind of family you were born into.

D: ~~mmm. Eh huh. Fine.~~ So then let's start and proceed in a chronological fashion. Let me say at the very outset I think, especially my early life, is quite eventful, probably more eventful than you would find in most interviews with other colleagues. I was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1938, March 14, two days after Hitler invaded Austria. There were a number of

LSD

people who wondered whether my father would name me Adolf because Hitler was very much in vogue in those days. My father being staunchly anti-German and anti-Nazi probably wished he could have killed the questioners in a stream full of water. <sup>(laughter)</sup> A few words about my parents. At the time of my birth my father was an officer in the Hungarian Army in the rank of ~~Lieutenant~~, ~~no~~ it was Captain. ~~And~~ my mother and father had been married a year. My mother comes from a family from Northern Hungary. The family is what I would call probably upper-middle class, a family of lawyers, attorneys, and government officials, <sup>for</sup> several generations back. My father's family is more humble. They could be described, I guess, as ~~having the nobility~~ petty nobility. My grandfather was a Justice of the peace in a ~~small~~ small town in Northwestern Hungary. He had gone to college two years, a school of engineering, when he decided to quit and get married. He had a large family. There were twelve children in my father's family, although only six reached adulthood. My father's education is rather unusual since he ended his career as an Army man. He began as an agricultural engineer. In fact, he received his bachelor's degree in Agronomy from ~~a~~ one of the Hungarian ~~universities~~ universities. But graduated in the ~~middle~~ middle of the depression and ~~since~~ there was no employment available, which was rather surprising in a country that was <sup>eighty</sup> 80 percent agrarian at the time, ~~but~~ <sup>That</sup> is again some indication of the difficulty world-wide that the depression of the 1930's produced.

(LSD)



← He had gone to school on a plan very similar to the ROTC program in the United States and since there was really no alternative, he then entered the military service and began *as* a career ~~army~~ officer. Eventually we moved from Budapest to Transylvania and lived there for three years. This is basically where I became conscious of being a human being.

H: How do you know?

D: My memories go back as far as three years old. ~~and~~ this is <sup>by</sup> no way meant as patting myself on the back, but I have a fantastic memory for things which occurred in my childhood. From age three on, I remember things quite vividly even to the point where even ~~twenty-five~~ <sup>20</sup> years after I sat down and drew a map of the city where we lived when I was three and four years old; *which* showed exactly where the main traffic, arteries were; where my father's office was; where our house was; what routes to take; where the churches were, <sup>and schools</sup> and so forth. ~~It~~ it is interesting that I cannot remember things that happened two months ago but these other events are very vivid. (Laughter) *13*

H: What is the earliest thing you can remember?

D; I don't know. I can't pin-point any particular event. ~~But~~ I clearly remember how we moved to the city of Transylvania, how we arranged the furniture, <sup>et cetera</sup> ~~etc.~~ I very clearly remember how my parents were indicating to the movers what should go where. ~~and~~ I was standing around helping them make up their minds, and generally being a pest. I also remember, eventually, the birth of my sister and brother who were born in 1942 and 1943, respectively. During this period I must say that I lived in an atmosphere which

*JSD*

HOVEY

4

was peaceful although the war had already begun, and the Russian offensive and so forth were going on. ~~and~~ although, on occasion, I saw pictures and when I first went to movies saw newsreels of the war, this was something extremely far away until the city itself was bombed by Russian planes in the summer of 1944.

H: What city was this?

D: This was the city of Kolos<sup>Zsvar</sup>~~barai~~, which is called Ciuj ~~barai~~ in Romanian. It is part of Romania now. This was a period of tranquility for me. I grew up by playing with neighborhood children who were all basically middle<sup>g</sup>class, upper middle<sup>g</sup>class kids. My parents seemed to, at least to me, ~~be~~ be very secure. It looked like this <sup>was</sup> is how we would be living for the rest of our lives. My father, at that time, was already talking about when I was a teenager, he would send me off to an apprentice to various craftsmen because he felt that I should learn how other people earned their money. He was very liberal, by the way, contrary to what army officers usually are supposed to be. He was not authoritarian and, in fact, became more liberal the older he became, which is again unusual. He also was thinking of eventually sending me off to study possibly in Paris or Oxford or somewhere because he felt being exposed to a foreign culture would benefit me. He never realized that, whether we wanted to or not, we would be exposed rather extensively to foreign culture. ~~So~~ basically this <sup>was</sup> how things were until the summer of 1944, ~~and~~ then ~~there was the~~ <sup>there was the</sup> surprise bombing of the town, ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> by the way, I

LSD

remember very vividly, I was standing in the middle of the window when planes approached the city and I fell and was yelling, "Look, those are our planes, those are our planes!", ~~when~~ all of a sudden they started dropping bombs and my mother grabbed me and we went down to the cellar. ~~And~~ because of the potential for further attacks my father then packed us up and we left our house never to return again.

H: ~~(QUESTION IS INAUDIBLE)~~ ~~What was the situation there?~~

~~Of No. 10,~~ the attack was primarily at the railroad yard and some factories but <sup>it</sup> also hit the girls' school and killed about twelve <sup>thirteen</sup> ~~is~~ and <sup>fourteen</sup> ~~is~~ year olds. We then went to a farming estate that my mother's sister had about 120 miles east of Budapest, ~~and~~ since this was in the middle of nowhere it was considered to be safe from bombing. This is where we spent four or five months. I remember this as being an extremely painful period both for myself, personally, and also for my mother. My father, being in the army, had to obviously stay behind and we lost contact with him. There was no word whether he was still alive or not, ~~and~~ in the meanwhile the Russians had moved in and cut off Transylvania from the rest of Hungary. My dad, however, managed to escape in the last moments and eventually rejoined us.

Personnally, what made this time of my life so miserable <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ the fact that the climate in this Hungarian village did not appeal to me at all. I was constantly ill. I was rather a sickly child to begin with, sort of almost transparent, ~~and~~ what is probably most

LSD

ironic is that during this time we were still relatively rich and had all the things that it was humanly possible to have. I was the hardest person to feed. I would never eat my food and would munch away on things like chocolates with reluctance and so forth. Once, however, we lost everything I became the hungriest kid that you could find and was always thinking back of <sup>how</sup> good it would have been if I had eaten all the goodies that I was supposed to have. ~~It~~ So anyway, one fine day in late fall of 1944 my mother received word from my father that he had been able to escape from Transylvania. In the meanwhile however because of the approaching Russians we too left this estate where ~~we~~ had been and moved further to the west. Eventually ~~then~~ my father caught up with us. ~~and~~ this was roughly in November of 1944. By this time the Russians were on Hungarian soil and were constantly moving in, ~~and~~ this was also roughly the time when there was a major change in politics in Hungary. Admiral Horthy tried to create a separate peace with Russia, tried to get out of the Axis and prevent Hungary from becoming a battleground. At the same time however a public regime, Nazi regime, imposed by Hitler took over. Now because of my father's notorious anti-German, anti-Fascist stand, and because he was considered an undesirable, he was given some kind of little desk job somewhere. He was a major by this time and probably would have had a ~~very~~ <sup>fairly</sup> successful career in the army had these events not occurred. We were stationed in a small village about <sup>fifteen</sup> 15 miles from the Austrian border, and this is where we spent our last Christmas in Hungary.

LSD



H: He was actually detailed there?

B: Yeah, That's right. By this time, you see, Budapest had been surrounded by the Russians. A German division, some Hungarian troops decided to defend the city and the Russians decided they would make an example of it and Budapest then had a siege longer than Stalingrad, over two months. They really shot the place up something fierce. Once Budapest fell and the Russians were on the move again, with each successive day the confines were becoming closer and it became evident that we would have to leave Hungary. Now the only reason, actually, why we left was simply to avoid falling ~~xx~~ into the hands of the Russian ~~ARMY~~ Army. The main reason, and this unfortunately is not propaganda and has been borne out over and over again by Swedish Red Cross reports and all you have to do is read <sup>RYAN'S Book</sup> Cornelius ~~Ryan's~~ <sup>Book</sup> on the fall of Berlin, is the fantastic amount of rape that went on and the senseless killing of innocent individuals. <sup>ent</sup> So my father said "Let us leave and hopefully by travelling west we will be captured by Americans." ~~xx~~ Then the war would be over and the Russians would go and we could return home and since he had done nothing in his life which was illegal, immoral, and he was a good Hungarian, his place was in his country, rebuilding, after the devastation.

Basically with these views we left Hungary under the assumption that we would be back within weeks. Our leaving the place was very traumatic. It was assumed that the unit to which was father was attached would receive motorized transportation

JSD

31

and trucks and what have you that were actually available. In the last minute, however, the German Army in their tremendous flight from everywhere confiscated every motorized vehicle and we were left there with absolutely nothing whereupon a group of peasant vehicles, four-wheeled carts, were requisitioned from the local peasantry and two families shared one peasant cart. This is basically what we came ~~wa~~ away with.

H: Horse-drawn?

D: Horse-drawn carriage with a little boy, a farm boy who was taking care of the animals, and another family and us. Now this gives you some idea of the amount of material goods that we were able to carry off with us. It consisted primarily of diapers for my brother and sister and the things we had on. <sup>The</sup> And photographs, picture albums, paintings, and all the things that my father and mother had accumulated during their seven years of marriage were left behind. ~~Again~~, with the idea that we would be back and we'll pick these up and wherever we'll go we'll start life anew. We left Hungary March 28, 1945. <sup>would</sup> the town <sup>from</sup> to which we left two o'clock in the morning, <sup>would</sup> fell to the Russians at eight o'clock in the morning. This means that as we left in long columns, thousands, hundreds of thousands of people were in various vehicles streaming out of the country. We could see burning villages, towns. We were struck by planes low-flying planes which then just machine gunned the columns as they were leaving. <sup>There were</sup> No military targets, <sup>in</sup> there were hardly anything.

H: These were Russian ~~planes~~??

planes

JSD

D: No, they were American planes.

H: ~~And~~ they were spraying ~~(?)~~ the civilians? ~~[redacted]~~

D: Yes Yup, yeah. In fact, two vehicles before us was an old ambulance with the biggest goddamn red cross that you can imagine. And along came an American plane and shot the hell out of it. But, you know, Geneva Convention rules weren't being followed by anyone.

H: It was a wonderful thing that you happened to get to Switzerland?

D: Yes. And maybe I'll get to this later. There's only one group that kept pretty close to the Geneva Convention and that was the British. Anyway, we left under these circumstances with the Russians really very, very close behind us. It was not uncommon after days of travel to find refuge in an Austrian farmer's barn and in the middle of the night wakened by my parents and told we had to go on because the Russians were in shooting distance.

H: Could you actually hear the advancing troops and the movements?

D: Oh yes. We could <sup>hear</sup> the bombings, and shellings, and what have you. And there was constantly the fear that some kind of motorized units would cut off the highway before us and we would be trapped. Fortunately this was not the case.

H: The Germans did not attempt to keep you out did they?

JSD

D: Oh, hell no. The Germans were fleeing faster than we were and on occasion German tank columns would come and they would push the refugees physically off the road. I remember a German tank ~~coming past~~ unit coming ~~up~~ past us and one of the horses got scared, pulled the cart (o) the side, the cart fell into the ditch, and a ~~few~~ women and three children died right there within thirty minutes because there was no medical aid. It was also a frightening time from another point of view and something that will always haunt me, sometimes even now I will wake up thinking about it or dreaming about it, the Germans were herding fairly large units of political prisoners. These were Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, <sup>and</sup> Ukrainians, on foot. A few guards with automatic weapons and here <sup>with</sup> were these emaciated persons, the kind you would see on newsreels and films about the survivors of Dachau and Buchenwald <sup>who</sup> were being herded on the highway, and I remember they were always asking for handouts, although by this time we didn't have much either. I told you what we had, ~~what~~ what was on the cart. I remember my mother and father gave them food and bread whereupon German soldiers would come around and hit them with the butt of their guns in order to get them away from ~~receiving~~ receiving food. ~~Also~~ I also remember that this is what ~~worries~~ bothers me very much. There were some who just couldn't make it anymore and were so fired whereupon one ~~of~~ of the guards would take them behind a bush or a house and you would hear a shot ring and the guy would come back alone. I always wondered what ~~kind~~ absolute

(JP)



hopelessness and tiredness a man must feel when he knows, and any idiot knew, in March or April of 1945 that the war was over, that it is really maybe <sup>40</sup> miles he has to walk yet, or maybe the next morning the Russians would catch up and maybe liberate him, but he says, "No, I cannot go on any longer", and have to be taken behind a bush and shot like an animal.

H: Why do you suppose that the Germans insisted on moving the prisoners?

D: Probably because some kind of order was given to herd these people and so the <sup>Sergeant</sup> ~~sergeant~~ and ten soldiers that were in charge of this detail, these were the orders that they got in October of 1943 and so they were going to carry them out. It was April of 1945 and they were still carrying out these orders. And they had already marched twelve-hundred miles. So anyway, to turn to something more pleasant, eventually we were able to transfer onto a Hungarian army truck that was carrying ~~a~~ condemned deserters, also for some strange reason, to Germany. I must say that they were the most pleasant group of people with whom we had ever been associated. We transferred whatever belongings we had onto this truck that was parked right beside us on the highway.

H: How long had you been escaping at this time?

D: Oh, about a week or ten days. And this truck was just parked beside us and my dad began exchanging words with one of the officers on the truck <sup>He</sup> and asked him if ~~her~~ had room for five more people, not really knowing at this time what kind of outfit this was.

SP

~~And~~ the guy said, "Why don't you come over, we'll take you." So we just threw things in and the column began moving and it was later that we found out that these were all deserters that were condemned by court martial and were already in prison somewhere in Hungary, but when the Germans advanced they took them on a truck back to German. So in this very pleasant company we were able to escape from the immediate war zone. And they took us some distance, all the way to the Austrian town of Lintz. This was as far as this column went. There were about four or five trucks. So we arrived in Lintz and my father looked around to see if there were any other Hungarian army units around. By this time there were units all over, German, Hungarian, Ukranian, all kinds of units all over the damn place.

H: Were these free Ukranian units?

D: Yes. These were free Ukranian units. My father found some Hungarian unit and said, "Well, here I am with my family, can you do anything for us?" And one said, "Well, you can have a cup of coffee", and that was about it. As my father was talking to this fellow officer I looked out the window and there were two horses with a carriage standing there. The horses, however, had come all the way from Transylvania and the only way they could stand was by leaning against each other. They were leaning against each other in the courtyard. So my dad asked if he could have the two horses. So he got the two horses and he took them out to this German peasant, gave him some cigarettes, and in return, this German farmer then fed these horses until they were able to stand on their own ~~two~~ legs, and we then continued our journey.

Until we came within eight miles of the border of Germany, <sup>to</sup> the border town of Passau, a very famous and beautiful cathedral town. ~~And as we were coming into Passau,~~ by this time the war zone <sup>was</sup> is considerably behind us and the roads <sup>were</sup> are pretty clear, <sup>we</sup> here we <sup>are</sup> are, my father, my mother, and the three of us children and some little enlisted man who was driving the wagon. We were coming down an incline outside the city of Passau when we were buzzed by a group of Russian planes. The horses began stampeding, they were unable to <sup>stop</sup> stop and the cart had no brakes or anything, so down this tremendous incline we headed at full speed with the horses completely out of control, until we finally crashed into a tree which upset the cart and almost killed my father. He was left completely unconscious and later we found that he had six of his ribs broken, three of the wings of his vertebrae, severe concussion, and was not expected to live. This was on a Sunday morning outside of the city of Passau and here we were on the side of the highway with our belonging strewn all over the place, <sup>and</sup> the horses had run off, There was a farmhouse nearby <sup>but</sup> but they were off to church, so we were faced with the problem of what to do. So my mother went out to the highway and tried to stop somebody to get assistance. Well, nobody would stop. You know, you think today people are heartless, well I guess they were just as bad then. ~~Until finally~~ she decided that she was either going to get hit or she'd stop somebody, <sup>and</sup> and she stopped a German tanker truck, oil tanker. The guy came over and looked at my father and said, "Well, this guy ~~isn't~~ isn't going to live anyway, and I can't take the responsibility

LD

of putting him ~~in~~ <sup>trunk</sup> my ~~cart~~, but I'll take you to Passau and maybe you can get some help." So mother then left the three of us children with our father, who wasn't even conscious lying there in the meadow, and ~~went~~ <sup>LD</sup> off to get help. ~~So~~ she went to Passau and found out there ~~was~~ <sup>an</sup> Hungarian military hospital unit in the city and so she went there and asked for help. However, when she described where the location of the accident was, she was informed that this was eight miles away <sup>LD</sup> from the place ~~th~~ and their jurisdiction was only five ~~xxx~~ kilometers ~~and therefore~~ they couldn't come out and do anything. It sounds like <sup>the</sup> Army anywhere doesn't it? Since I guess at this point mother said some unkind things about the Royal Hungarian Army and its establishment, a doctor, who had some feelings in his heart, took pity on her and decided he would go out there on foot with her. As they left the hospital they also found two stretcher-bearers and one of them knew somebody who had a cart and they finally arrived back where we were located with a cart, stretcher, doctor, and two <sup>medics</sup> characters. Anyway, by this time the people from the farmhouse had come back and had taken my father into the house and laid him out on the bed ~~and~~ <sup>they</sup> saw that he was very sick and they called the priest. ~~And~~ when my mother stepped into the room the priest was giving the last sacraments to my father, thinking that he was going to die. The doctor then took a look at my dad and immediately ~~xxxxxxxx~~ and we transported him back to the hospital ~~and~~ got whatever we could together, put them on the cart and returned ourselves.

LD



than

9/ No sooner did we arrive at the hospital ~~and~~ there was an  
 air raid and we were forced to go to the cellar and stay there.  
 Since there were no ~~X-rays~~ <sup>X-rays</sup>, no antibiotics, no pain medicines  
 at all, the only thing they could do <sup>was . . .</sup> ~~is~~ they said, "If he is  
 going to survive then we better do something for him," and they  
 took tape and taped up his chest, Big thick tape. Then they  
 put him on a bed and said if he survived, fine, but ~~that~~ that is  
 all that we can do. The hospital was in an old Jesuit <sup>high</sup> ~~high~~ school  
 with walls roughly about a yard and one-half thick. It was  
 built in the seventeenth ~~century~~ century, it was a ~~XXXX~~ Jesuit  
 College. <sup>9/</sup> ~~So~~ this is where we were and ~~this is where~~ and this  
 is where the end of the war reached us. Unfortunately however, ~~2~~  
~~the German~~ ~~SS~~ <sup>Division</sup> ~~position~~ decided, this was the  
 beginning of May 1945, that they were going to save the Third  
 Reich by fighting for every house and window in Passau. ~~And~~  
~~so the American Army~~, fortunately the American Army came and  
 surrounded the city <sup>and</sup> began shelling it. The American Air Force  
 began bombing it and the Domonkos' spent time between cellar.  
 There was this huge cellar, there was about 3,000 people in it,  
 Typhoid fever people, <sup>dysentery</sup> ~~dysentery~~ people, everybody, people were  
 dying right and left from gun wounds, from ~~dysentery~~ <sup>dysentery</sup>, and what  
 have you. And we were all there together. <sup>9/</sup> My father being too  
 ill to move was left up in one of the wards with the windows  
 open because of the constant shooting and constant explosions.  
 Sometimes we would go up there <sup>if</sup> there was a lull in the fighting,  
 and we would sit on his bed. ~~And~~ if it got too bad and the shots were

too close then we would all scurry down to the cellar.

H: Leaving ~~my~~ your father up there?

D: Leaving my father up there, yes. He couldn't be moved in his condition.

H: Was he conscious at that time?

D: Oh yes, he recovered his consciousness and was obviously in considerable pain with his injuries, but he managed. The seige, I think, lasted for about <sup>ten</sup> 10 days. The room, we had a room upstairs on the fourth ~~fl~~ floor where we slept on straw. It was not a direct hit, but this ~~is~~, again, gives you some idea about the construction. The room was absolutely destroyed, our sacks of staws on which we slept, <sup>and</sup> our few meager belongings flew right out the window. There was nothing left in the room. The next room however you would never tell that the building was even ~~hit~~. It was airtight.

H: It was stone?

D: Oh stone, the walls ~~were~~ were so thick <sup>C</sup> that you could put a bed in through the window opening. It was <sup>an</sup> unbelievable, vaulted ceiling. <sup>9</sup> So anyway, this ~~goes~~ <sup>went</sup> on for maybe 10 days or even two weeks. I am not so certain. Until finally the Americans <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ able to capture the town. <sup>with an American soldier</sup> ~~And~~ my first encounter <sup>was</sup> was a very pleasant encounter. We were down in the cellar and in came an American soldier who had been wounded in the arm. He saw the <sup>big</sup> red cross on the building so he came in. The fact that there was a huge red cross on the building, <sup>by the way,</sup> didn't prevent it from being hit. ~~Now~~ Now I am not saying that it was hit on purpose, the fact is that it was hit by Germans, Americans, or whoever, but

(JD)

it those days I guess it just didn't...

H: The Germans weren't actually using the building?

D: There were no Germans in the building, no. <sup>There</sup> ~~There~~ was not one German in the building. ~~And~~ there was not one armed Hungarian in the building either. It was ~~was~~ not a matter of it just being used as a camouflage for a machine gun nest or anything.

H: Well, if it is a big building, it is a lot easier to hit.

D: Yes, it was a huge <sup>E</sup> building and it stood out and everybody was shooting and it was bombed, yes. ~~So~~ <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ American came in and he was bandaged ~~up~~ by the Hungarian doctors. ~~And~~ as he was leaving our beds and cots in the cellar were very close to the exit. ~~And as he was leaving~~ he saw my brother, who at this time was about two years old, playing around there on the floor and he picked him up and he hugged him and kissed him and put him down. ~~So~~ that was my first exposure to Americans, and as I said it was a pleasant one. ~~So~~ eventually the siege ~~was~~ was lifted, and the Americans came in. This then also meant that there was a considerable improvement in the food supply and what ~~have~~ you. ~~And~~ father's condition improved to the point where he was eventually released from the hospital and was given some kind of paper that he should try to seek some kind of recuperation outside of ~~the hospital~~ <sup>PASSAU</sup>. ~~So~~ we went out to a Bavarian village and moved into a farmer's house. Not into his house because we were foreigners and he would <sup>int</sup> let us in. He did however give up a room over the pig sty and this is where we spent the summer of 1945, with my dad recuperating ~~and~~ we were making plans to

LD

return to Hungary. The fighting was over.

H: What were you doing for money to live during this period?

D: There was no money, <sup>there was nothing</sup> nothing. My mother and father would get up in the morning and go from peasant to peasant and would beg, An egg here, a quart of milk there, and so forth. This is how we were able to <sup>subsist.</sup> ~~exist~~. Dad was barely able to walk, he was unable to subsist anymore.

H: What did you kids do?

D: Well, we ran around and picked berries in the forest ~~X~~ and helped the farmer with his garden ~~and in return~~ we would get a pancake or something. They were very stingy people. But not because we were Hungarian. There were other German refugees from Hamburg and Salasia <sup>Silesia?</sup> living there and they were even more stingy towards them. In fact, <sup>they were</sup> they were nicer to us than to their own kind. They were just horrible stingy people, that is all. ~~So~~ So while all of this is going on, my parents are making plans to go back to Hungary. In fact, my father went to a nearby camp, Hungarian camp, where they were processing people to be shipped back to Hungary. In fact, because we were a family with children, they had accommodations where children and women would be put into regular railroad passenger cars while men and older boys over <sup>twelve</sup> ~~12~~ would be in the cattle cars, and they would be then sent right back to Hungary. One fine day in the fall of 1945 we already had tickets and everything for the railroad. We left this Bavarian village. The minute that we left, some other German people moved into our house. We went to the

*82*



railroad station with the expectation of finding a train and then going. Because of a shortage of coal there was no train there and ~~you~~<sup>we</sup> couldn't go back to the village because there was no place for us. So we went ~~into~~ this big Hungarian camp and this is basically why I am here. Had that train been in the station, had we boarded that train, obviously, we would have gone back to Hungary. God only knows what would have happened to us subsequently. The fact is that when we then entered this camp, we stayed there waiting ~~there~~ for subsequent trains because other trains had already ~~pulled~~<sup>been sold</sup> out. We ~~have~~<sup>had</sup> to wait until some future train <sup>came</sup> in which we could get on. ~~So time began to~~ pass. ~~And~~ as time went by, stories from Hungary began to circulate. We found out that usually when a train entered into Hungary at the first railroad station, they take off all former army officers, all government employees, teachers and people like that. ~~And~~ they are interned for an indefinite period until they are issued their new passport and what have you. Now since we really didn't have a home ~~the~~ the place where we had lived before the war was ~~not~~<sup>now</sup> in Romania. Since there was no place for us to go, and there was this chance of my father being taken off the train, even for as short a period as a month or two, it became almost impossible for us to go home and face the uncertainty. So we said let's wait and the situation will become <sup>less</sup> muddled. The Russians will undoubtedly move out. a truly democratic regime will be established and everything will be just fine.

H: Was this something that the family discussed?

JS

D: Oh yes.

H: You didn't hear about this later?

D: No, this was discussed. Well at this time I was seven and my mother and father confided in me why we were doing this. My brother and sister were rather young then.

H: They explained to you what they were doing?

D: Oh yes. So we stayed in this camp. The only problem here was that this was under American military authority. This was an American occupation zone of Germany. ~~And~~ the Americans' attitude toward Hungarians, it was not hostile, it was not friendly, it was just benign neglect. ~~So~~ we didn't have any food. We still had some old connections in the farms outside of where we used to live and father used to go out there and try to scare up some butter and eggs and what have you. Well, that didn't go. ~~Then~~ my father very cleverly, and I <sup>had</sup> have no apprehension about him doing this, my father became a black marketeer, which was something that had to be done if you wanted to survive. So among other things my father sold his lucre to an American, <sup>and</sup> his binoculars to another American. Not for money, because that wasn't worth a damn by now, but for such things as Camel cigarettes, chocolate bars, and so forth. ~~Then~~ my father and I had an agreement, he would make the deal, I would then go and sell this in the barracks. I would go ~~up~~ and ~~down~~ the barracks and yell, "Camels for sale, Camels for sale" or "Hershey bars for sale, Hershey bars for sale" and I would sell this for very high money, because it was black market

JD

money, which in turn my father took and went out into the countryside <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ bought flour for us from the German peasants and so forth, but paying outrageous prices for which ~~we~~ had we been caught we would have obviously been punished. But everybody was doing it. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

H: Was this in the camp?

D: Yes. There was at about this time <sup>ten thousand</sup> 10,000 Hungarians in this camp and also a large number of Jew<sup>s</sup> who were being shipped to Israel. So with their somewhat return to normalcy <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ the Germany, we soon found out that my mother's sister <sup>(my aunt)</sup> was living in a prisoner of war camp. Where we were was <sup>not</sup> a prisoner of war camp, but just an old German Luftwaffe camp that was being used to transport Hungarians back to Hungary. These people were <sup>however</sup> actually in a <sup>regular</sup> prisoner of war camp in the British occupied section of Germany near the German city of Düsseldorf. ~~And~~ my ~~an~~ <sup>ant</sup> wrote to us how wonderful it was there because the English, being the kind of gentlemen they are, not only do they <sup>provide</sup> ~~provide~~ <sup>them with</sup> ~~for~~ all the earthly goods, such as bread and milk, and necessities, but they were even paying the salary of the captured officers. It takes the British, <sup>I guess,</sup> to do this kind of thing. My father having ~~g~~ heard this, ~~thing~~ decided that the best thing for us to do was to become prisoners of war. So having sold his binoculars for a carton of Camels, he went down to the local German station master and rented three regular cattle boxcars and with the help of friends we outfitted ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ them with beds and stoves and everything in these damn things and addressed ourselves to this camp. ~~And~~ for five ~~days~~ <sup>or</sup> six days we were being shuttled and

(SD)

banged and shoved back and forth across Germany until we finally arrived in this camp. When we got there, my dad and a number of other men who were in this group, presented themselves to the officer in charge of the prisoner of war camp asking to please be made prisoners of war. The commandant of the camp was a Scottish captain with kilts and all the associated goodies. He was extremely polite. Since <sup>Dad</sup> ~~had~~ outranked him, he was only a captain and Dad was a major, he was very differential and so forth. So he asked them if they had any side arms and Dad had long ago sold it for Camels. ~~And~~ he said, "Well very fine, but we insist that you wear your uniform because you are a prisoner of war." And we are delighted to have you and just come! So we entered the prisoner of war camp with watch towers and ~~barbwire~~ <sup>barbed wire</sup> and what have you. The only thing was that although it had all of the outside features of a prisoner of war camp, you could go in and out anytime that you liked. All you had to do was to indicate that you were going to Dusseldorf to do shopping or whatever and you could sign out. ~~And~~ they knew that you would come back because the outside world was very cruel.

H: ( Question can't be understood )

D: I don't know if the captain ~~received~~ a battle cross or something for his bravery in action. But the fact is that here were about <sup>three hundred</sup> 300 Hungarian officers <sup>with a</sup> whose senior officer <sup>who</sup> was a ~~General~~ Lieutenant, General, or whatever, And families and enlisted men. All kinds of people. The guards consisted of I think, about <sup>twenty</sup> 20 <sup>people, and that was it.</sup> ~~people and that was it.~~ So we stayed here for <sup>five</sup> about 5 months enjoying English hospitality to the fullest.



They provided us with surplus blankets and everything that ~~would~~ were treasures in those days. We didn't have anything. Unfortunately however, the government of England and the government of Hungary decided to sign an agreement preliminary to the peace agreement. Once this was signed, and this was in the fall of 1946, the British captain called together everybody at this place and said "Gentlemen, there ~~is~~ <sup>exists</sup> no longer this state of war between your government and mine." "On October 10th I will withdraw my troops, and you are on your own." This was the ~~saddest~~ <sup>saddest</sup> news that anybody could have ever imagined. May I at this point ~~stop~~ <sup>stop for a moment</sup> and go back and talk about something about my education. I began school in Hungary, but by this time <sup>because</sup> we were constantly moving already in Hungary, it was rather <sup>an</sup> unorganized kind of instruction, <sup>where</sup> where for about <sup>two</sup> 2 or <sup>three</sup> 3 months I would have a teacher and she would then teach me the fundamentals of the alphabet. Then we would move on and I would learn numbers somewhere else; A's and O's in this town and T's and G's in another town. So this is how the first year of my elementary education began. Then when we lived in this camp in the American zone, there was a camp school there. There were so many children and families in this camp, elementary school was established and I went into the second grade there. That was from roughly January <sup>of</sup> 1946 to ~~the~~ <sup>the end</sup> the school year and finished the second grade. By that time I knew how to read and write. This other British camp that I went to in the third grade from September to November, that was it.

H: Are these Hungarian teachers? ~~No~~

D: Yes, these were Hungarian teachers. <sup>A</sup>All of the students

were Hungarian and we learned what, I guess, you would under ordinary circumstances for the first few years of your elementary grades.

H: Do you remember anything about any of those teachers?

D: Oh yes. There was one that I liked very much who inspired me greatly, ~~Although~~ she was very severe. I also remember <sup>these</sup> Hungarian schools as being extremely <sup>disciplined</sup> ~~disciplined~~. In fact <sup>disciplined</sup> almost to the point of cruelty. For instance, in the second grade you had to know your multiplication tables, all of them, one to ten, all of the tables, The eights, ~~sevens~~, all of them. ~~And if you didn't know, the~~ teacher would say "seven times ~~six~~ eight". If you couldn't reply immediately, fifty-six, you got ~~whacked~~ <sup>whacked</sup> on your hand with a ruler. So you knew your multiplication tables by the second elementary grade forward and backward. ~~And~~ anybody could arouse you in the middle of the night and say seven ~~x~~ times eight and you would answer.

H: Was this accepted by everybody?

D: Oh yes. You didn't file civil suit against the teachers for cruelty or anything like that. This was perfectly acceptable.

So now with the end of this pleasant English camp, we were then thrown at the mercy of post-World War German bureaucracy. ~~And~~ the camp was broken up and various families were transporting <sup>ED</sup> into various towns and cities in the vicinity. Strangely enough, about seven or eight families picked at random, were put in a huge bowling alley in a small town, again not far from Dusseldorf. ~~And~~ this is where I first met my wife. She was among

clay place

those people there. In order to receive some kind of privacy in this bowling alley, we would ~~string~~<sup>string</sup> up blankets to try to create departments or compartments I used to think. These were very sad days in a way, We didn't know what would happen to us and what the outcome of all of our efforts would be.

H: How did your parents seem to you to feel, obviously they were upset.

D: No, if there is anything that I learned from my parents is that even in the most ~~difficult~~ difficult times, they somehow or another were able to look upon life in a positive manner. You know, <sup>if</sup> I consider, here was my father 42 years old, really at the height of his physical, mental abilities, with a career completely destroyed, with a country that he loved taken from him or being forced to leave. My mother ~~was~~<sup>had</sup> grown up ~~and~~<sup>in a</sup> very pleasant, as I said, upper-middle class, not rich, but very well-off situation. To be forced to live over a pig sty, <sup>That is a hell of a life.</sup> I remember we had a cook, and we had a maid, and we had a butler, and then all of a sudden they are out there at six o'clock in the morning going from farm to farm getting a carrot here and an egg somewhere else. It must have been extremely traumatic for them. ~~And~~ they never expressed bitterness and they never expressed a feeling, "look how great I could have been, or how ~~it~~ good it was for me and then all of a sudden this." There was no self-pity.

H: No tears?

D: Never visible, no.

H: You never saw your ~~mother~~ mother crying during this whole thing?

Dr. D:  
I always  
thought it  
was 18??  
42 is  
pretty old!!

?

(You  
said  
this!)

D: No. She got gray, but she didn't cry. Look, I was seven, eight years old, ~~what was~~ <sup>it</sup> my greatest loss were my toys. My nice electric train and all that kind of stuff. ~~And then~~ all of a sudden I was in a situation where I would have given <sup>ten</sup> at least 10 years of my life or half my soul for a rubber ball to kick around ~~and play~~ and play soccer with. We used to take rags and tie them together <sup>with rope</sup> and kick it around. Anything that would have bounced, I would have thought it was the greatest damn thing that ever happened.

H: There wasn't any feeling that you were having a good time doing this? I mean, you know some people talk about the ~~comradery~~ <sup>camaraderie</sup> in disaster situations?

D: There is that, because even though, ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> I said, these were sad times and we were without any of the simple things that you consider absolutely essential for civilized existence, such as a roof over your head, <sup>still</sup>, somehow or another, my mother ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> for example, my wife's parents, would get together in the evening and talk. ~~And~~ <sup>and</sup> talk pleasantly and joke and carry on. ~~And~~ <sup>and</sup> I don't think it was sort of phony front in order to drag their mind away from the unpleasantness of everyday existence.

H: What did the kids do?

D: Kids play, kids carry on. We learn <sup>ed</sup> dirty German words and made faces at the German kids and ~~threw~~ stones at each other and this sort of thing. So that <sup>here</sup> were actually sort of minor ethnic fights between the local German kids and this ~~contingent~~ <sup>contingent</sup> of Hungarian ~~roughians~~ <sup>ruffians</sup> led by yours truly. We



would go out there and fight.

H: Were the boys street fighters?

D: Yes, this was tough. We threw stones at each other and said ~~horrendously~~ <sup>horrendously</sup> ugly things, which we really didn't understand. At this time most of us were monolingual. Being in Germany for such a short period of time and being mainly in Hungarian camps, we didn't have a chance to learn.

H: But you knew if they would turn around...

D: Oh yes, and we made them throw stones back. So we knew that the desired effect was achieved. So this goes on for about a month until all of the kids in this street gang <sup>at</sup> of this big bowling alley received an infection of measles. And then all of us were ~~then~~ carted off to the university hospital in Dusseldorf to the <sup>an</sup> quarantine ward. This was the first time that I co-habitated with my wife. We were in the same room about five beds down, there she was, along with about fifteen or twenty other kids. Now, to make a long story short, eventually after all of these disasters, we then ~~received~~ received two very small rooms in a house, in a small village outside of Dusseldorf, and lived there for the next two years. Now, this is 1946, 1947, a period of tremendous poverty in Germany, with industrial plants completely bombed out, <sup>and</sup> The German ~~mark~~ <sup>has</sup> ~~mark~~ <sup>reached</sup> ~~mark~~ <sup>mark</sup> gloosing all of it's buying power or almost all of it. There was very poor quality food. There was a time, for example, in three months we only saw a pound of meat between the five of us. Then, however, things began to improve somewhat, mainly because

again my father very cleverly went into black marketeering. But this time on a big basis. In 1947 he began running a kind of shuttle between the Swiss boarder and the <sup>Kocher Rahn</sup> rural valley in which he would take <sup>two and a half</sup> 2 1/2 million sewing needles from Germany and sell them ~~in~~ across the boarder by Switzerland. ~~And~~ by taking the risk of being apprehended on the train and by sheer fighting on the trains, because the train service was atrocious. But by doing this he would make a million and <sup>half</sup> 1/2 marks. Now for a million and <sup>half</sup> 1/2 marks you can buy a good pair of shoes or something like that. But it was something that prevented us from being completely on the poverty level. ~~And~~ in fact, as time went on because of his efforts we were doing rather well. Then they decided to bring in the new mark, the <sup>Deutschmark</sup> ~~mark~~, which is still in existence. ~~XXX~~ That then ended black marketeering from one day to another, that whole thing collapsed.

H: Was he smuggling or black marketeering?

D: Black marketeering. He wasn't smuggling across the boarder. He gave it ~~to~~ somebody in Friburg and Brisgau <sup>Bryscow</sup>.

H: Was it under a price controls system?

D: Under the new system there were price controls, further more, Everybody started out with 120 marks, that was all you could get. We had money by the millions of the old stuff, but we couldn't convert it into new capitol.

H: There was no conversion of the old money?

D: You could only convert so much. ~~xxx~~ So we lost millions of absolutely worthless stuff. So in the meanwhile, since we were living ~~in~~ there in this German village I entered <sup>A</sup> ~~this~~ German

school and had to begin as a first grader. Between 1946, the fall of 1946, and the fall of 1948 I was a student in a German elementary school. ~~And~~ during these two years, I finished four grades. It was a very good, <sup>school</sup> very ~~thorough~~ <sup>thorough</sup> school, just as autocratic as the Hungarians. There was a no-nonsense kind of attitude. But what resulted from being immersed into really a German surrounding is that in 1948, if I would have talked to anybody, nobody would have known that I was not a German. I spoke the language as well as any kid from Dusseldorf.

H: With a German accent?

D: With no German accent, the \_\_\_\_\_, yes. <sup>... deutsch? deutsche</sup> At this point then, my mother and father, because of connections that they had, were able to get a job in the French zone, occupation zone of Germany. ~~Down~~ in the area of the black forest and the vicinity of Firburg and Brystow. ~~And~~ so we then packed up, left the English zone, and went down to the French zone where my mother and father began working in an institution for displaced-person <sup>and</sup> children. In other words, children ~~much~~ like ourselves. But since there were thousands of displaced-person families of all kinds in West Germany, ~~The~~ various military occupation governments, and the new one, put up money to establish institutions, homes, where children would be sent to be fed well, good mountain air, and so forth. So after living in ~~maps~~ <sup>maps</sup> for years and going through all kinds of horrible tribulations, they would be able to be strengthened to the point where <sup>4</sup> their parents immigrated, there would be no problem of them having lung disease and so forth.

So this is where my father became a gym teacher and my mother was

a kindergarten teacher.

H: Had <sup>she</sup> ~~they~~ taught before?

D: NO, ~~But~~ having raised three kids, this was considered to be ample preparation. ~~And~~ <sup>=</sup> she, by the way, turned out to be a superb kindergarten teacher. Although Dad's ~~gun~~ teaching consisted of doing drills, he had no army, he developed into a <sup>formidable</sup> ~~formatible~~ guy instructor. They knew how to grow in the new surroundings. The commandant of this children's home was a chauvinistic French ~~Lady~~ who felt that the only culture that anybody <sup>should</sup> ~~should~~ have is French culture. ~~And~~ if you didn't drink it with your mother's milk, you should quickly <sup>= this is</sup> make some kind of arrangement to get it somewhere else. So she insisted, she told my mother and father that she would like for me to be sent to a French school, which was a great idea. At that time, I didn't think so because here this meant learning a new language. ~~But~~ being exposed to French culture, going to a French school, which I considered to be the nicest period of my whole school career. It was really tremendous. ~~I~~ found French schools to be superbly run, a fine combination of using incentive to force students to learn and also a fine combination of order and discipline on one hand and creativeness on the other. At least from my experience, I went to subsequently to three different French schools. The French school system is superior at least on the elementary grades to anything I have seen anywhere. So I went to French school and I didn't know a word of French.

By sure perseverance and by being enforced to learn because I wasn't the only non... there was two other kids that also their



parents worked for this outfit. *They were also there.*

H: Did the teacher speak German?

D: No. Even if they did, they wouldn't for two reasons. Number one, they wanted us to learn French and number two, they hated the Germans with such a passion that they would never admit that they were German. So I went to school there and learned the basics. *J* Eventually my mother and father were transferred to another French institution of this kind and I continued in another French school. Let me put it this way, ~~in two years~~, in three years, 1948 to 1951 I was able to finish six grades in the French school, having started in the first. This was, by the way, the third time that I had started. First in Hungarian, then in German. But they pushed me ahead as I learned the language.

H: Did they cover different subject matters in the different schools, besides ~~from~~ the language?

D: Well, basically, the first few years there is really *not* that much difference except in such areas as history for example. Obviously, the history that I received in the French school was basically a strongly nationalistic French history. The greatest man that ever came around was Charlemagne<sup>a</sup> who was not Frankish but French. *Ma* And the creator of a new Europe and the crusades were all organized by Frenchmen and won by Frenchmen. So it was a very interesting introduction.

H: Did that nationalistic difference in the ~~educations~~ strike you at the time?

D: It did. ~~And~~ again, ~~see~~, one of the tremendous advantages I had was that I could always go home and explain to my

parents, "now this is what we did and this is how this was taught." ~~And~~ my father, who<sup>s</sup> understanding of history was extremely deep, very very deep, in fact almost that of a professional historial, ~~EMile~~ would then be able to explain why a Frenchman would interpret something in this fashion while a German would look upon it in a different view, And why this is so. I remember one time<sup>when</sup> I was eight years old and while father and I were going off to do some shopping or what ever -- since we had no other mode of transportation other than walking, We had to walk two or three hours. He told me, for example, the whole Congress of Vienna, and the whole Napoleonic Wars, and the eighteenth of Brumaire, and how Napoleon came to power, And the German confederation, and the Battle of Nations and the Meternick and the New Europe, At the age of eight.

H: Were you interested?

D: Oh, tremendously. In fact, again if there is any one thing that I ~~am~~ remember very vividly even back in Transylvania when I was a kid, The very first stories that I remember are not about Snow White and the <sup>seven</sup> dwarfs and all that nonsense, it was about Stephen of Hungary and Louie \_\_\_\_\_, and various individuals in Hungarian history and world history. These are the kind of stories that Dad would tell me for bedtime stories instead of the frightening things about dwarfs coming out of ~~caves~~ caves. So I think my love for history probably has its origin here. At a very, very early age.

END OF FIRST TAPE

~~P~~ Part II

HOVEY: Last time you were telling me about your education in the French school and your walks with your father discussing some of the lessons that were being instilled in you. And I think we have gotten your education all the way through the sixth grade. This is the second interview in the Youngstown State University Historians Project with Dr. Leslie Domonkos in the Arts and Science Office Building on May 28, 1975, at approximately at 1:00 p.m. What I wondered if we could do, Les, today would be to continue as far up to the present as we can get. Just get a general development of your life, your school interests etc.

D: ~~Fine~~. In 1951, my parents finally were able to get immigration permission to come to the United States. So after a long and rather dehumanizing medical check-up and going to various camps, we were processed for immigration and sent to Raymond \_\_\_\_\_, who was in Germany, to embark for the ~~the~~ United states.

H: Dehumanizing?

D: Yes. You know, the kind of thing where you are herded like cattle and examined like cattle to see whether you are worthy to enter the United States. If you had an ingrown toe nail, this might prevent you from coming here. Obviously the United States was only interested in the physically fittest

individuals ~~(\*)~~ ~~The fact that~~ many people were ill, had TB and so forth which they acquired during the war and so forth, this obviously did not interest anybody. You were the dregs of humanity. You should obviously die somewhere other than in the United States. We were fortunate that there were no major medical reasons for denial of <sup>entrance</sup> entrance to the United States. So we got our permits and left in August of 1951 on an American Troop Carrier Ship called the Samuel David Sturgess, which had taken GI's for occupational <sup>force</sup> duty in Germany and on ~~its~~ <sup>it's</sup> return trip took several thousands ~~of~~ refugees of all descriptions, Ukrainians, Poles, and an awful lot of Jews, Hungarians, and what-have-you all cramped into tight quarters.

H: All of you were going to the United States?

D: Yes.

H: How did you get along with these different groups <sup>on the ship?</sup>

D: No problem whatsoever. You know, having been exposed to many nationalities, kids, and parents, and adults, during ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> various ~~days~~ <sup>stays</sup> in camp, And during the time that we were at this children's camp that I discussed in my last interview, I had gotten to know all kinds of <sup>a</sup> nationalities really. We got along excellent. So on this ship they separated <sup>a</sup> men and women. Boy children over twelve, stayed with their fathers, women and small children were grouped separately. So in huge state rooms they had four or five hundred <sup>a</sup> men, Three and four bunks above each other. This is ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> we were herded into the United States.

~~H:~~ That is how you felt, that you <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ being treated like



cattle?

D: Basically, yes. Although theoretically the United Nations was IRO, International Refugee Organization. <sup>which is a division of the UN</sup> ~~The UN~~ was supposed to be resettling <sup>displaced people</sup> ~~this place before~~ and they <sup>were</sup> are supposed to see to it that they <sup>were</sup> ~~be~~ treated as human beings. I really don't think that this was the best possible way of bringing people across at the time.

H: You don't feel that it was necessary?

D: No, I don't think so. No, it could have been done in far less crowded conditions and with some degree of decency and privacy maintained. To give you some idea, the American naval officers would go on ~~quote~~ "inspection tours" of the female quarters of the ship, And would open up toilets ~~where~~ where women were sitting, and enter into showers while women were showering. Things ~~like~~ that are obviously unnecessary. I do realize that one has to maintain order and cleanliness and discipline, but there are ways of doing this. I <sup>didn't</sup> ~~think~~ <sup>this</sup> ~~there is~~ <sup>was the best</sup> ~~a better~~ way of accomplishing this.

H: Did the refugees protest that at all?

D: Oh, yes. Well, you know, among these people were university professors, doctors, lawyers, in many instances were of the most intellectual classes that this country has ever received as far as immigrants are concerned.

H: They <sup>were</sup> are an elite group?

D: Yes. ~~And~~ I don't maintain that you should treat people, of peasant~~s~~ ancestry like dirt and give people with college

backgrounds, <sup>a</sup>different kind of treatment, But I don't really think that you have to treat everybody like dirt just because they happen to be homeless.

H: It seemed almost deliberate?

D: I am not sure. I don't think it is a vicious policy, I think it is basically \_\_\_\_\_ . <sup>9</sup> So this is then how we arrived in New York City, after nine days of Atlantic navigation. We moved into New York Harbor. I do remember seeing the Statue of Liberty. I must say that it made an impression on me. It was a moving experience. It was also a very frightening thing. Here we were, a family of ~~five~~, all of our possessions in six or seven suitcases, and to arrive in a country with a different language, with really no relatives, with nothing to go on, it was <sup>very</sup> ~~sort of~~ difficult.

H: No relatives?

D: No, we had no relatives.

H: You didn't need a sponsor?

D: Yes, we were sponsored by a old Hungarian couple from West Middlesex, Pennsylvania, who not knowing us, but through a mutual friend, had signed the affidavit of sponsorship. ~~And~~ this is basically how we came to the Shenango Valley. ~~So~~ after being processed out of the ship on a sweltering day in August of 1951, we were put on a train in New Jersey and directed to Sharxon, Pennsylvania.

H: That is near West Middlesex?

D: Yes, West Middlesex is about five miles ~~from~~ Sharxon. <sup>outside of</sup>

It is a community of roughly 150.

H: Fantastic. And nobody in your family spoke English at the time. <sup>?</sup> You spoke ~~two other~~ <sup>quite a few other</sup> languages. <sup>?</sup>

D: Yes, well, the linguist in the family was my mother. She, besides speaking Hungarian, also spoke German, she went to a German high school. She had studied French in high school, so she was rather good at that. ~~And~~ she grew up in a Slovak language area, so she spoke Slovak, and could understand Russian and Polish. So she was able to get along rather well. Dad, was basically not very talented in languages. He spoke German, but <sup>with a</sup> ~~rather~~ <sup>e</sup> horribly Hungarian accent and then proceeded to learn English with a horrible Hungarian accent.

H: How did you get along in the United States?

D: Well, it was a rather difficult and trying experience. After living with this sponsoring family for four days, the Roman Catholic priest, who had really been the one who got us the sponsorship, took my father down to the Sharon Steel Corporation to get him a job as a laborer. Because here he was, he spoke no English, he had a degree in agriculture at a Hungarian Univeristy, but <sup>twenty</sup> 20 years <sup>d</sup> have lapsed since the time he was a student and the time that he arrived here. And besides, there was the absolute immediate need of ~~a~~ finding some subsistance <sup>e</sup> on which to live.

H: You were penniless.

D: That is right. In fact, we were not only penniless, but the National Catholic Welfare Organization paid for our trip

from ~~New~~ New Jersey to Sharron, <sup>and</sup> we had to pay back to this organization this money for the train tickets. It is strange, for example, the Jewish World Organization which also sponsored refugees gave at the peer, \$500 ~~00~~ to each arriving Jewish immigrant never to be repaid, so that they could get strated. The Catholics paid your way and then asked for the money back.

H: Is there a lesson in that?

D: I think ~~it~~ there is.

H: Was your family Roman Catholic?

D: Yes.

H: ~~Then~~ did your father go to work then in the steel mill?

D: Yes, my father started working in the steel mill about a week after we arrived. ~~And~~ then shortly there after, after Labor Day, we were taken to a school in Sharron and enrolled as students. At that time, I was ~~13~~ <sup>thirteen and half</sup> and ~~1/2~~ years old and I was put in the first grade, and my brother and sister were in the first grade too.

H: What kind of school was this?

D: An elementary school, Prospect Elementary School. <sup>2</sup>

H: A public school?

D: Yes, a public school. I was a first grader for four hours, From nine to one, at which time they realized that since my lanky frame didn't fit into the first grade pews, I had to be moved to something bigger. Although my English had not improved in those four hours, I was promoted to the second grade where they could find larger benches. So here I was, age <sup>thirteen</sup> 13, having had mathematics already in the beginning algebra



level, having had geometry, French, and world history, abilities in three languages, And I was making O's and A's and figuring things out such as farmer Smith has two apples and farmer Brown comes along and gives him four more, how many apples does he have? So, I'll say this was again somewhat unnerving.

H: But she wasn't concerned with you?

D: Oh, the teacher was a lovely woman, she tried very hard to tell me that dog means an animal <sup>with</sup> ~~with~~ four legs and goes woof-woof. ~~And~~ soon I began to catch on and after I would say about six weeks, after I had mastered the very basics, the fourth grade teacher in this very same elementary school took a liking to me. Besides, I stood out like a sore thumb among all those little kids. So she took me into her fourth grade class, from that time until Christmas vacation, I was a fourth grader. ~~And~~ she was the one who really began to seriously introduce me to the English language <sup>and</sup> to American history. ~~And~~ I remember her extremely fondly, in fact, I still write to her every Christmas because I think she did more for me and for my morale at that point that is imaginable.

H: How did she do this?

D: Well, she used to give work to the students and then would ask me to come up to her desk. She would explain words individually to me to try to show me various picture books and what have you, and major incidents in American history. She encouraged me to participate in the Thanksgiving program at the school. ~~And~~ all in all, she really went out of her way to be helpful and to

build up my vocabulary so I could go on. Then when Christmas came during the vacations, we moved from Sharon to Farrel, which is a twin community, ~~And~~ where I was put into a Catholic Parochial School in January. ~~And~~ they transferred me to the fifth grade. I was ~~about~~ a fifth grader for about two days. Then I remember there was a history lesson on Charlemagne. And I think I knew more about Charlemagne than the sister did. So she was terribly impressed and promoted me to the sixth grade. I was in the sixth grade for about three weeks, and then the sister in the seventh grade decided that maybe I belonged there. So I was promoted to the seventh grade and continued that year to the seventh grade, <sup>and</sup> in one year actually finished seventh grade. I must say though that ~~the~~ experience at this Catholic school was one of the worst school experiences that I have had.

H: The worst?

D: Yes. I found the nuns to be less than charitable, ~~and~~ especially the principal, who was also the seventh and eighth grade teacher, <sup>she</sup> ~~she~~ used to push me around and call me the dumb kid from the old country.

H: Was this a woman?

D: Oh yes.

H: And you had been in a religious school before?

D: Furthermore, having been brought up in post-war Europe where ~~Americanism~~ <sup>20</sup> was practiced roughly thirty years before it became fashionable, it was very difficult for me to accept this basically very puritanical, narrow, Irish Catholicism, which exists in the Roman Church, or existed in the Roman Church in the

United States. We were <sup>20</sup> liberal everything back there. Even, for example, both of my God-parents are Lutherans. One of the sisters heard that and I <sup>almost</sup> had to wash ~~dist~~ <sup>all</sup> off the floors.

H: Was this just a matter of religious instruction or attitudes or did this <sup>er</sup> prevade to other things too?

D: Well, all I know, this woman disliked me because I was an immigrant. And what is most remarkable is that she too was an immigrant of the religious order of nuns where I went to school, were Polish immigrants. It was a Polish order. ~~And~~ maybe her parents were born in Poland, I am not sure, maybe even she was. ~~And~~ you would have expected understanding and sympathy, and instead I received ridicule. Comments like, "dumb kid from the old country," certainly don't make you feel wanted or welcome.

H: Did this bother you?

D: Yes, it did. It bothered me to the point where, I <sup>when</sup> ~~was~~ saw a group of nuns belonging to the same order when I was working on my <sup>doctorate</sup> ~~doctrate~~ at Notre Dame. — There used to be nuns coming there in the summer for all kinds of retreats. — ~~I saw a bunch of these nuns from this order and I started~~ riding my bicycle and I pulled up to them and I said, "Do you know this and this sister, she used to be in Pittsburgh?" And they said, "Oh, yes do you have a message for her?" And I said, "Yes, I do." "Tell her that the dumb kid from the old country is getting his Ph.D. from Notre Dame."

H: Do you think that that had anything to do with getting your Ph.D?

D: No, there were other reasons why I was mad and I got my PhD. well, we will get to that. So next year when September rolled around, instead of going to the eighth grade, I was put into Farrel Junior High School, a public school, as a ninth grader. And from then on, my education was uninterrupted and orderly.

H: Why did your parents want to put you in Farrel Junior High School?

D: Well, since I skipped eighth grade, which would have been the last grade in a Catholic School that I could have gone to, there was no parochial high school anyway. Besides, I was so turned off to this religious business that I was very eager to go to a public school. In fact, I liked public school very much. At the time, I felt convinced that if I had a ~~chance~~ chance that I would have my children go to a public school. Because this is the place where they would be exposed to people of different cultures, races, colors and what have you.

H: Do you think that that is important?

D: Yes, I think so.

H: How did you feel about your studies in junior high school?

D: Actually, it was a rather good school. I still had difficulties with English, after all you must remember that at that time, I was only in the United States for one year, one year and a month. So especially in English composition and things such as writing themes and outlining sentences and analyzing words and so forth, I was still a little rusty. But here again, I found some very helpful, very kind teachers who



were willing to help and who took personal interest in my welfare and helped me out. ~~So~~ although I never went to eighth grade in my life. I left in the sixth grade in the French school and finished ~~half~~ a year in seventh, and never went to eighth. Although my education up to that time had been rather choppy and often interrupted, at least I was very happy that finally it looked like, and fortunately it turned out, that I <sup>would</sup> will not be moving and we would be able to finish school without any difficulty. ~~And~~ this is basically what happened, after ninth grade I went to high school in Farrel. I graduated in 1956. I was by no means a good student. In fact, I guess I would describe my studies at this point as being rather mediocre. I did well in those subjects which I had an active interest in. Such as History, languages, I took French and Latin. I did horribly in mathematics and the sciences. ~~And~~ one of the things, which again this is not solid justification or explaining away failure, I think that the year and a half ~~xxxxx~~ that I spent in adding up how many apples farmer Jones and Brown had, sort of killed my whole mathematical incentive. ~~And~~ ever after I became intellectually lazy and did the least amount of work in math and science. To the point where in Algebra I, ~~w~~ I was able to finally get straight C's. In Algebra II, I got straight D's. And then real disaster strck with Chemistry. First of all you have to be <sup>fairly</sup> very good in mathematics to be able to work formulas. You should be interested, and number <sup>three</sup> 3, you should learn the valences, which I never did. ~~And~~ so, <sup>in</sup> one six week grading period, I got an F on my report card, which I consider to ~~be~~ sort of a turning

point in my academic career. Because I went home, and when my father saw that I had a D in Algebra and an F in Chemistry, he told me that I would never amount to anything. That I would probably <sup>at best</sup> go down to Sharon Steel and be a laborer pushing a broom for the rest of my life. ~~And~~ he said that he was absolutely disgusted with me, I had let him down. ~~The fact that here he~~ was with a college education sweeping down at Sharon Steel, but he said that there was nothing that he could do about it. ~~And~~ <sup>But</sup> you could do something about getting <sup>my</sup> yourself together and making a life for <sup>my</sup> yourself in this country. So since he said that I would never amount to anything, I decided to try to show him that I could. ~~And~~ the last ~~year~~ year of my high school career, I did far better than the ~~three previous~~ <sup>my</sup> previous two. In fact, I missed being an honor student by 7/100 of a point, ~~which~~ <sup>...</sup> which probably hurt me more than if I had missed it by two or three points or anything like that. For the simple reason that it was so narrow a miss. I saw the students sitting on the stage at commencement and I knew that I had more brains in my head than some of those kids and here I was sitting on the main floor but not on stage. ~~And~~ this bugged the hell out of me. ~~So~~ I graduated in 1956. ~~And~~ already in my junior year, I had gained employment as a stock boy in a grocery store. It was a large chain, which recently went out of business here, called Loblaws. Prior to my Loblaws <sup>job</sup> store, I was yard boy, and gardener, and house painter, and wood refinisher, and all kinds of odds and ends jobs that I did really since about the age of 14. So at my job at Loblaws I <sup>had</sup> accumulated some money already. My parents did not

have the economic resources to send me to school. ~~So~~ there was never, by the way, any question that I would go to college. I am absolutely convinced that even when my father told me that I would never amount to anything, he knew that I would go to college, but I guess he wanted to get me off dead-center and get my ass moving. ~~So since~~ I had this part-time job where I worked <sup>about</sup> 24 hours a week at ~~minimum~~ union wages; Therefore, it was very lucrative. Since I was tied to this job, <sup>and</sup> since there was no other monetary resource that I could dip into, There was only ~~one~~ one choice of schooling and that was Youngstown. Now as far as deciding upon a career, when I was still in Europe and even in the first year or two in America, besides being very much interested in history, I always wanted to be an architect. Now, I have some <sup>modest</sup> moderate abilities in the field of art and drawing and painting and so forth. ~~And~~ I always <sup>thought</sup> that I had a fairly good imagination for thinking about building projects. In fact, buildings <sup>as</sup> such <sup>still</sup> ~~xxxxx~~ fascinate me. I can go down to various projects on campus and still look at the place ~~four~~ hours, figuring out just how this place is going to look and why and so forth and so on. ~~So~~ I always had this frustration I guess, of wanting to become an architect. But it became quite obvious that anybody that is getting straight D's in Algebra II is not really cut out to become an architect. ~~And~~ it was not really a matter of second choice, because history through out my whole high school career was still my first love. In fact, instead of doing my chemistry homework like I should have, I was taking out books from the Farrel Public Library under Greeks,

~~under~~ <sup>under</sup> Romans, <sup>and</sup> medieval history, all kinds of nonsense like that. <sup>e.g.</sup>  
~~So~~ I was constantly reading things which have no relivence to high school <sup>ACADEMIC</sup> ~~academic~~ involvement, and to a large degree, that is the reason why my high school record was far ~~from~~ being \_\_\_\_\_.  
<sup>So</sup> ~~So~~ when I came to Youngstown in the Fall of 1956, I enrolled as a history major with the idea that I would go on to get a PhD, in history and I would become a college professor. So from the very first day of class, my aim was to someday get a PhD. This is very unusual for a freshman. They usually have to feel their way around and have different levels of aspiration. But my aim right there was to ~~go~~ get a PhD, and become a professor.

H: What <sup>about it</sup> made it attractive to you? Were there any problems with the life style?

D: Well, first ~~so~~ of all, the realization that actually I would be doing something and would be getting paid for something which I considered to be a hobby. And I think life has BORE me out. ~~And~~ I think this is one of the reasons why I am basically a very happy man is that I do eight or forty hours a week, or how many hours I put in, something which other people would consider a hobby.

H: Is this something that you just get a lot of fun out of doing?

D: I <sup>got</sup> get an immense amount of pleasure out of learning. ~~And~~ I got an immense amount of pleasure out of studying history and related fields. <sup>although</sup> ~~Also~~ when I was a history major, I also had a major in French. I had a minor in sociology and a minor in German.



H: And you enjoyed studying all of those things?

D: I enjoyed studying all these <sup>in</sup> facts, I took extra courses in anthropology. I was even interested in the science of economics, Mainly because, to some degree, all these things that deal with humanity related back in one way or another to history. I was also very much interested in literature. Although I was still working 20 to 24 hours a week at Loblaw's, by that time as a produce clerk and later <sup>assistant</sup> to produce manager, whatever the hell that means, I was still able to do an awful lot of reading. ~~And what really amazed me was that here I was doing things that I finally, I was~~ getting college credit for things I enjoyed doing. Things that I had been doing to a large degree since my sophomore year in high school. Here I was reading "Human Bondage" for the second time and getting college credit for this in communication, and doing marvelously. So what even surprised me is that even in the courses in the sciences that I had to take, I had to take biology and zoology, I did fairly well. So my college career I, can honestly say, was very successful grade-wise. It was a matter of personal enjoyment. Although I had really no social life as far as the college was concerned, because I commuted from Sharon <sup>to Youngstown</sup> about <sup>three four</sup> 3 or 4 times a week, And then proceeded to go ~~to work~~ work whenever I was not here. I studied during the night, and in the morning, and in between classes in the library. It was still basically, with all of the <sup>enormous</sup> events hassle, it was still an enjoyable process. ~~The fact that~~ I <sup>had</sup> got credit by examination for a whole slew of French and German classes, plus as ~~I said~~, <sup>the fact that</sup> I took an overload of usually

18, 19, sometimes even 20 hours, semester hours of credit, I was able to graduate in three years. I got out of Youngstown with a AB Degree ~~in~~ LAUDE.

H: What did you think of the faculty here, what kind of education did you receive?

D: That is a very interesting question. Because I always maintained, looking back, that I received probably as good an education as I ~~could~~ <sup>could</sup> have anywhere. Although, I must confess that I felt a little apprehensive when I went ~~out~~ <sup>off</sup> to graduate school at Notre Dame and here were all these kids from fancy eastern colleges competing with me. That is when I really realized that I did get a damn good education. I had ~~one~~ <sup>done</sup> great advantage. ~~And~~ that is, again, ~~since~~ <sup>because</sup> my parents were intellectually oriented and my father had gone to ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> university in Europe and knew about academic life, I placed a great deal of emphasis on the selection of my professors. In other words, I didn't select them according to when somebody was teaching a particular course. ~~But~~ I went to the university catalogue, looked at the man's name, <sup>and</sup> went to the library hopefully trying to find something that he had written. Again, in Europe, if you become a professor, you usually have ~~four~~ <sup>four or five</sup> books to your name <sup>all</sup> before you even allowed near a university to teach. Well, obviously these kind of productive scholars were not running around by the hundreds at old Youngstown University Campus, ~~But~~ there were a few that could have and would ~~have~~ stand up to any other faculty member from some big name institution. The ~~History~~ <sup>Department</sup> was particularly strong, even then. The fact that <sup>at the</sup> time, I think

four out of the six men teaching full-time in the history department were PhD's from Chicago. I think this is a good indication.

H: <sup>who</sup> How were they?

? D: Dave Behen, Al Scardon, <sup>and</sup> there was a man called <sup>Bulough</sup> Vern ~~Billow~~. Actually, the courses that I am teaching now were taught by a German. By the way, Vern and I then became ~~a~~ very good friends. ~~And~~ he from quite early on recognized that I had this ambition of becoming a college teacher and he then proceeded <sup>by</sup> to write in my behalf, letters of recommendation, trying to get me into Chicago. He was very helpful. So there was <sup>Dave</sup> Behen, Scardon, <sup>Bulough</sup> ~~Billow~~, and a man by the name of E. D. Smith. He <sup>went</sup> ~~went~~ off to, I think, Nebraska or Minnesota and ran for the Senate from there. A man who has written a considerable amount on <sup>nineteenth</sup> ~~19th~~ Century American history. Oh yes, a man by the ~~name~~ name of Steven Fulkerson, who also taught here, he was also from Chicago. <sup>So there were</sup> Five out of the six people. By the way, the years that I was student assistant to Morris Slavin as one of my professors. Morris, at the time was still ~~teaching~~ teaching at Woodrow Wilson High School. ~~And~~ he was finishing his <sup>S</sup> ~~dis~~ertation at Case Western. Morris had a very deep influence on me in opening up new ideas concerning the French Revolution, interpretations of the French Revolution, <sup>great</sup> <sup>interpreter</sup> Particularly about people like,           , Sorel, Mat           , the <sup>great</sup> socialist <sup>interpreter</sup> of the country. <sup>Bulough</sup> Vern ~~Billow~~, also, in fact of all the people, probably Vern <sup>Bulough</sup> ~~Billow~~ influenced me more than anybody else. Vern was a liberal in the noblest tradition of the word. ~~And~~ I think I had liberal







~~THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD TAPE~~

H: This is <sup>the third</sup> an interview with Dr. Leslie Domonkos for the Youngstown State University Historians Project by Donald Hovey at the conference room of the Arts and Science Office Building. Today is May 29, 1975, and is approximately 2:10 p.m. Put in  
000

H: <sup>Last time</sup> ~~Well last time~~ you were telling about completing three years or completing your Bachelor's Degree at Youngstown in the course of almost three years. I wondered if you can go on to tell us something about your graduate education?  
000 =

D: Well, ~~the last year of my undergraduate,~~ during the last year of my undergraduate studies, a number of people on the faculty here became very concerned about what kind of financial aid I could be given in a graduate school, ~~and~~ especially Vern <sup>Bulough</sup> Bullow, who I described in my last interview, was pushing ~~in~~ <sup>for</sup> in my behalf so that I could possibly go to the University of Chicago, his ~~old~~ <sup>alma mater</sup> alma mater. He handled letters of recommendation with several other members of the faculty with whom I had established close contact. I put in an <sup>ap</sup> application to Chicago, to Wisconsin, to the University of North Carolina, to Notre Dame, <sup>and</sup> Pitt, and as it turned out, I was accepted at all of these places. However, financial assistance came only from two places. One was Wisconsin, but it was only a very small sum. ~~And~~ Notre Dame, which was the most generous, so although I really had desired to go to the University of Chicago, I ended up going to Notre Dame which was not my first choice. I entered the history program in the Fall of 1959.

H: You mentioned ~~last time~~ that you were interested in <sup>the</sup> medieval and Renaissance period, at this time did you...

D: My intention at that point was to actually work in early modern Reformation, post-Reformation era. One of the reasons for my interest in the Reformation ~~was~~ was the presence of a very outstanding Reformation scholar at Norte Dame by the name of <sup>20</sup> Phillip Huges. He taught about the history of the English Reformation. I started out in the ~~Fall~~ of 1959 as a history student, <sup>9</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>=</sup> <sup>a</sup> during the course of the fall semester, I made the closer acquaintance of the man that I had already met before just informally and who was very kind and apparently instrumental in me getting the scholarship at Notre Dame. His name was Dr. Gabriel. He is a fellow Hungarian, and is very highly regarded and was already then very highly regarded in the field of history of the universities. ~~And~~ he was and is <sup>the end of</sup> through <sup>the</sup> this year the director of <sup>the</sup> Medieval Institute of Notre Dame. During some conversations that Dr. Gabriel and I had, he brought to my attention the immense amount of Hungarian material that he had assembled at the Medieval Institute. ~~And~~ he said that it would really be to my advantage if I wrote something in the field of Hungarian history for my <sup>MA</sup> ~~entering~~ thesis. So with <sup>collaboration</sup> the <sup>1</sup> ~~collaboration~~ of the history department, because the Medieval Institute is an <sup>o</sup> ~~autonomous~~ <sup>1</sup> part of the graduate school ~~It~~ was under no department, but sharing faculty with ~~the history~~ a number of departments like theology, <sup>and</sup> English, <sup>and</sup> history. ~~With~~ the cooperation of the history department, they arranged so that I could write my MA thesis under Dr. Gabriel. ~~And the subject~~

<sup>that</sup> the I chose was the impact of foreign scholars <sup>on</sup> ~~from~~ Hungary during the age of the Renaissance. This then really is the origin of a very long and very close, almost paternal friendship that ties me to Dr. Gabriel, <sup>degree</sup> A friendship that to a large <sup>degree</sup> also shaped my scholarly interests in my subsequent career. Under the leadership of Gabriel, I began my research in medieval Hungarian history, Renaissance history. I wrote the thesis for ~~him~~. ~~And~~ because I was able to arrange my schedule in such a fashion that I took an over~~load~~ of courses and also wrote my thesis on an <sup>Overload</sup> basis, I was able to get my MA in one year. So I started in September ~~and~~ finished in August. ~~But even at that time...~~

H: You completed the thesis at that time too?

D: Yes, I took twelve hours fall quarter, six hours the spring quarter, plus six hours of research, and took twelve hours in the summer.

H: Did you drive a truck <sup>forty</sup> 40 hours a week on your spare time?

D: No, in fact, what is really remarkable ~~is~~ to me, this was the first time in my whole school career that I finally had time to read again like I did when I was in high school. Not to have to run off to weigh vegetables at Lowblaws, <sup>^</sup> To commute an hour each day, <sup>and</sup> <sup>^</sup> to be right on campus, <sup>^</sup> to be <sup>^</sup> able to only take twelve hours, <sup>even on the graduate level,</sup> It was almost like a vacation for me. I almost felt embarrassed to pick up my checks each semester for my graduate <sup>^</sup> assistantship because I didn't really feel that, this was almost like a lark.

H: So you were serving as an assistant?

D: I was what ~~was~~ <sup>WAS</sup> known as a university scholar. I got money and I was supposed to do some services for the history department. They ~~were~~ very minimal services.

H: They didn't hold you to ~~20~~ <sup>twenty</sup> hours a week.

D: No. As a matter of fact, if I worked ~~20~~ <sup>twenty</sup> hours a semester that was fine.

H: Was there a particular point of view that you brought to this thesis that you did on Hungary?

D: Yes, there was. Actually, in the thesis I took a position which, by the way, I no longer hold, but I did in my PERPETUOUS youth. That the Renaissance movement in Hungary was ~~not~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~imported~~ <sup>simple</sup> ~~sort of a transplanted gentle flower~~ that came from Italy, but that it had native roots. I actually no longer support that position.

H: But you did in your thesis?

D: Right. I supported it apparently well enough <sup>so</sup> that ~~my~~ all my readers accepted it. At least I had enough footnotes to give the impression that I knew what I was talking about.

H: Did you have any doubts about the validity of it at the time?

D: Yes, I did. I always doubt the validity of almost all my conclusions at all times. There are very few things that I hold as gospel truth. ~~So~~ <sup>OK</sup> after the completion of the first semester, I was still uncertain whether I wanted to stay at Notre Dame, ~~Not~~ for any reason, but somehow or other I felt that I would be more at home at a SECULAR institution. Again, this is not meant to indicate that anybody bugged me to go to



church, or to confession or anything like that. I don't know, having been brought up basically from a secular surrounding, I was just a little <sup>e</sup>naus~~tr~~ated by the excessive rosaries swinging and running off the communion rail that prevailed at Notre Dame at the time. So I again applied for possible Ph.D. work. The place I applied was Pitt. I got a reply, in fact, it was a positive reply. But in the meanwhile something else happened.

H: This was before you had gotten~~x~~ your MA?

D: Yes, this was in the winter of 1959 and 1960. But in the meanwhile, the friendship between Dr. Gabriel and myself continued to grow. And what is even more important, Dr. Gabriel decided that it would be a good idea if I transferred into the medieval institute, got myself another <sup>M</sup>master's degree in medieval studies, and a <sup>orate</sup>doctri~~te~~ under the \_\_\_\_\_ of the institute. What made this whole deal much more appealing was a grant from the Grace Foundation, <sup>3</sup>The people who run the "bananna boat" to South America. They had a very nice lucrative graduate assist~~ant~~ship at the institute. ~~And~~ so I guess I was seduced by money, but also by an increasing greater desire to work in late medieval and Renaissance Hungarian history. I then transferred into the institute the following year. I spent the next three years as a student.

H: Did they in fact have quite an impressive collection of documents?

D: Yes, they have among other things, the most complete collection of university records anywhere in the world. When I was in my last year at Notre Dame, they began the microfilming

of the whole \_\_\_\_\_ library of Milan, which since then has been completed. It is a much more extensive collection than what the Jesuits have at the Vatican collection in St. Louis. It is far more easily accessible too. So I then began being a student at the institute. At the time that I enrolled, I was <sup>fifty percent</sup> ~~50%~~ of the student body. The institute faculty consisted of eight members and there were two students. So the amount of personal attention that was devoted to my colleague and myself was something that is most unusual, even in high powered universities, where it was almost this one-to-one relationship.

The other colleague was a Franciscan. This obviously had disadvantages. If you decided to go <sup>to</sup> Chicago to see a concert, to listen to a concert or something, it meant that <sup>fifty percent</sup> 50% of the student body was absent. It was quite obvious and even the dumbest professor would catch on. But I continued to work and took courses which are rather \_\_\_\_\_ besides my usual courses in medieval and social economic. I took courses in old French \_\_\_\_\_, and <sup>a</sup> miniature painting of the <sup>fourteenth</sup> 14th Century, the theology of Grace in the middle ages, stuff that I must say is of limited use even today. There were, however, a large number of courses that I had found extremely helpful in my subsequent research. Probably, and this sounds rather unusual, probably the greatest advantage I received from my work at the institute was in matters unrelated to the subject directly. At the time I was a student, my \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Gabriel was editing and writing a monumental work which was later published in France by one of

the largest publishing companies, and he won all kinds of prizes at the French Academy and what have you. ~~And~~ I did the proofs of this book. ~~And in the process of doing the proofs,~~ and the book dealt with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Paris in the <sup>fifteenth</sup> 15th Century, by doing the proofs, and by Gabriel insisting that I handle every one of the books that appeared in the footnotes, I AMASSED a fantastic bibliographic<sup>al</sup> knowledge. I also learned the tricks of editing and complying and what have you that eventually came very handy when I edited my first book. ~~So~~ ~~then~~ I studied there for three years, and at the end of my second year, I got my second <sup>M</sup> master's degree. I wrote a new thesis; a thesis, by the way, which became part of my dissertation. It dealt with the origins of the <sup>U</sup> University of Obuda, which is one of the first university foundations in Hungary. Now the work there that I did on this <sup>M</sup> master's thesis, on this university, I would have to say was so well received eventually that I published this in the form of an article in the \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> that I edited for Dr. Gabriel. Subsequently, when I went to Hungary, all of the important scholars in the field of <sup>na</sup> Renaissance and medieval history in Hungary had ~~heard~~ heard about this particular study and knew me as the author of this work. So here is a master's thesis that became fairly well known. In fact it is in some of the major Hungarian bibliographies as the definitive work in that field. Now the fact that I did this work on university history already obviously indicates the impact or influence that Dr. Gabriel was having on

me since he is the specialist in the history of universities in medieval times. Again, the work that I did in proofreading, and editing, and so forth, acquainted ~~we~~ with not only sources but methodology to be used in dealing with history of universities and what ~~not~~. What kind of ~~records~~ records one could expect to find, what has survived and what hasn't, topographical descriptions, and what-have-you. All of these things I basically learned from Gabriel.

H: When you started working on the Obuda problem, was it pretty well defined to you that Gabriel would give you a lot of guidance?

D: Gabriel gave me <sup>a</sup> considerable amount of guidance. However, what is strange about the man is once I had pretty well assembled the thing, then he gave it a very CURSORY reading. It was basically the kind of ~~relationship~~ relationship where every ~~thing~~ Friday night before I went home, I would have an hour conference with him. We would discuss the progress on the thesis that I had made. The reason why he only glanced at it ~~in~~ in a CURSORY fashion, I presume, ~~what~~ was that he was pretty well familiar with it by hand, and really didn't feel that he was terribly concerned where I put the commas and where I ~~indented~~ indented paragraphs and where I didn't. ~~And~~ he left this basically to be handled by other readers of the thesis. Now to get my second <sup>M</sup> master's degree, I had to have not only a thesis, but also an oral examination. And all oral exam<sup>s</sup>, both for MA and PhD, are open to the public in the old medieval tradition. In other words, it is almost like an inquisition; The victum sitting there, others who might ~~come~~ face



the same fate, sitting around sweating along with him.

H: Is this held in an auditorium?

D: The medieval institute had a main reading room. It was a little larger room than this, with books and bookshelves all around, and working tables. They would have a special arrangement when the exams were given, the position of the tables and what have you, and rows of seats where people could come and sit in. Obviously, students by the way in the meanwhile, the number of students <sup>density</sup> had vastly increased. There was eight of us by the second year or so. All subsequent victims who would face this kind of drilling all came there. They sat around and hoped along with you that you would pass.

H: What was that like?

D: The exam I took, I must say was probably the least successful of any of my oral exams. The oral exam for my MA in history was no problem, I did very well. There were a number of factors here that I guess came together. I had just recovered from pneumonia and was physically not in the best of health. Somehow or another in the questioning I misunderstood two of the questions and did not give good enough answers. ~~Then~~ Gabriel, who thought that I should be doing much better than that. After all, I was supposedly his prize pupil, he began ranting and raving which unnerved me even more. So the end result was an acceptable MA performance, but certainly not what could be called brilliant.

H: Was this over the thesis?

D: It was over the thesis as well as all sorts of material

covering any of the courses that I had had. So it was<sup>a</sup> rather general examination. That is general in the sense that it covered a wide area. ~~And~~ it was an hour and a half exam with four people. So I managed to survive it. Then I took a few more courses for my doctrine. I had a grant from the Ford Foundation, a pre-doctrine fellow. ~~And~~ in the meanwhile, Gabriel had begun operation in the background. ~~And~~ using his influence, and that he has a great deal of, he was able to get me a ~~full ride~~<sup>Fullbright?</sup> to go to study at the University of Vienna. So in 1963 at commencement, I got my second Master's degree. Shortly before I had been informed that I received a full fellowship to Vienna and would be leaving to study at the University in September of 1963.

H: Were you married at this time?

D: No. I was, however, engaged or was getting engaged. ~~I had known~~, actually I had dated Eva off and on ever since I got to Notre <sup>DAME</sup> in 1960.

H: Was she at Notre Dame?

D: No, she was in Cleveland so it was a long distance romance. Most of my money went for calls. Very expensive correspondence was exchanged by the two of us. It is actually through letters that we got to know each other. Now there was obviously the problem, here I would be going off to Vienna. At the same time, we wanted to get married. Eva was also graduating in June of 1963. So we then decided on the following plan of action. I wrote to Dave Behen and asked if I could teach as a part-time instructor in the summer of 1963 before I went off to

Vienna, to earn money to help defray expenses. Eva, who graduated in 1963 went out immediately and got a job at Lakewood Hospital in Cleveland with the idea that she would only work for six months and that she would quit before Christmas. The plan was that I would go off in September of 1963 to Vienna, <sup>and</sup> I would come back at Christmas time. We had already made arrangements to be married on the 4th of January of 1964 and that Eva would then accompany me back to Vienna and she would join me for the second half of my \_\_\_\_\_ stay. It would then be a combined honeymoon and scholarship and what have you. Fortunately, everything worked out pretty well as we had expected. Eva did get the job, I did get my first job teaching here at Youngstown, <sup>and</sup> we did get engaged. We made all the formal preparations and on September 4, 1963, I sailed off to Vienna with the hope of coming back at Christmas time and getting married. ?

H: Is that what happened?

D: This is what almost happened. There was one very unfortunate interlude that put a shadow over most of the event. I was supposed to come home on December 18th. And on the evening of December 8th, I got a telegram saying that my father had died. So I immediately made arrangements to come home <sup>10 ten</sup> days earlier. I got home just ~~in~~ in the morning of the funeral. We proceeded to carry out our plans of marriage for the simple reason that there was no reason why not to get married even though some of the circumstances had changed. ~~And~~ so on January 4th we dually tied the knot. ~~And~~ then that same evening we flew off to Europe and spent the rest of the year in Vienna.

H: What was the atmosphere like in Vienna?

D: I found the University of Vienna basically a disappointment. The main reason I guess was the expectation that here I would be going to a very famous old university. Gabriel, before I had left for ~~Europe~~ <sup>Europe</sup>, gave me instructions about the important people there. ~~Actually~~ <sup>He</sup> he knows all of the important people everywhere. ~~So~~ <sup>So</sup> I was sure to say hello to this person and that person who would be working with this man at the library, this man at the archives. ~~And~~ <sup>And</sup> he told me above all if you have to ~~take~~ take courses at the university, describe yourself and take a course from the famous man called Henrich \_\_\_\_\_ . <sup>?</sup> <sup>?</sup>

H: He ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> still ~~living~~ <sup>there</sup>?

D: Oh <sup>yes,</sup> in fact Henrich \_\_\_\_\_ is still ~~living~~ <sup>there</sup>. So I went and enrolled in Fulmer class. Even the meeting with Professor \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>?</sup> sounds like something out of an operetta. With both of us approaching the center of the room and shaking hands and bowing deeply and all kinds of nonsense. This is where I first realized the immense prestige and importance of a European university professor, who next to God or at least the Trinity, is a close fourth. So I enrolled in Professor \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>30</sup> class on the Gregorian reform of the church in the <sup>eleventh</sup> 11th century. And found that this seminar which <sup>he</sup> it was <sup>giving</sup> given was the biggest waste of time that I <sup>had</sup> have ever encountered. The seminar consisted of nothing else, <sup>but,</sup> well first of all, the first shock was when the seminar contained over <sup>1 = 40</sup> 40 people. Remembering back to my old Notre Dame days where Gabriel and I used to sit around and drink wine and beer and discuss historic problems, this ~~was a far cry~~. And so the whole semester ~~we spent~~ with \_\_\_\_\_ coming in late, announced by his graduate assistant five minutes ahead of time, and then two or three papers prepared



by member<sup>s</sup> of the class being read, and Victor<sup>20</sup> enoff thanking the readers for their papers, getting up ~~the~~ at the end of hour and a half, the ~~class~~ he bowed, we bowed, and he disappeared and we didn't see him for another week ~~and a half~~ at which time he again came, he bowed, we bowed, three papers were read, ~~was~~ he bowed, we bowed, he disappeared, and this went on for a whole semester.

H: Question is ~~in~~ inaudible. ?

D: Very little instruction of ~~any~~ any kind, <sup>Hardly</sup> any. But it was as I said, an extremely disappointing kind of thing. So if I would be measuring my relations with Fichtenau 2 as indicative of what went on during the year that I was in Vienna. However, fortunately, ~~and~~ and again through Dr. Gabrial, ~~I~~ became very good friends with the ~~Archivist~~ of the University of Vienna. The University had a very fine ~~Archives~~ Archives where the records of the <sup>various</sup> ~~various~~ nations of the University, various faculties of the University are kept. ~~And~~ here I did much of my research for my dissertation. I pored over all kinds of <sup>fifteenth-</sup> ~~15th-century~~ records looking for ~~Hungarian~~ Hungarian students enrolled at the university of Vienna who might have been graduates of other Hungarian Universities, ~~Ties~~ Ties that the University of Vienna had with other Hungarian Universities and schools of higher education. ~~so~~

H: Were you working on your ~~dissertation~~ dissertation?

D: Yes.

H: What was the main topic?

D: The topic was actually sort of a composite thing, <sup>first of</sup> The History of three Hungarian universities, the ~~university~~ which was

HOVEY

~~it was the history of three Hungarian universities. The first of which was Obeda and then two universities founded in the Renaissance period by a chap by the name of Lithus Corvenus,~~ whose age and activities I am still persuing in books.

H: Straighten me out on the Corvenus name now.

D: He is called Corvenus for the simple reason that the coat of arms of the Hunyadi family, which he is a member of, a crow is one of the heraldic symbols, and crow in latin is Corvenus.

H: But he is also known as Matthias Hunyadi?

D: Right, that is his real name. He was named Corvenus mainly by the Italian humanist who through very strange genealogy traced back his ancestry to the Corvenii in the early republic in Rome. It takes some doing to trace somebody back to the Corvenii.

H: What do the Hungarians call him?

D: \_\_\_\_\_ or Corvenus.

H: Both?

D: Yes.

H: This was sort of a continuation of your Master's?

D: Yes, this was a continuation of my Master's thesis and an elaboration of two other universities, so most of my work was in finding in the records of the University of Vienna, indications of the existence of these institutions. And actually, I also worked in the library at the university trying to find secondary or printed primary sources for it.

H: Was there a thesis involved in this thesis?

D: No, it was basically a descriptive thing, it was not... the only thesis really is again a basic disagreement with most

HOVEY

OF ~~THE~~ Hungarian historians of ~~the~~ <sup>today</sup> day, and actually of pervious periods who maintain that one of the foundations made by this <sup>?</sup> ~~Corvenus~~ <sup>?</sup> in Buda developed into a full scale university. This was sort of a dominican studium           <sup>3</sup>          , which           <sup>3</sup>           was planning to make into a truly first-class institution of high learning but it never really got off the ground. While most of the other Hungarian scholars get carried away and they think that this ~~x~~ is a marvelous institution ~~of~~ and a ~~g~~reat university and so forth. I had the audacity to point out that this is nothing more than a dominican <sup>20</sup> ~~studium~~ which is not really a university. So although as I said it is basically descriptive, it is to some degree ~~conten~~ <sup>+</sup>sious. ?

H: Did you get into Hungary at all? (for this study)

D: Yes. Now during the year ~~of~~ that we were there in the spring when Eva had already joined me, this was the first time then that I was able to go back to Hungary, <sup>nineteen</sup> ~~19~~ years after we had left. It was a very emotional kind of pilgrimage back to Hungary. There were obviously ~~very~~ ~~many~~ relatives who I had <sup>not</sup> seen <sup>since</sup> ~~when~~ I was a young child of six or five, ~~A~~ grandmother that I had not seen in almost twenty years, <sup>because</sup> ~~In~~ fact, over twenty years ~~ago~~, she lived in a different part of Hungary and we have <sup>d</sup> not seen her for quite a while. ~~X~~So it was an interesting reunion, furthermore, to go back to a country that is number one, behind the ~~Iron~~ ~~Curtain~~, and number two, <sup>had</sup> ~~have~~ suffered so very heavily just eight ~~years~~ years perviously during the 1956 revolution. <sup>the</sup> ~~And~~ scars of this were still very evident. <sup>A</sup> ~~The~~ shock of seeing <sup>A</sup> ~~poverty~~ ~~sticken~~, unpainted, unkept

HOVEY

<sup>CITY</sup>~~CITIES~~ that was supposedly one of the most beautiful towns in Europe, it was <sup>A</sup> rather shocking. <sup>EXPERIENCE</sup>

H: This was ~~in~~ in Budapest?

D: Yes.

H: Were you there on the basis of doing scholarly work too?

D: Yes. We went there twice, <sup>once</sup> strictly as tourists and another time we went there for the longer period, and I was able to make my ~~first~~ serious contact among Hungarian scholars. You see, in the course of writing my <sup>S</sup>dis<sup>A</sup>ertation, my thesis, I had to become acquainted with <sup>1</sup>alot of Hungarian scholars by name, strictly from the bibliography. I was very eager to meet these people in the flesh, and I was able to meet ~~a~~ some of them. Subsequently, I have met practically everybody that I could have. But it was during this first episode that I met a <sup>fairly</sup> large number of people at the libraries, and individuals. <sup>?</sup>

H: Were these pre-arranged meetings?

D: Some yes, others no. I had carried down some correspondence with two <sup>H</sup>ungarian scholars, <sup>And</sup> naturally when I went to Hungary I went to visit them. Others, I just showed up at the library and told them who I was and what I was ~~doing~~ doing, and I must say that I was received very kindly. Apparently, any Hungarian feels that any Hungarian who lives outside the country and is even remotely interested in them must be a <sup>great</sup> ~~good~~ guy. So this was always to my advantage. The fact that I had left the country when I was a very small child and that I spoke Hungarian fluently and that



HOVEY

I was interested in the culture of my native land , I guess I impressed them very much. ~~so~~ I must say that I found no difficulty what~~so~~ever in gaining ~~access~~ <sup>ACCESS</sup> to any of these things.

H: Were you able to get into the university archives?

D: I didn't go to the university archives because the university archives didn't really have any material that I was looking at. I did, however, <sup>make</sup> ~~make~~ some very good contacts with the national archives. I, ~~in~~ <sup>fact</sup>, made arrangements to have some things micro-filmed. Subsequently, these were then sent out to the states, <sup>and through</sup> ~~through~~ diplomatic <sup>channels</sup> ~~channels~~ arrived <sup>at</sup> to the Hungarian Embassy in Washington. ~~so~~ they wanted to make sure that I was not <sup>CARRYING</sup> ~~carried~~ away some kind of state secrets.

H: But there was no governmental interference?

D: None what~~so~~ever. Further more, on a very dispursed trip, I was able to purchase an <sup>im</sup>ense number of books. <sup>I</sup> came loaded back to Vienna with so many books that the taxi driver couldn't lift the ~~the~~ suitcase it was so heavy. So this, then, was really the first installment of a sizeable Hungarian library that I eventaully was able to \_\_\_\_\_ . ?

H: How do you feel about the \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: I think we sould quit. Don't you? There is a meeting here at the

END OF THE THIRD TAPE

PART IV

~~BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH TAPE~~

HOVEY: This is <sup>the fourth</sup> an interview with Dr. Leslie Domonkos for the Youngstown State University Historians Project by Donald Hovey at Professor Domonkos' office on June 3, 1975, at 2:10.

~~PART IV~~

H: Last time just as the train appeared to be headed off the burning bridge, you were in Vienna and you had told me about <sup>some</sup> of your trips to Hungary. I wondered if we could bring you today from Vienna ~~back~~ to the United States and more or less up to 1975, <sup>in terms of the things that you have been doing.</sup>

D: This then ties into how I got to Youngstown really. When I was in Vienna in 1963, I knew then that in the fall of 1964 that I ~~would~~ need a job. I had hoped that during the Christmas ~~break~~ <sup>was home</sup> when I ~~was going~~ to get ~~married~~ anyway, that I could go the American Historical meeting, which <sup>that year</sup> ~~back then~~ was held in Philadelphia, ~~and~~ to look for a job. In fact, this is what I did. I interviewed with three schools. A place ~~called~~ <sup>h</sup> called Ithica ~~College~~ in New York, the University of Vermont, and Lehigh University. They were all looking for medieval history professors. The interview with Ithica College after the initial contact was absolutely no \_\_\_\_\_ on their part, <sup>e</sup> so I don't know if they ever filled the <sup>o</sup> position or not. Lehigh went as far as asking the University of Notre Dame library for copies of my two <sup>M</sup> master's thesis and apparently contacted some individuals. Finally, they were decent enough to write and tell me that they had hired somebody with a Ph.D. in hand. The University of Vermont is actually the school that

HOVEY

CAUSED ME considerable difficulty. The University of Vermont made every indication that they were seriously considering me. After I had returned to Vienna, they were ~~in correspondence~~, in contact with me through correspondence. They offered me a contract with number of hours, with salary, every thing quoted. I wrote back accepting the contract. This was ~~in~~ some time in February, I think. And I operated under the assumption that I <sup>would</sup> be employed at the University of Vermont. Time passed, in the mean while we had been back to Hungary, <sup>and</sup> everytime we had got back to Vienna from any trip the first thing we did was run to the mail box looking for a letter from Vermont; nothing happened. Finally in May, exasperated, I wrote a letter to them asking what the situation is, why I haven't heard from them. Where upon I received on a paper slip resembling a torn off lunch bag, written in pencil, the following note, "Dear Mr. Domonkos, I think there is some misunderstanding, we hired a man in the field that we had offered to you. We do, however, wish you good luck in finding a job." This was my first contact with the academic world and its functioning. At this point, as you can imagine, ~~that~~ I was desperate. Further more, it was <sup>just</sup> a week or so before that my wife announced that she <sup>thought</sup> ~~thinks~~ we <sup>were</sup> are going to have a baby. Fortunately, we didn't know that it was going to be two. At that point, I would have probably have ~~a~~ taken a gun and committed ~~in~~ suicide in good central European fashion. So in desperation, I wrote to some old friends at Notre Dame, Vern <sup>Bulough</sup> ~~Bullow~~, who in the mean <sup>while</sup> ~~time~~ had gotten a job

HOVEY

in California. ~~And~~ I wrote to Dave Behen, my old ~~who was~~ ~~at Youngstown~~ ~~and~~ who was department chairman. Very shortly thereafter, even before I had heard anything from any other source, I got a telegram stating, "We will match Vermont's salary, will you join our faculty? Dave Behen?" Being as poor as I was, I responded in a one word telegram, "Yes." ~~And~~ this is how I then signed a contract, actually ~~a~~ long distance with Youngstown. I I came back in July and I started in the summer school because again we were absolutely broke, ~~and~~ the only possessions that Eva and I had were wedding gifts, ~~A~~ lot of nice silver and crystal, but hardly the kind of things with which you can start a house hold. So I started working, in fact, we arrived on ~~the~~ 13th of July at <sup>five</sup> 5 o'clock in the afternoon and at <sup>eight</sup> 8 o'clock the 14th, the next morning, I was in Tod Hall lecturing on the Egyptians. I This is how I came to Youngstown, ~~really~~ <sup>fully</sup> expecting to stay no longer than a year. Dave Behen didn't think that I would stay longer, and here it is 1975, and I am still here. Why did I stay? Well, there are a number of reasons. First, the reasons were primarily economic, I could not afford to move. The December of the first year that I took the job ~~at~~ Youngstown, we had the twins. This was <sup>eleven</sup> ~~11~~ years ago, and at that time, by the way, I was making <sup>5,800</sup> ~~5,800~~ dollars. At ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~time~~ <sup>when</sup> the garbage collecting crew in Youngstown <sup>the</sup> ~~city~~ was out for a minimum wage of \$7,000. I immediately realized that I was in the wrong profession. In 1964 it ended on basically a <sup>dapper?</sup> ~~diaper~~ note. The following year, 1965, I still felt that until I had my disertation done and a

20



HOVEY

71

degree in hand, there was not much sense in moving.

H: You were still working on your dissertation?

D: Yes, I was still working on my dissertation. In fact, it was a rather, well not rather, it was an extremely difficult period in my life for the simple reason that I was teaching fifteen hours, <sup>and</sup> obviously with two little ones at home I had to give my wife some support and aid, and I was trying to finish my dissertation. On January 8, 1966, I got a letter from my friend Dr. Gabriel at Notre Dame with the following message, "I am leaving for Europe, March 14<sup>th</sup>. If you want your degree this year, have your dissertation in in six weeks. At that point I had not written one page. I had done research, but not very extensive, since I had gotten back from Vienna. I did, however, have \_\_\_\_\_ notes. At that point I decided that I was going to get my degree. There was no if's, and's, or but's about it, I was going to do it. There were two things that initially interfered. We were still on the semester system, with fifteen hours all the test papers to ~~grade~~ <sup>correct and so forth</sup>, you can imagine that. Number two - this is almost customary with me, I get my usual winter pneumonia and was <sup>in</sup> pretty bad shape. I shipped my wife off to Cleveland because I felt that I would be able to <sup>do</sup> better fending for myself. I drank <sup>innumerable</sup> jars of orange juice, medicated myself <sup>with</sup> and frequently visits <sup>to</sup> the doctor and began writing my dissertation. I finished writing the dissertation in roughly three weeks. This was accomplished only by sleeping four or five hours a night, coming home from school, taking a short nap, and starting on the dissertation, working sometimes till three or four o'clock

HOVEY

~~IN~~ the morning, taking a brief snooze till about eight, and then going off to teach, and getting home about three or four o'clock in the afternoon. This went on, as I said, roughly for three weeks. At the end of which time, on the last allowable day, I was writing the conclusion and had a girl type it. My wife was typing the appendices. My student secretary was typing the bibliography and my sister was pasting in the illustrations.

H: How did you manage to get that many typewriters?

D: At that point it didn't make any difference, because all I had to do was get it to the readers by, I think, this was February 15.

H: And then they were going to have you retype the final version?

D: The final version, I already had a dear lady in South Bend, all picked out. ~~That~~ as soon as my readers would read it, she would <sup>pick</sup> ~~fix~~ them up and type it, <sup>and</sup> send it to me for correction. ~~On~~ <sup>th</sup> March 4, I was supposed to take my defensive <sup>s</sup> dissertation and I was supposed to put on the table a final corrected perfect copy for the dean of the graduate school. Sure enough, on March 3, <sup>re</sup> ~~Ev~~ Eva and I went up to Notre Dame, <sup>and</sup> the copies were there. I spent the evening correcting and putting on crazy Hungarian accent marks and what have you, and on the afternoon of March 4th, in a public <sup>s</sup> defensive dissertation, because the medieval institute advertised the fact that somebody was taking the defense, I defended this <sup>s</sup> dissertation and passed <sup>it</sup> with fine praise from the inquisitors.

H: Tremendous.

9

HOVEY

D: So I think in the ~~and~~<sup>?</sup> of dissertations<sup>S</sup>, this was probably one of the most precipitously written dissertation<sup>S</sup> ever created.

H: You had been here then a couple of years?

D: One year and a half. So I think among the days of my life which I recall as memorable, March 4th, ranks pretty high because after ~~the~~ years of waiting and this last intense push, it was a great feeling to have it done. I might also say that it was also sort of the eleventh hour because the next day, March 5th, Gabriel left for Europe and didn't come back for a half a year. So if I ~~wouldn't~~ have done it then, that would have been it for at least another year.

H: What do you think would have happened if Gabriel hadn't written that letter?

D: If he hadn't written that letter of January 8th, I still might not have it. I am the kind of person who works well under pressure. In fact, I must have pressure and then I sweat and moan and bitch and produce. In writing the dissertation<sup>S</sup>, I must ~~say~~ the reason why it was possible for me to write in really three weeks was the fact that I had superb notes, I had the whole thing organized. In fact, ~~something~~ something that I rarely admit but it is true; The day before I sat down to write, and by the way writing the first paragraph is the hardest god damned thing under the sun. The day before I sat down to write I made an extremely detailed outline and predicted the length of the dissertation<sup>S</sup> within two pages of the actual one. ~~So~~ I knew exactly what I had, where I was going, so there was very little deviation from this norm once I ~~got~~<sup>set</sup> myself down to produce the

HOVEY

thing. I had my notes organized so perfectly that I ~~had~~ took them out of the folder and hung them with paper clips and what have you, all over my room and I would then just go around and check the notes and walk up and down; we had a long corridor. I would sit down and write a paragraph and look at the notes again and write. I would create the footnotes and within hours my student secretary came, who by the way was one of my prize students, she now has a <sup>M</sup>master's in history herself. She is a librarian in Wooster, <sup>Massachusetts.</sup> Massachusetts. She is a very sharp girl. She would come in the morning by the house, pick up the notes at eight o'clock that ~~I~~ I had written during the night and by noon she would have a rough copy of things that I would correct and then she would retype them. It went on like this for three weeks.

<sup>TREMEENDOUS,</sup>  
H: Do you do other things like this?

D: Unfortunately, yes. I say unfortunately because I always hate myself afterwards for having left things hang until the last minute. But most of the articles that I have written and so forth are always done in this fashion. There is always some god damn dead <sup>( )</sup>line that I am meeting and it is always the eleventh hour. Then I naturally get <sup>criticism</sup>criticism from my wife who says "why have you been sitting around all of this time when you should have been working." So to continue the story, <sup>either</sup>in June of 1966 ~~then~~ I got the degree. It was a ~~year~~ that spring, or the following fall that I made my first attempt to move out of Youngstown to a better place, <sup>And</sup> and this was to Case Western



HOVEY

Reserve. Case Western Reserve had an opening in medieval history. I applied, I was interviewed, <sup>and</sup> from what I was able to gather later, there was some support in my behalf. Eventually, however, they hired a man at an associate level with <sup>a</sup> book and what have you. Actually ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> changed the ~~job~~ <sup>job</sup> description and I no longer fitted what they were looking for. So that was my first attempt. It was not the kind of attempt where you decide to put all of your eggs in one basket and then if you don't get it this is some kind of horrible disaster to you. I applied and I ~~hoped~~ that it would work, it didn't. Looking back and knowing what has happened to Case Western Reserve in their history department, I am very happy that I never got the job.

H: <sup>Oh</sup> Really?

D: Yes, I have a friend there who is a young associate professor making \$12,000.

H: Living in Cleveland?

D: Yes, living in Cleveland. The University has practically put all of their money into their medical school. Their liberal arts college has greatly suffered. They have discontinued giving European Ph.D.'s, in fact, they are phasing out their Ph.D. program all together. So if I still had the job I would be <sup>under</sup> financially far less favorable circumstances, and let's face it, prestige alone certainly will not get you anywhere. <sup>The</sup> Next year, the University <sup>[Y503]</sup> turned from a private to a state institution. By <sup>?</sup> the way, in the meanwhile I also got an offer from Ball State. —

H: ~~That is in Indiana?~~

HOVEY:

D: Yes, in Indiana. I was tempted to go out there. In fact, I was invited to go out to see the place. But then I decided that that would be too much of a lateral move anyway, and I came to the conclusion that ~~if~~ I am going to move I am going to move up. So I never carried that move out. ~~so~~ with the new institution as a state related school, I was hoping, and most of my hopes actually materialized, that the place would improve in its academic standing and faculty and so forth. At that point, already I was thinking ahead, this was already my fourth year. <sup>and</sup> That if I stayed around for two more, then I would be eligible for a <sup>sabbatical</sup> ~~seventical~~ <sup>year</sup> In the fifth year, I applied for a full ~~rightxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ <sup>year</sup> to Vienna to do research in Hungarian history. The major cutbacks in the <sup>Fulbright</sup> program eliminated that whole category of research scholars, so I was screwed out of that. Then looking around for other sources of income, I heard about this new grant that was offered by the American Council of Learned Societies and Social Sciences Research Council under a general heading of International Research and Exchange, Board or IREX, which I will be referring to several times in the next few minutes. I applied to this IREX, it has its headquarters in New York. This outfit then runs an exchange programs with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. A friend of mine and his wife were on an IREX in Budapest. They gave us some information as to what it is like. We decided then, with ~~Eva~~ <sup>would</sup> that we will apply, which I did in <sup>NOVEMBER</sup> ~~December~~ of 1969. After an initial positive ~~preply~~ preply I was called to New York for a personal

HOVEY

INTERVIEW/ <sup>In</sup> February of 1970, we got a special delivery letter that we had been accepted to go to Hungary and that we would be able to leave in September of that year. I went to see President Pugley about a <sup>sabbatical</sup> ~~sevatial~~. And since the university at that time still had a <sup>ab</sup> ~~sevatial~~ program and I had a fairly good relation with Pugley, it was agreed that there was no unforeseen difficulty, <sup>so would</sup> I will get my <sup>sabbatical</sup> ~~sevatial~~, which meant ~~that~~ half salary from here, plus the money from the IREX people, plus money from the Hungarians in Hungary, and this would then allow us to go. To supplement all this and to be able to buy a car, Eva went to work at St. Elizabeth's in the delivery room. We managed to save enough money to buy a little red Volkswagon, which we ordered before we left for Europe and picked it up in Vienna.

x H: So you actually went then?

D: Yes, the preparations that we had to make obviously took considerable time, <sup>such as</sup> finding somebody to live in our house. <sup>a</sup> we had our colleague Saul Friedman live in the house for a ~~xxx~~ year. In September of 1970, we got on the plane in the most comfortable fashion, <sup>and</sup> flew off to Vienna where our little car was waiting for us, and the following day, we drove to Budapest.

H: Very good, then how long was that stay?

D: The stay was from actually the 2nd of September, 1970, to July 1, 1971, eleven months.

H: A whole year then?

D: Yes, a whole academic year.

HOVEY

79

H: What did you do there?

D: I was assigned to the Historical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Most of my time was spent in research on the subject of the Renaissance in Hungary. As I already indicated in the previous interview, I had contact with Hungarian scholars. Now I was able to meet all those that I didn't meet initially. The fact that I was a guest of the Hungarian Academy, immediately opened <sup>EVERY</sup> ~~over~~ door to everybody's office that I wanted to go to. So I spent much of my time <sup>in</sup> with the Hungarian National Archives, the Library of the Hungarian Academy, <sup>and</sup> at the Hungarian National Library. <sup>I spent</sup> ~~And~~ also a considerable amount of time in just talking to ~~just~~ <sup>a</sup> colleagues in the same field. Which was really a wonderful novel experience because in Youngstown or even if I was in Chicago, I mean how many other people are involved in Hungarian <sup>fifteenth-</sup> ~~15th~~ Century History? So here were people who were in cultural history, art history, and so forth. Fortunately, they had already heard of me through some of my reprints that I had sent to various friends, so I was not a completely unknown factor. Some very well known scholars, members of the academy, wrote <sup>to</sup> ~~me~~ and called me while I was there asking me to come and visit them and <sup>to</sup> be in contact with them. Again, another great advantage that I had and I must say, I am not saying that all these people opened their door only because my name was Les Domonkos, but many of these people <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ classmates of Gabriel <sup>'s</sup> ~~'s~~ When he was a student in Budapest back in the 1930's. Now these guys were in responsible senior level positions <sup>at</sup> ~~of~~ the Hungarian Academy, the Libraries, and so forth. So when they heard

(7)





HOVEY

this is the only way that he could have it published.

H: ~~QUESTION CANT BE HEARD.~~ Was there ~~this~~ <sup>this</sup> problem?

D: ~~Yes~~, now the book that he made his great name in . . . actually, he was a very well known scholar already in the 1930's. Then he had problems because he was Jewish. But because he had some good friends, Christian friends, he was saved from being deported. Then when the new regime came, he stepped forward as a great martyr of the old regime, a great anti-fascist, and rose to become director of the Hungarian Academy in Rome. Then he came home and was made a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. ~~And~~ he became the great Marxist historian of the post-world war era.

H: This was all \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: <sup>D:</sup> Hovey, I really don't know. He claims that he had to survive. ~~And~~ I guess, you know, when you are faced with that problem, I don't know what you and I would do. We have children, he had children, you have to feed them, ~~so~~ what do you do, do you prostitute yourself or do you starve?

H: Then you discovered that there was another point of view that has merit that was afraid to be recognized?

D: Yes. Well, that is what many have done. It is interesting and somebody, not Kardos, but a friend of his, pointed out that you could take his book, take a red pencil and pencil out paragraphs that deal with Marxist ideology. ~~And~~ if you take these out and you read the remaining section, they make a perfectly logical sequence. In other words, what he really did is he probably took the damn thing and said, well, this far <sup>enough</sup> down the page it is

HOVEY

high time ~~time~~ <sup>things</sup> that we insert some about what Lenin said. ~~And~~ then he found something that even vaguely could have been interpreted or tie in, <sup>and</sup> he wrote then a brief paragraph stating Lenia's view on this problem then continued exactly where he had left off in the previous paragraph and went on. By clipping out ~~these~~ <sup>this</sup> Marxist garbage he then still has a perfectly well written book left.

H: Do you have a feeling that other people were having problems in how to live with \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: Yes, I have found that a number of them have had problems. I have another very, very dear friend, in fact, I consider <sup>ED</sup> Professor Kardos a very dear friend, although he is accused by many as being a careerist and a phoney. I still felt that there was a great deal of merit in his work ~~and~~ that he was basically a very decent and fine human being. Another chap, a much younger man, He was brilliant with a far more \_\_\_\_\_ mind than Kardos' mind, Also he is a Marxist, ~~is~~ is a very dear friend of mine. He too has problems ~~about~~ his past. He wrote again, a superb <sup>s</sup> <sub>n</sub> dissertation which was then published as a book, the best book on the subject. On a Hungarian military leader of the early <sup>seventeenth</sup> ~~17th~~ Century by the name of Zrinyi, and it is a Marxist book. ~~It is full of,~~ it was published in 1953 or 1954, <sup>It is</sup> <sub>n</sub> full of glorification of Stalin and quotations by various party officials and what have you. They were woven in in such a fashion that it makes absolutely no sense. Here again, in order to have the thing published he had to do it. ~~It~~ It is strange how ~~people react to things now.~~ He has a revised new addition of

HOVEY

<sup>ac</sup>  
 THE SAME BOOK OUT, But all of these passages <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ missing. So  
 the second edition published in 1968 or 1970 doesn't have any  
 of this. It is a considerably shorter book all of a sudden  
 and it ~~doesn't~~ have this. So to give you some idea of how  
 these people feel about it. I was at a dinner at his house,  
 just the two of us and I said, "I <sup>thought</sup> brought you this \_\_\_\_\_  
 book. And he looked at me sort of sheepishly and he said,  
 "Did you buy the big red or the new one?" The big red  
 actually in this case had a double meaning. It was in a big  
 red cover, but it was also the big red book. So looking back,  
 I am quite sure that he is not at all happy with the big red.  
 But again, here is a man who felt that he had to do it because  
 this was the only way. So I must say, my ~~experience~~ in Hungary,  
 led me to contemplate many things, among them naturally there  
 are some ~~very~~ brilliant men who have Marxist bias. Obviously,  
 whatever I will ever write in the future will always take  
 the Marx interpretation into account. I will certainly not  
 write Pre-World War II Bourgeois history as the Marxist have  
 done a great deal <sup>of work</sup>, particularly in social history, and looked  
 upon historical problems even in my area, with completely new  
 views. ~~SM~~ Studies done on such things as social mobility, who  
 were ~~those~~ students who ~~were~~ went to the university, what ~~was~~  
 their social background was and so forth, All of these things I  
 will adopt <sup>out of</sup> the research made by the Marxist.

H: So in the ~~case~~ of these people, their ~~Marxism~~ is  
 distinct from the ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Stalinist? in other words, it wasn't  
 completely authentic? Were they sincere Marxist?



HOVEY

D: Don, I don't know who the sincere Marxist is. I know who the insincere ones are, but I don't know who really believes. In fact, of all the historians that I met, there is only one woman who I think is a sincere Marxist, the others I have serious doubts. Either by just general conversation with them or through what others have said about them that they are sincere Marxists. But ~~here~~ <sup>is</sup> a situation ~~where~~ where I have...

H: XCan you work in Hungary as a historian ~~if~~ <sup>do</sup> you ~~are~~ not ~~a Marxist~~? *take the Marxist approach?*

D: I guess you can. You can write straight ~~and~~ forward descriptive history. You can write even on things such as the great peasant rebellion of the early <sup>sixteenth-</sup> 16th century. One of my friends, who is not a Marxist, finished a book on the subject, in fact, it was his second book and ~~he~~ is not a Marxist and it was published. Basically, what I have found is that unless you are anti-Marxist you are pretty safe. That is intolerable to be anti-Marxist. To be Marxist is preferred, not ~~to~~ be anything is acceptable.

H: ~~What position then,~~ did you run into any people of the church while you ~~were~~ over there?

D: I ran into some interesting people who were churchmen. ~~Both~~ <sup>some</sup>, I had lengthy conversations with people who ~~were~~ were parish priests. I had the opportunity to talk to a man who is in charge of the treasures, ecclesiastical treasures of the Arch Diocese of \_\_\_\_\_ . In fact, he took me to the palace of the arch bishop and I sat in the \_\_\_\_\_ chair and sat down on his bed while he was still at the embassy in

HOVEY

84

Budapest.

H: Did you kiss his ring?

D: NO, no in fact, what emerged basically in my conversation with these men, ~~that~~ they were somewhat upset with the United States for harboring \_\_\_\_\_ at the legation. ~~These men, and~~ these were not what are called "peace priests". In other words, probably they are agents of the secret police who parade around the streets. But these men that I met were genuine Catholic priests. They believed that the <sup>normalizations</sup> ~~normalizations~~ of the relations between the Vatican and the Hungarian Government was in many ways hindered by the ~~presence~~ <sup>presence</sup> of \_\_\_\_\_. So unlike many in the grace around here who think that is probably God's greatest gift to mankind, I personally am not very fond of him. ~~And~~ although, when he was in town I went to see him and all that, but I don't think of him as a great hero. That is, I think of him as a man who out lived his past, or out lived his usefulness many years ago, and he lived to be too old. ~~And~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ died, let's say maybe, and he had been shot by the Russians in 1956, I think he would have gone down at a tremendous rallying point, something like Joan of Arc. One of the good things about Joan is that ~~that~~ they burned her. Had she been around a little longer, probably things wouldn't have been so rosy. St. Francis of Assisi, if he had lived five or six years longer would have probably been accused of heresy and killed. So \_\_\_\_\_ unfortunately didn't have the foresight of dying sooner so to some degree he did stand

H: Did you come away from your year in Hungary changed at all, do you think?



HOVEY

~~TO CRUSH THE~~ Hungarian revolt. ~~Subsequently to that...~~

H: Then you think that the United States could have inter-  
v~~e~~ned?

D: Oh, I definitely think so.

H: ~~Can't understand question.~~ That the Russians would not have ...

D: Well, the Russians were pulling out of Hungary during the initial phase of the Hungarian rebellion. Only when they received reassurances to the Yugoslavian Embassy, <sup>S FROM</sup> President Eisenhower that we <sup>had</sup> have no intention of doing anything, did they turn around and come back ~~and come back~~ in force. So any Eastern European who has any illusions that the United States stands for democracy and freedom and so forth, ~~they~~ should immediately be shot or put into an insane asylum. I don't know if we will do anything ever. It is basically <sup>rhetoric.</sup> retorect.

H: A couple of years after <sup>the check</sup> ~~you checked you had this~~ experience?

D: Yes. I must say that most of the people that I talked to, ~~and again~~ most of my contacts, were with historians, many of them my own age. It was a very frightening thing to them because they realized that any kind of loosening, any kind of liberalism, can be wiped out really over night by the Russians if they so desire. ~~And again...~~

H: That is right, just look and see what the Russians did to the ~~C~~zechs.

D: Yes, that is right. And remember that \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>who</sup> ~~who~~ is the <sup>pre</sup>miere of Hungary, and \_\_\_\_\_ were very close friends. ~~And there was a great deal of sympathy. Now, I must also say~~



HOVEY

~~the~~ <sup>that</sup> for once, and this is remarkable for Hungarians as far as politics are concerned, Hungarians have muffed things ~~the~~ worst than probably anybody else. Remarkably, Hungarians for once seem to be doing something right. \_\_\_\_\_, who by the way enjoys considerable personal popularity in Hungary. In fact, I always maintain that he should run for election. He would even win, I mean if the election was...

H: Mayor Dailey did ~~it~~?

20  
 D: Yes, exactly. So \_\_\_\_\_ by playing the role of the obedient son in Moscow and at the same time encouraging cultural and economic contact with the western world, And not being too oppressive at home, ~~and~~ <sup>has</sup> basically done ~~that~~ everything that \_\_\_\_\_ ~~tried~~ to do in Prague. \_\_\_\_\_, however, did the stupid thing of yelling and screaming about how wonderful things ~~were~~ <sup>are</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_, on the other hand does all this, ~~such as~~ <sup>and</sup> keeping things cool and there is no friendship that is as close as that of Russia and Budapest. And that is what the Hungarians called the 'official' <sup>ass kissing</sup> periodically in Moscow and to satisfy \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who also periodically come and visit the friendly satellite and ~~just the smoothest of envy~~ <sup>there is this</sup>. Naturally, if the Hungarians get too far out of line or get too liberal and there is too much of a western influence and if the Russians begin to catch on, ~~then~~ which unfortunately they already have, <sup>that</sup> then Hungary's living standard is far high<sup>er</sup> than the Soviet Union's, then they immediately put on the screws.

H: Well, how about the the development of any nationalistic feelings in Hungary, are these pretty well channeled by the party?

HOVEY

D: There is very strong nationalism in Hungary. The idea that communism is an internationally oriented ideology is one of the great myths. Furthermore, another myth is that if you have what they call a social<sup>ist</sup> structure or a communist social structure that you all of a sudden forget<sup>a</sup> thousand years of hatred and feel great brotherhood for those across national borders who are also socialist brothers, this is humbug. The sense of frustration, the sense of hate, that Hungarians feel toward their neighbors for various reasons, and what their neighbors feel for them is at least as strong now as it has ever been since the end of the First World War, which is basically the cause of the anger to the Treaty of Versailles Hungary lost immense territories and huge blocks of pure Hungarian population to the neighboring countries, especially in Romania where the Hungarians are very severely oppressed. This causes tremendous amount of ill feelings. On the other hand, officially, <sup>you</sup> see the Romanians, and the Hungarians, and the East Germans, and so forth are all brothers under socialism. You cannot beat the table and say "well you son of a bitches".

H: <sup>Just</sup> The Russians could be nationalist?

D: Yes, that is just it. The Russians obviously can be anything they like.

H: Does this nationalism have any impact on the study of History ~~in~~ Hungary?

D: No, in the Stalinist era there were actually two major trends in Hungarian historiography. Number one was to down

HOVEY

play all things which were ~~not~~ traditionally considered to be characteristic of Hungary. In other words, Hungary's <sup>rather</sup> unusual feudal structure both in the middle ages <sup>and</sup> and actually until the <sup>twentieth</sup> 20th century, all this was sort of down played. And the idea was actually <sup>under</sup> the great \_\_\_\_\_ of internationalism, all this kind of ~~quote~~ "Hungarian characteristics" had no meaning. The other interesting development in the Stalin <sup>ist</sup> era <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ to EMULATE everything that is Russian and <sup>to</sup> ~~you~~ emphasize Hungary's similarity to it's Slavic neighbors, something that in the previous period ~~was~~ <sup>would</sup> amount to <sup>hearsay</sup> ~~heresy~~. In other words, Hungarians traditionally have always maintained that since they are non-slavs, that they don't want to have anything to do with this RABEL?

E: Did the Russians try to prove that they were Slaves somehow?

D: No, they didn't go that far. But they emphasized, for example, that in Hungarian linguistic development, <sup>so</sup> many of the words that were picked up after the conquest of the \_\_\_\_\_ are basically Slavic words. Also, great emphasis was put on the fact that the Hungarians at one time or another lived in the area <sup>which</sup> today ~~which~~ is Soviet Russia. In other words, the \_\_\_\_\_ mountains and the \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Carpathian~~ Sea Region, <sup>BA</sup> Prior <sup>to</sup> coming into \_\_\_\_\_ Base, and they were situated in the area just north of the Black Sea. All this was tremendously emphasized. In order to sort of prove to the Russians to say, "we sort of broke away <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ you guys, but actually we are fond of you." In fact, the Russians destroyed the cities and raped

HOVEY

the women and so forth, this<sup>v</sup> is not supposed to be mentioned. *apparently*

H: Are there <sup>yet</sup> any history <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ of the Second World War?

D: Yes, there <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ for the first time, by the way, ~~while~~ *well*  
I was there the second time in 1973. ~~The first time~~ there appeared  
a book dealing with a Hungarian Army, they called it the second  
army. Not that they had that many, the second army that was  
sent in 1942 to fight on the Russian Front.

H: On the German side?

D: Yes, on the German side. ~~And~~ up to this point, you see,  
whenever this was even mentioned at all, it was ~~only~~ in a  
fashion which was utter stupidity and so forth, and the Hungarians  
deserved ~~anything~~ <sup>everything</sup> that they got. This new book, however, tried  
to emphasize the fact that since Hungary was at war with the  
Soviet Union, this was not at all an unusual thing.

H: (Comment can't be understood) ?

D: Yes. And it also for the first time at least implied  
that all those men who fought on the Russian Front were not  
traitors and the worst of the criminal element that ~~you~~ could  
find. But that these were patriotic Hungarians who <sup>were</sup> drafted into  
the army, or who were career officers or whatever ~~and~~ were sent  
off there to fight <sup>ill-equipped</sup> ~~ill-equipped~~ and what have you, and got the  
hell beaten out of them. Thousands of them died either as a  
result of <sup>VARIOUS</sup> ~~their~~ counter offenses or they were taken prisoners  
and nobody ever say<sup>w</sup> them.

H: That many?

D: Oh yes, roughly <sup>one-hundred thousand</sup> @ ~~100,000~~ men died.

H: They just disappeared?



HOVEY

D: Well, remember this is something that very few Americans know. One million and a half German prisoners of war have never been accounted for. One million and a half is an awful lot of people. So there is a tendency to talk about things, naturally, in such a way that you don't offend the Soviet Union, but at least there is somewhat of a revisionist kind of movement. First of all, not everybody who held some kind of position in Hungary prior to 1945 was a fascist and had two Jews for breakfast every morning. There were people who were middle of the road and there were people who were actually anti-German. Also, very interesting is the reevaluation of the position of the communist party in the 1950's. <sup>You</sup> See, during the Stalinist era, and I have seen statistics on this, <sup>more</sup> more old communists were executed in Hungarian prisons than ex-fascists. In other words, the revolution was eating its own children. ~~Again,~~ I remember visiting an old lady who was an old communist from the first World War era who had two sons. She was a Jewish lady by the way. She had two sons who are now high party functionaries, <sup>and</sup> and we began talking and so forth. And she said, "Well, Professor Domonkos, you have no idea what <sup>we</sup> you went through here." And I thought that <sup>was</sup> when the Germans occupied Hungary in 1944. It turned out that what she was referring to was the Stalinist era when communism supposedly has its <sup>was at</sup> ~~height~~ <sup>height</sup>. She said that you never knew at ~~that~~ night if in the morning you would wake up. Her sons were always loyal communist members and so forth. But so many of <sup>them</sup> ~~us~~ were lost <sup>during</sup> ~~at~~ that time. <sup>and</sup> and it is also interesting that you will very often see in more recently published works,

HOVEY

A PICTURE of this comrade who played a major role in the Hungarian resistance in 1944, played a major role in the party back in the 1920's. ~~And~~ then it will say during the period of the personality cult in the early 1950's because of \_\_\_\_\_ up charges he or she was executed. ~~And~~ it is almost like a form of \_\_\_\_\_ up charges, personality cult and so forth. So you learn an awful lot about a world which to us is entirely closed. How many communists have you met? You could probably count them on your hands, if you have met any. But the average American doesn't <sup>met</sup> them. ~~And~~ it is very strange when you first <sup>met</sup> one and you look at him and he doesn't look any different than anybody else. In fact, <sup>sympathetic</sup> you find that there are a number of them who are quite sympathetic. You then begin to <sup>wonder</sup> ~~wonder~~ why ~~you're~~ is he that, why am I not, and that kind of stuff.

H: How many fascists have you met?

D:: Well, I met them daily.

H: Does that work out that way too?

D: I think so.

H: Does that \_\_\_\_\_ look at historical characters?

D: I don't know. Don, I think again my experience of meeting some historian<sup>s</sup> who were Marxist or who pretend to be Marxist has made me, I think, more compassionate of individuals both, I guess, to the left and to the right. In other words, I am far less prone to condemn<sup>a</sup> a person for being anything now than <sup>a</sup> lets say I <sup>I</sup> even five years ago. ~~And~~ let me again emphasize, even five years ago I was not the kind of guy that would go around screaming that there was a "pinko" behind every rock. ~~But I think~~ I understand.

was

HOVEY

human nature somewhat better because of this experience, The very idea of survival under adverse conditions. And again, it is <sup>extremely</sup> ~~seems~~ difficult for us Americans to realize that not every nation is a big powerful nation that can rattle its swords, and send in its Marines, and do things like that. ~~That~~ there are some very small <sup>nations</sup> ~~nations~~ which are tossed in the storm of history. And people who are part of the small nations, I guess, must be able to adapt themselves to different surroundings far more than we have to. We can be <sup>a</sup> arrogant and say well, what the hell is going to happen? Usually nothing happens. You live <sup>in</sup> an entirely different kind of atmosphere in a small country where you are constantly exposed to the changes of government, ~~or~~ even complete changes of world view. And what do you do then? And how do you cope with it?

H: Is this something that the Hungarians sort of grow up with? I mean, this is sort of part of Hungary's history from the <sup>very</sup> beginning?

D: I think so. It is, I guess, far stronger in the period since the <sup>F</sup> first World War than ever before. Remember that after the <sup>F</sup> first World War there was a basically <sup>Dem</sup> democratic revolution <sup>in</sup> <sup>Hungary</sup> which was then swept away by the only communist regime in <sup>E</sup> Eastern Europe <sup>where</sup> <sup>anyway</sup>. Which then was swept ~~away~~ by a right wing regime of Admiral \_\_\_\_\_, which was then again swept away ~~for~~ by an ultra-fascist regime imposed by the <sup>G</sup> Germans, which was swept away by the Russian armies, then sort of a coalition government <sup>until</sup> 1948, Then probably the worst type of Stalinism anywhere in Eastern Europe <sup>from</sup> ~~in~~ 1948 to about 1953, Then a beginning of a kind

HOVEY

OF A LETTING UP after Stalin's death, then the revolution, then the tremendous repression, Then again a kind of a loosening; all this in <sup>fifty</sup> 50 years. That is a hell of a lot of changes. To be able to spin with the wind, like the weather<sup>vane</sup>vein, with all these <sup>different</sup> kind of changes, takes I guess the skill of an acrobat. Very few people are able to make these kind of adjustments. I think Eastern Europeans are more prone to be able to make it over most others because it is a matter of survival.

H: Okay, lets<sup>o</sup> get you out of Hungary and back to 1975.

D: Okay, after a year of this, And besides all of the actual research that I did, one of the <sup>great</sup> really <sup>would</sup> advantages of this year ~~is~~ the large number of books that I was able to purchase to bring with me.

H: Had you started working \_\_\_\_\_ of these books?

D: Yes.

H: Was there a problem here, what was the problem?

D: The problem is basically two fold. It is again a disagreement with basic interpretation. One is <sup>one</sup> that I already alluded to. In fact, we have already discussed this idea <sup>to</sup> what extent is the Renaissance <sup>is</sup> a native or an importation? And the second problem is one that I think will cause probably far greater <sup>a</sup> amount of disquiet among Hungarians, <sup>It</sup> is ~~that~~, from what I have been able to gather, the traditional view of MATHEUS as a great king who intervened in the ~~whole~~ <sup>Bohemia,</sup> affairs of the Holy Roman Empire, and so forth only because he wanted to secure a very strong base in the West in order to face the <sup>power</sup>



HOVEY

Turkish menace in the <sup>E</sup>east. I find ~~a~~ really very little evidence to support this. I think \_\_\_\_\_<sup>?</sup> was again a <sup>very</sup> superbly capable realist and opportunist. He made peace treaties with the Turks, not for any noble reasons, but because <sup>he</sup> wanted to throw his weight around in the west. In fact, I think he was deeply misled by the papacy into believing that the popes would support his bid for the throne of Bohemia, and thus got himself involved in an expensive <sup>basically</sup> disasterous war in \_\_\_\_\_<sup>?</sup> and upper Bohemia. ~~And~~ I see really no indication that he had any \_\_\_\_\_ plans of using his position as the King of Bohemia to further the anti-Turkish cause, so to a degree this will be a little bit of a debunking. Again, it is almost sort of an axiom of Hungarian history. Here is \_\_\_\_\_ the great Turk fighter, who because of these bastards in the <sup>W</sup>est gets involved with ~~Frederick II~~ <sup>Frederick II</sup> and George \_\_\_\_\_ and so forth, But all he is trying to do is secure his back in order to be able to throw himself wholeheartedly <sup>to the</sup> east and fight those god damn Turks. This just isn't so.

H: Does this represent a shift in your interest to political? <sup>?</sup>

D: No, my primary ~~a~~ interest is still cultural. But this, since I am planning to write the history of the age, roughly <sup>fifty</sup> 50 years, obviously ~~this~~ will have to be accounted. In fact, he is Hungary's last major monarch. They have been going downhill ever since.

H: I guess I am supposed to read up about his son, John \_\_\_\_\_.

HOVEY

D: Yes, little John.

H: Is this a strange case in itself?

D: Yes.

H: You <sup>have</sup> got lots of material?

D: Oh, there is no problem there <sup>y</sup> I could also find lots of time. The immense material that I have and the things that I could do with the material, if now I could find the time to do it, I would be all set.

H: It is just a matter of time.

D: It is a matter of time, not a matter of not having this and that. I have the material. I could at this point, June 1975, sit down and write probably a 700 to 900 page book.

H: You just need another Gabriel ultimatum?

D: It would be nice. Eva's ultimatums apparently are not as powerful.

H: She tells you?

D: Oh yes, that I should get my rear end moving. Up to now, really not much success.

H: Okay, so you then came back there?

D: Came back, and again because of the rules of the university, I came back for two years, otherwise, I would have to repay some of my <sup>abb</sup> seravical money. Since then, I have had one major chance at a job and apparently got very close to getting it.

H: That must <sup>have</sup> of been the director of the <sup>Medieval</sup> Medieval Institute?

D: Yes.

H: How did you feel about that?

HOVEY

~~Obviously~~ <sup>Obviously</sup> D: Well, ~~basically~~, disappointed but again I don't feel that... I still feel that I am not going to die of old age in Youngstown. Soemday, something will come up. Until that ~~comes~~ I am not the kind of person who is unhappy. I am basically a contented person. My colleagues in the department, I find all very pleasant.

H: What role have you played in the development of the department?

D: Well, my role has been actually sort of a triple role. I have served as acting department chairman in a very crucial year, 1969. This was the time of the establishment of the Black studies program. It was a very touchy situation with a white man Don \_\_\_\_\_<sup>?</sup> teaching Black history and there was discontent, so I had to play very cool politics there. For four years I was the director of the graduate program. I actually saw it through the pains of childbirth. And I guess my constant contribution, it you can call it that, is <sup>the</sup> teaching in the area of <sup>Medieval,</sup> Renaissance and Reformation.

H: Did you play any part in bring<sup>in</sup> people into the department?

D: Yes, I was very actively involved in the selection ~~of~~ process of almost half of the department.

H: Half of the department has ~~come~~ since you were here?

D: I was instrumental in talking Dave Behen into hiring George Beelen. That is, I suggested several times that we hire George Beelen; I had known George ~~before~~ before. I was present in interviewing Jim Rhonda. I must say I was ~~not~~ not present

HOVEY

*I was instrumental in*

In interviewing Joe May. Lowel came here, and <sup>v</sup>trying to talk him into coming here, ~~g~~ Berger, Jenkins, Amadi, Kulchysky, and I sort of take special pride, I consider, probably nobody else will think so, with the possible exception of Friedman, I don't know whether he is happy or sad about it, But I think I am the one who discovered Friedman in a hotel room in New York City, during interviews, ~~x~~ <sup>was</sup> And <sup>v</sup>very much impressed with his style, And ~~I~~ Had him come for an interview. So every time Friedman bitches and moans about Youngstown, he has every right to think that I am responsible for all this.

H: Are ~~is~~ you involved in such things like the acquisition of documents and books for the library?

D: Oh yes, I have been on the library committee since ~~time immemorial~~ <sup>immemorial</sup> ~~immorial~~ <sup>immemorial</sup>. I personally have through the years taken a very active interest in the growth of the library. I am happy to say, I brought a large number of ~~books~~ collections of documents, the \_\_\_\_\_ series in English history, the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ documents in Italian, and the church history. I was instrumental in <sup>setting</sup> the whole \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which are the major works of the church fathers to Innocent III. All of these, although <sup>often</sup> not purchased by the history department, were purchased by instigation because I went to departments that didn't spend their allotment to get them. I got the whole \_\_\_\_\_ assigned to the Philosophy department. It cost \$15,000.

H: Fantastic. What do you feel about the quality of the research resources available here?



HOVEY

D: Actually they are not bad. Now, obviously, in my field, they are poor. One of the reasons <sup>is</sup> that I have never built up the library, the university library, because I have been building up my own.

H: (can't understand) ?

D: Yes. As far as the research opportunities in medieval and Renaissance in general are concerned, we do fairly well. It is not outstanding, but very good. However, <sup>there are</sup> fields such as French Revolution or Colonial America I think ~~where~~ the collections are probably as good as you will find in most of what I would call "mid-lane American" universities.

H: What sort of place is this to work in? *How do you feel about the atmosphere here?*

D: I find the history department to be a<sup>n</sup> interesting, pleasant place. At least in my mind, what is very remarkable is that here we have 19 people, many of them consider themselves superior people, and still there is collegiality. No major cliques have developed and that in itself is most unusual. There is a very interesting feeling here that ~~the~~ people, I guess, know that they are expected to do some kind of scholarship. However, there is no strong push ~~for it~~ or pressure applied to any individual. The department chairman doesn't come up to you and say, "well, look in the last five years you have only written five articles, why not ten?" If you don't write anything nobody is going to come up to you and say why don't you. Although, I am quite sure that those who do not write feel that there is a pressure, an unwritten pressure, or an unspoken pressure, to do so.

---

HOVEY

And this basically comes out at promotion time. The department I think has very wisely taken the position that to be promoted over <sup>the assistant</sup> ~~this~~ level, and we don't have anybody below that, you should show some kind of indication of scholarship. This has <sup>caused</sup> ~~caused~~ unhappiness among some, but I don't think the ~~kind~~ of unhappiness that is going to destroy ~~the~~ the university or the department. It is the kind of unhappiness that <sup>might</sup> prompt <sup>e</sup> somebody to at least make some effort.

H: Should there be more pressure on people? Should the chairman be coming around saying ~~.....~~

D: Well, I ~~want~~ almost wish he did, <sup>because</sup> Especially, I am quite sure that I am not the only one who works well whenever there is some kind of even gentle pressure. ~~And~~ I also know that there ~~is~~ are some individuals who absolutely need to be pushed in this direction or otherwise they won't do it. But it is basically a very healthy atmosphere here. There is no excessive academic snobbery, at the same time, I think, there is a genuine desire to make or to keep this department one of the better ones at the university.

H: And you feel that it is one of the better ones?

D: I definitely think so.

H: Has the department then been pretty much the same all the time that you have been here?

D: The department grew immensely since I have been here, but in the last five years has been static. At the time that I came here the old timers were Dave Behen and Scardon.

HOVEY

H: Well, you thought it was a pretty good department before when you were a student?

D: Yes, I always thought that it was a darn good department before. Then with the addition of a whole slew of young members, especially in the period immediately following the joining of the state system, it has greatly improved the department. I think it is basically unfortunate that so many people here have been unable to move.

H: Out you mean?

D: Yes. Because that also has other advantages. Not only do you get new blood, but lets presume that Fred Blue goes to UCLA. And UCLA is looking for a medievalist. <sup>Fred Blue</sup> he can say, "I know a guy who is not bad."

H: The basic \_\_\_\_\_ really isn't?

D: ~~And~~ this is especially the case now when jobs are hard to find. <sup>Alot</sup> of schools go through the process of advertising because...

H: Legal requirements ?

D: Yes, legal requirements. But in most instances whether people admit it or not, that is a dry run. They already have their man, they already practically have their man under contract when they run these damn things through the paper.

H: You don't write into the New York Times, the Sunday section ads?

D: Hardly.

H: Do you think those are fake?

D: Most academic positions I think are.



HOVEY

H: \_\_\_\_\_ .

D: No, actually the place where most historians get their jobs <sup>is</sup> not through the New York Times or any of these things.

There is a bulletin published by the HA.

H: Are those fake too?

D: Of course they are.

H: You were chairman of the department here and this was when President Pugsley was here. Do you have any general observations, I guess, I wouldn't limit it to the chairmanship period, but things outside of your work as a historian. Pure and simple in terms of administrative experiences here and other extra curricular univeristy activies?

D: Let me put it this way. And this might not be the answer that you want to hear but that is the truth. I became absolutely convinced that most of the work that is called administrative work is the type of work that can be efficiently done by a good secretary. The chairmanship is one of the most overblown jobs. And I think it is even more overblown now than it has ever been. Especially since collective bargaining. As I said, you might not think that this is the right answer that you want to here, but this is basically how I feel about it. Many of the tasks assigned to the chairman are absolutely idiotic tasks that should be assigned to a clerk. Filling out various reports, <sup>taking</sup> inventories, and so forth. Now again, I must say that in the back of my mind is still always this basically European and to some degree better American university view of what a chairman's role is. A chairman is first among equals, but one



HOVEY

~~WHO GIVES~~ intellectual leadership to a department, gives it  
 a certain \_\_\_\_\_ . He becomes chairman, not because  
 he is the most efficient paper shuffler, but because in that  
 department, in his field, in the profession he is probably the  
 best man, the most recognized individual. Obviously, today  
 except for a few exceptions, this is not what chairmen do. Chairmen  
 come into the chairman's position basically to administer, the  
 department allots him this travel money, and as I said, take S  
 inventory and so forth. ~~I~~ <sup>to be</sup> found my brief period as acting  
 chairman <sup>rather</sup> disappointing from this point of view. It  
 would have been far more disappointing if I would have gone into  
 the position expecting all kinds of fantastic things, saying  
 that here I am reaching the high point of my career. I knew  
 that this would be, first of all, a one year appointment and  
 I looked upon it as basically a caretakers job. Maybe this is  
 why I didn't find it <sup>so</sup> interesting as possible. I do think,  
 though that even under the present circumstances, a chairman  
 can exert a <sup>very</sup> positive influence on the department, both by his  
 own scholarship, <sup>but</sup> his manner of dealing with <sup>colleague</sup> colleagues and others,  
 and also by the way that he socializes. I think that socializing  
 has an extremely important role in <sup>the</sup> academic world. I don't mean  
 standing around with a bottle of champagne in your hand and being  
 drunk. I mean having department meetings for example where you  
 meet and somebody maybe reads a paper. But this is all done in  
 a fairly civilized atmosphere with a bottle of wine and what have  
 you. ~~If the chariman is able to encourage, if he has the style~~

HOVEY

to be able to pull <sup>this</sup> this off, I think<sup>v</sup> would enhance the of the department. Now, both Dave Behen and Hugh Earnhart were absolutely against any kind of social contact with their colleagues.

~~XXX~~ H: Really?

D: Yes, and I found this to be rather<sup>v</sup> unfortunate short-coming of both men. Especially in the case of Hugh. I don't know whether...

H: But through the social thing, you feel that there really is a chance for intellectual leadership?

D: Even under these circumstances, yes.

H: When you were running the graduate program, did you feel that you exerted some intellectual leadership, that you have influenced your<sup>a</sup> colleagues at all?

D: I don't think<sup>v</sup> I was a very good graduate director.

H: You don't think you were?

D: ~~no,~~ <sup>no, don't</sup> I ~~don't~~. I began the whole thing with considerable enthusiasm<sup>s</sup> and I thought that here ~~was~~ was a great chance for Youngstown to have a graduate program. I was thoroughly disillusioned by the way the whole graduate program at this place was conceived, how it is to this day carried on, the type of individuals<sup>ap</sup> who are pointed to associate, and even full graduate faculty status, this is by no means an intellectual meet.

END OF THE FOURTH TAPE

## BEGINNING OF FIFTH AND FINAL TAPE

PART IV  
the fifth

HOVEY: This is an interview with Professor Leslie Domonkos for Youngstown State University Historians Project by Donald Hovey at Dr. Domonkos' office ~~at~~ approximately 3:00 p.m. on June 5, 1975.

H: Last time we had started to discuss some of your activities outside of the realm of purely history teaching of scholarship. We talked <sup>about</sup> the chairman and your work in setting up the graduate program. As a matter of ~~fact~~ fact you were discussing your disillusionment I think of some aspects of the graduate program and I wondered if we could persue that and also perhaps if you could tell about some of your other activities that you have engaged in. I know you are active in the OEA and the other things that you have been doing in the community.

D: Okay. How should we proceed<sup>ed</sup>? Do you want to start me off by some direct question?

H: Why don't we continue with your feelings about the graduate program? Or have you pretty much gone over that?

D: I think I have pretty much wound up. I am very firmly of the opinion that the graduate program here really got off on the wrong start.

H: Throughout the university?

D: I think so. No, in fact one of the things that I maintain is that the History Department is one of the few

HOVEY

departments <sup>that</sup> who has very <sup>consciously</sup> conscientiously tried to make the graduate program what a graduate program is intended to do. We have very carefully selected those individuals who we recommend for senior and associate status. We do not allow nongraduate faculty to teach courses in which graduate students are enrolled. In other words, based on our understanding of what a graduate program should be, <sup>and</sup> in many of us can remember our graduate years <sup>so</sup> not having been so terribly long ago, I am quite sure <sup>we</sup> ~~we~~ tried or hoped that the same kind of standards that we were subjected to, would be established here. One of the real shocks, actually the first time that I realized that this graduate program is ~~not really a~~, is never really going to amount to too much, is when I saw that a young man that I had met the year previously when he was <sup>being</sup> ~~being~~ hired here, his first job out of school, named to full membership, senior membership on a graduate faculty. I can not imagine how a young man on who <sup>sufficient</sup> ~~diploma~~ the ink has hardly dried, has already <sup>positioned</sup> academic background to be made a senior member of the graduate faculty. I also can see how this sort of thing can cause others to look at our institution with some SAUNDICE, eye or even poke fun at it. Can you imagine writing back to your former professor saying, I have just completed my first year of teaching at Youngstown State University and I have been made a senior member of the graduate faculty. I mean it is ludicrous. ~~And~~ <sup>an</sup> in an effort <sup>an</sup> to have instant faculty, instant graduate school, these sort of things I think occurred very often. The lack of a strong leader at the helm of the graduate



HOVEY

school I think is one of the major reasons why this has occurred.

H: What activities have you been involved in in the community?  
Are you active in the church?

D: No. I have not been a very active member of my church. For a brief few years I was the first vice-president of the Hungarian Council of Churches and societies in Youngstown. In fact, I held that post when I resigned to go off to Hungary. I was never again asked to serve. I don't know whether it is because I was foolish enough to accept the hospitality of the \_\_\_\_\_ or for other reasons. But I may also say that I am delighted that I have never been asked again because I do not see much future for Hungarian societies in Youngstown. Much of the activities there are very petty and of very little importance what so ever. Furthermore, I have been far more deeply involved in my own personal research and more involved in school. So there are just so many hours that you can devote to these kind of things.

H: Do these societies play any role in attempting to perpetuate the Hungarian culture and knowledge of the life \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: Yes, they have indirectly, they recently established a Hungarian school in which one of our colleagues teaches, Steve \_\_\_\_\_ and his wife. And from that point of view I guess they are finally, after many years of inactivity, trying to do something that is worth while. I send my kids to the school.

H: Is this a full-time school?

D: Oh no, this is every Saturday night and Friday night

HOVEY

FOR <sup>a few</sup> ~~two~~ hours.

H: Is this basically language training?

D: Yes, it is basically language training. It is designed primarily for second and third generation Hungarians whose abilities are either nil or very limited. So it really comes to the point where my children are one of the most advanced in there because at least they can speak, not very well, but at least speak it.

H: You never taught at that school yourself? Do you speak Hungarian at home?

D: Yes, we are strictly bilingual at home, which means that we go from one language to another with tremendous ease and completely without any realization that we are sometimes changing in mid-sentence, or fix Hungarian endings to English words or vice versa. So then it becomes an interesting potpourri. ~~And~~ whatever my wife and I do not want to have the children understand what we are saying, then we speak German to each other. That frustrates the children immensely and encourages them hopefully to take up German. Then we will have to seek refuge in something else.

H: How about involvement in political activities? Any school boards or anything?

D: None. No, none what so ever. I must confess that I am not a political animal. To me local politics holds very little interest. I keep up as much as possible with world events. I read Time. I read the daily newspaper, usually the Sunday New York Times. I even listen to short-wave radio on

HOVEY

2  
0  
Occasion ~~x~~ just to get another \_\_\_\_\_ ; Either BBC or the \_\_\_\_\_ or something. But exactly which party dominates politics locally or even on a state level leaves me very cold.

H: The fact that your office room mate is a member of the local council <sup>town</sup> <sup>and active politically</sup> doesn't have any kind of positive effect on you at all?

D: No, not at all. In fact, possibly it has the opposite results when I see ~~him~~ <sup>that</sup> it takes so much of his time away from things which I feel I couldn't afford.

H: But you were active in the <sup>negotiations</sup> negotiations for the contract for \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: Yes, now ~~that is~~ I got into that whole business in a sort of a strange way. Almost like ~~my~~ Pontious Pilate got into the Creed after washing his hands and saying he doesn't want to have anything to do with the business he still got in there. I guess several years ago, no, the second year of the contract I had a number of occasions expressed to my colleagues in the department and even in conversation the dissatisfaction with the contract as being basically insufficient in its monetary provisions. I have always been a very firm believer in faculty rights. So although I am basically apolitical, I am at the same time very strongly pro-labor. This pro-labor view I guess stems from two things in my earlier youth. My father's association with the United States Steel Workers when he became a laborer in the United States. And the realization that it is ~~a~~ basically because of labor contracts that we were able to live in this country on an economic level equal to a middle class standard

HOVEY

of living in Europe.

H: That is true.

D: That is true. An American laborer has the material goods of a middle class European, ~~And~~ this is due basically to the fact that labor unions have been able to get a fair share of profits and what have you. The other reason for my basically pro-labor views has been my own involvement as<sup>a</sup> retail clerks union member in the labor movement back when I was working as a produce~~store~~ clerk. ~~And~~ I saw how vulnerable some of my friends were who worked in non union stores. ~~And~~ if the store manager didn't like<sup>the way</sup> they looked or said anything contrary to what was considered accepted policy, ~~you~~<sup>they</sup> were out the next day. Obviously, with the ~~pro~~tection of the union, the management ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> much more understanding of the deviation of the norm. So I guess it was a combinations of these two things. ~~Furthermore~~, you see my very deep involvement in the history of the ~~Universities~~ in graduate school and since gives me sort of ~~an~~ extra advantage over many of my colleagues<sup>a</sup>. I know that the university, how the university started. ~~And~~ there was basically unions of professors who unionized in order to prevent exploitation by the chancellor or by<sup>the</sup> bishop or by the students. So to me, the argument that joining a union is not professional, is basically an opinion based on<sup>complete</sup> ignorance of<sup>the</sup> origin of the profession of which we are. The university was formed as a corporation of masters or professors to protect their rights. ~~And~~ the whole idea of election of officers, ~~the~~ university from president on down, I consider this to be perfectly legitimate concern of the faculty. The



HOVEY

ELECTION OF DEANS, THE election of presidents, I find perfect historical parallels to this and ~~of our society~~ <sup>other societies</sup>. ~~So the agrument...~~

H: Is this a continuous tradition?

D: Well, it is in some countries. For example, in Vienna, the Dean is still elected by faculty. Furthermore, there is a rotating system where the university chancelor is one of the four deans ~~weach~~ each year on a ~~protating~~ rotating basis. In other words, the faculty of philosophy, which is arts and sciences, the faculty of medicine, theology and law, the four deans alternate and the university senate and the deans and the head men run the university. And it hasn't fallen apart.

H: Did your expertise <sup>in</sup> in the history of ~~the university~~ <sup>universities</sup> actually play any part in the discussions in the negotiations themselves?

D: Well, only in a ~~periphent~~ <sup>peripheral</sup> sense. For example, in the discussions with the other side, the whole idea of the department chairman being co-equal but first among equals of the faculty, a view obviously not shared by members of the group or some members, I was able to expound on this in considerable length, Furthermore, even on such trivial matters as referring to the universtiy to \_\_\_\_\_ administration as the previous contract referred to. I raised the issue that the university is not the administration. The university is the faculty and the students. The administration is a rather late and basically unfortunate development that come between the two.

~~H: What do you do for entertainment?~~

HOVEY

D: What do I do for entertainment?

H: Is that sort of an artificial question?

D: I love music, primarily the classical and Baroque period. I have a very good collection of records. If I want to relax and unwind, that is what I do. I paint on occasion.

H: What sort of paintings do you do?

D: I paint in oil, not originals, just copies. I make nice reproductions of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and Rembrandt's Man and the Iron Mask and stuff like that.

H: And you do this just for relaxation?

D: Yes, strictly for relaxation. In fact, when I was all wound up in the negotiation process, I then proceeded to start on a painting which I will probably finish in about two weeks. It is a fairly large canvas, 48" by 36". It is a <sup>inches inches</sup> Venetian scene based on a painting by \_\_\_\_\_ of the <sup>eighteenth</sup> 18th century.

H: Does this tie in with your architectural...

D: Yes, I think so. Especially in this particular case, the central building in this particular Venetian scene is the famous church of \_\_\_\_\_. It is <sup>also</sup> one of my favorite architectural things. I have spent a great deal of time studying how the damn thing is put together. And by painting it, I think I know it well enough to be able to really understand how the architect was put together.

H: Do you play any musical instruments?

D: Unfortunately not. This is one of my great disappointments in life. Having been brought up under the rather spartan conditions prevailing in Europe in the the 1940's and the early

HOVEY

1950's... .

H: There were no grand pianos?

D: No, there were no grand pianos in refuge<sup>e</sup> camps. I ~~mean~~ this in all seriousness, it has given me <sup>a</sup> great deal of anguish that I cannot do anything. I can whistle Beethoven's Violin Concerto or Mozart's piano concerto for hours and it gives me tremendous joy. And there is nothing that I can do with my hands/ I have really regretted this.

H: I may have asked you this the other day but what sort of books have you read in the last couple of months?

D: What sort of books have I read in the last couple of months? <sup>?</sup> actually, outside of my immediate field, I have not. That is I have ~~not~~ read a novel, in fact <sup>in</sup> probably about a year.

H: Most of the reading that you do is in...

D: Is in my field, that is either connected with my research on the Hungarian ~~Renaissance~~ <sup>Renaissance</sup> or these are books related to my teaching of medieval and ~~Renaissance~~ <sup>Renaissance</sup> history.

H: So you don't look at ~~reading~~ as ~~more~~ a form of general escape?

D: Oh well you see, again, it is very difficult for me to say when I read something because I am seeking information or seeking to expand myself or when I sit down and go through my book shelf and pick up some work and I read two or three chapters and I put it down because I don't know whether I am expanding my mind and doing ~~great~~ work or am I having a great time? Because as I pointed out to you before, ~~the two~~...

H: This is why you are in this business.

HOVEY

D: I am in the business, It is ~~my~~ hobby, and I am ~~not~~ getting paid for it.

H: I realize that to use the word ~~is~~ entertainment might suggest you need some sort of artificial enjoyment.

D: Yes, you don't really necess~~ar~~ily have to have...

H: ~~You~~ don't have that need, you really enjoy what you are doing?

D: Exactly. This doesn't mean that I don't enjoy going off to the Playhouse to see a play or go off to the Youngstown Symphony to hear a concert or take my kids to Stambaugh Auditorium to go see \_\_\_\_\_ . All this I consider entertainment and I consider it part of the general cultural life that I <sup>would</sup> like to be able to lead even in Youngstown. It is sort of a natural thing to do, it is not artificial in the sense that so much money is set aside ~~each~~ <sup>each</sup> month for "entertainment"; Now we got fifteen dollars left, let's go and entertain ourselves.

H: Like we are going to go to the Playhouse and enjoy it whether we like it or not?

D: Exactly, it doesn't work that way. In fact, we don't belong to the Playhouse and we don't belong to the Symphony for the simple reason that we do not like everything that they produce and we don't like everything that ~~they~~ <sup>they</sup> play. ~~And~~ <sup>if</sup> it is a \_\_\_\_\_ symphony that they are playing and Rovel and \_\_\_\_\_, obviously we are not going to go. Even if they get the most fantastic guest artist to ~~come~~ in, we just won't go.

~~H: You wouldn't go if there was some kind of music that didn't appeal to you?~~



D: Exactly. I can stay home, and although I know that a lot of people would be appalled at this, but I would much rather put on the Mozart piano concerto. And although it is a ~~kind of~~ <sup>kind of</sup> artificial situation where I do not see the orchestra and do not see \_\_\_\_\_ go through the various \_\_\_\_\_, I will enjoy that far more than ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> even Arthur Rubenstien was at the Powers Auditorium giving the most fantastic rendition of a Samuel \_\_\_\_\_ piece. I didn't care for that.

H: I am going to ask you some questions that to some degree you might ~~not want~~ <sup>know how</sup> to answer.

D: Okay.

H: ~~And~~ one of them is whether you see any connection between your nonhistorical activities such as the OEA and being the department chairman, this sort of thing, and your work as a historian. You really have answered that in one direction, that the OEA negotiating thing that you brought a lot into from history. Does that participation in what you would call union activities, does that have any impact on your work as a historian?

D: Very little, Don. I don't think it has in any way changed either my world outlook or my techniques of teaching or anything. <sup>like that.</sup>

H: That happens to be the next ~~question~~ question. ~~And that is~~ <sup>=</sup> about whether you have \_\_\_\_\_ shown that you have a particular point of view as a historian?

D: Well, that is probably the most difficult question you have asked me in all the interviews. It is very difficult to answer for the simple reason that I don't particularly care ~~for~~ labels of \_\_\_\_\_

conservative, liberal, or anything like that. But then when making statements about \_\_\_\_\_, I guess you cannot avoid them. ?

Let me try to put it somehow in this fashion. I consider myself basically a sort of a secular humanist with a considerable liberal socialist notions who views the world basically in optimistic terms. Even after all the things that I personally have been through, I really feel that the demise of the world is not upon us. That mankind has muddled through the same problems before. I ~~must~~ <sup>am not</sup> say that this means...

H: You mean that this is not the first time that things have looked this bad?

D: No, this is not the first time things have looked this bad. It doesn't mean, however, that I believe that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the west will continue. ~~In that sense I might be \_\_\_\_\_ of the~~ <sup>I definitely think that the balance might be tipping in the direction of the non...</sup> ~~non...~~ and when I mean western, I mean western European and the United States. A new type of world might develop in which the power might be, the power centers will probably be some where else. Although obviously, my whole life experience, my whole <sup>field of</sup> research has been western history, I am not a <sup>chauvinist</sup> ~~chauvinist~~ to the point where I ~~am~~ must say that this is the only type of history that is valuable and the western achievement is the ultimate achievement in mankind. I am quite sure that other people <sup>with</sup> ~~with~~ views equally <sup>stamp</sup> ~~stamp~~ and valid and that the demise of this western stamp that we have been able to put on the world for so long might be to some degree beneficial. I don't know if that answers anything.

D: Yes, it does. There is one ~~other~~ thing along the same <sup>line</sup> ~~one~~ that I am curious about and that is <sup>were there</sup> ~~when~~ any major historical works or great accomplishments in history that seem to provide a model for the kinds of questions in history that you think are useful to ask, and the kinds of answers that are appropriate to come <sup>up with?</sup>

D: Well, actually in my field three important works are very much in the forefront. ~~And~~ they are the work of ~~Edward~~ Edward Gibbon ~~as~~ to the transition <sup>from =</sup> ~~from~~ the antique into the medieval world, ~~Naturally~~ all of the critics of Gibbon, ~~And~~ then the next major work that again is sort of a major historiographical step is the work of \_\_\_\_\_, the great Belgian historian about the development of western European culture as a separate entity from the previous and the creation of the Germanic West. ~~And then~~ the third major book is \_\_\_\_\_ Study of the Renaissance and all of the questions that it brings to the floor and all of the answers that <sup>have</sup> ~~have~~ been given in response to the \_\_\_\_\_. So there are actually three books which, at least in the field that I deal with, are basic cornerstones <sup>from</sup> ~~on~~ which you can then attack various other problems. ?

H: How do they shape your attack?

D: Now, in the case of all of these books, they have a basic thesis. Therefore, in order to understand the development of early medieval history, you have to understand what Gibbon said, and you have to understand what his thesis has caused in the writing of history, ~~What~~ kind of counter-thesis were offered as partial or whole explanations of what we have said. So each

one of these books then ~~develops~~ develops a complete historiography around it which then opens the way for new ways of looking at things. So these are sort of eye-opener points along the way. Sort of <sup>like</sup> guidelines.

H: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

D: Exactly, exactly.

H: ~~And~~ you feel quite consciously working on a historical problem, that the problem is ~~is~~ somewhat defined by and that you really can't define the problem without getting back to these people?

D: Well, when I deal with basically these three segments of <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ history, these I consider biblical.

H: Now looking at Obeda and the universities <sup>of Hungary</sup> do these still shape your thinking there?

D: Well, \_\_\_\_\_ and his opponents ~~or~~ his critics, particularly \_\_\_\_\_ and others, obviously have influenced my <sup>whole</sup> view of what the Renaissance can be or should be. The idea of what civic humanism is. All this is absolutely essential for my understanding of to what degree the Italian Renaissance was able to infiltrate Hungary and to what degree \_\_\_\_\_ Hungarian relations are really valid cultural relations, or whether they are just simply based on political expediency for ~~at~~ that <sup>particular</sup> time.

H: Have you ever deliberately decided not to work on a particular historical problem?

D: No.

H: I ~~think~~ think that you answered this one before but what constitutes a problem in history for you? What makes something a problem requiring investigation? It is a crazy question!



D: It is not a crazy question, it is a damn good question. It is the kind of thing that where in the hell do you hold on to it? I guess after you teach for a long time, where you have done research in a field for a ~~long~~ time, you will detect a certain axiom that <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ repeated over and over again. ~~And~~ I guess if you are going to specialize in that field then you must begin ~~to~~, begin raveling backwards to try to see where does this ~~maxi~~om begin?

H: You mean an axiom in the sense of an event repeating itself *or a conclusion*

D: No. Let's take an example. Almost all history books will say that after the end of the War of the Roses, England having exhausted itself elects a new dynasty to Tudors and Henry VII becomes the kind of England. Henry VII allies himself with the middle classes. ~~EM~~ Now this is repeated, repeated, repeated. So if this is the *field B* specialization that you are in, then I think that it is absolutely necessary to find out what is this axiom based upon. <sup>J</sup> That the end of the War of the ~~Roses~~ and the rise of the reliance on the middle classes under the early tudors is an absolute fact. <sup>?</sup> So you begin examining where the main sources of revenue for the king are and you might find that it is not in the tradition middle classes that he finds his support, but he will find it among the upper class merchants and so forth. So this then holds true basically for all things. Now obviously, ~~the~~ we constantly repeat axioms established by others through the years. Now when I began my work in the period of the Hungarian Renaissance, there was this axiom repeated over and over again that Hungary had a fairly long Italian connection.

A lot of students went to Italian universities and so forth. It was a <sup>e</sup> fertile ground for the <sup>re</sup> inception of the Italian ideals. This then is almost elevated to the position of ~~being~~ gospel truth. ~~And~~ after working in this period, and I guess even after having written my MA thesis, I was somewhat seduced by this history, After wanting almost to believe it yourself.

H: The natural attraction of these ideas is that *people went out and found them interesting and brought them back?*

D: Exactly.

H: ~~Through the~~ *Purely* cultural interests.

D: Now, if you begin to really analyze this very problem, you will find that this whole axiom is a very tenuous kind of thing. So in the case of the Renaissance in Hungary, closer examination shows that a lot of people have gone off to the Italian universities and have come back *and received* with important ecclesiastical positions and so forth, but this ~~is~~ still then means that only at \_\_\_\_\_ centers of the royal court and so forth do we find an interest in our humanistic scholarship. Lacking in the whole Hungarian picture is the kind of environment that you find in a more highly urbanized society. ~~And~~ let's face it, the Renaissance is, there is no Florence, there is not even a Nuremburg or an Outsburg. So in an *where* environment ~~where~~ it counts we are in fact on the decline in the second half of the fifteenth century. Again, if you examine this whole business closer and read all of the printed material, you will find that all of a sudden the axiom doesn't work anymore.

H: This is what ~~is~~ really got you turned on to begin with, is something that everybody keeps saying these things and you get suspicious?

D: Exactly. This is the same thing with, as I have already expressed about \_\_\_\_\_ going off fighting in the west against Emperor Fredrick III and against the Bohemians because he wants to go out and defeat the Turks. Well, this ~~then~~<sup>thing</sup> becomes an accepted Hungarian historical view some time in the 1880's, I have been able to trace it that far back, <sup>has</sup> And ~~I have~~ been repeated by practically every author ever since.

H: Are you just naturally suspicious or is there something that just doesn't ring true about these things?

D: I guess I am not naturally suspicious. I don't think it is part of my nature. But I think as a historian you have to be suspicious of things that have almost been sanctified.

H: Don't you accept these things as quite believable?

D: I am quite sure that a lot of things are quite believable. And if I took any one of these history books and went down sentence by sentence, basically all of these are axioms. And if you really began pounding away you would probably find that the structure would crumble in about <sup>twenty percent</sup> ~~20%~~ of it and about <sup>eighty percent</sup> ~~80%~~ of it would probably stand up. I just happened to pound away at two axioms that crumbled.

H: Have you ever felt fearful of your historical work, with the ridicule or censure of your conclusions?

D: No. I have been fearful that somebody else might publish something like this <sup>before</sup> ~~before~~ I do. I found ~~that~~ a chap that was working on something similar at Rutgers, but from everything that I have been able to gather <sup>he is not going</sup> ~~I only went~~ at it with the kind of seriousness, <sup>which I think should be devoted to it,</sup>

H: Have you ever felt that what you were doing as a historian has required courage?

D: No, because you see, again, my field is not the kind of field. — Look, if I prove, for example, that maybe — — was not such a tremendous hero after all, this will not create a major psychological damage in the minds of a lot of people. ~~XXXXXX~~ ?

H: You feel that people will still speak to you?

D: I have absolute confidence that they will for the simple reason that I have no illusions that my work, even if it will be published by hopefully a good university press and so forth, And, again, even though it might be very well received by the scholar community, it will not have any major impact on "popular thinking" or things like that. I came forth with a thesis such as FDR was a homosexual, it would take a certain degree of courage to stand up and say this because <sup>number one</sup> ~~#1~~, FDR to still a lot of Americans is sort of a great national symbol. Homosexuality, for all its reasons, is still not the most popular kind of a Aberration, and I don't know whether you call it an Aberration or not. ~~And~~ so it would take that kind of courage. But ~~maybe~~ by the very nature of my field of inquiry, there is not that much apple cart to upset.

H: How about in your teaching, does that require that you take dangerous positions that might be socially and politically unpopular?

D: Again, you know as well as I do that I don't teach anything that is controversial. But the most controversial thing that I even come close to is the Reformation. But in an age when probably <sup>forty percent</sup> 40% of the people ~~sitting~~ sitting in the audience don't give a



god damn about religion anyway, will I be shocking Protestants or Catholics or anything, I really don't think so.

H: You don't deliberately try to shock people by revealing scandals about the Vatican?

D: Oh, I do that a little bit.

H: Could you tell me something about your habits of work, Working as a historian either on research or in preparing material for teaching. Do you go with a schedule, do you keep material, what do you do?

D: I think that probably the best way to answer that is to take lectures and articles as an example, <sup>that</sup> ~~That~~ is, lectures for class or public lecture <sup>re</sup> ~~er~~ that will eventually become an article. The usual method that I employ is, after I am able to establish or if I am told that you are supposed to <sup>give</sup> a lecture on this and that, Then I proceed to read on the subject all that I can, often without taking notes. Then, after I have read ~~and again~~ on the subject, this might be reading every night or every second night for about a week or two, ~~Then~~ I quit for four or five days, And then I think about it.

H: Deliberately?

D: Oh yes, very deliberately. I think about it while driving the car, I think about it before going to sleep, I almost live the damn thing. <sup>ha</sup> In fact, this has actually ~~happened~~. There have been instances where I was involved in writing an article or lecture <sup>re</sup> ~~er~~ where I dreamt about the individuals I worked on. For example, for a while back about six years ago, I wrote an article on a Polish astronomer by the name of \_\_\_\_\_ . I will give

you a copy of the article. I actually dreamt that I met the guy. ~~And~~ I asked him questions about things that I wasn't too sure about based on my readings.

H: Really?

D: I get very vivid dreams. I dream in technicolor.

H: Did he answer you?

D: I don't remember, that is ~~just~~<sup>just</sup> the problem. The next morning I woke up and I remember the whole sequence of events and there were no...

H: Could you remember the questions that you asked?

D: ~~Oh~~ yes, I wanted to find out if he took all of his astronomical instruments back to \_\_\_\_\_ with him after he left Hungary in 1492? And "I never found out, I am still wondering. ~~So as I say, ..~~ ?

H: And this was in complete costume of the period?

D: Oh yes.

H: It was authentic to the last detail?

D: Authentic, as least as much as I can remember, or as one imagines things to be authentic. So after this very intensive thinking, I am pretty well able to determine where I am going, what method will I employ in this. Then usually in the documents, in the articles, ~~and~~ that I have consulted and the books that I have read, usually I insert all kinds of papers indicating which passages are of value. What the Germans call \_\_\_\_\_ . ?  
I make notes in the margins, underline things and what have you.

H: All these books are your own?

~~D:~~ Oh yes, obviously. I would never do anything like this ~~to things~~

that belong to the university or some other colleague. <sup>a</sup> ~~And~~ then I have a rather weird way of operating. Again, I usually ~~then~~ re-read these sections, very pertinent sections of information. Then the actual birth of the paper is an extremely messy affair. I ~~usually~~ usually go off to the dining room and spread my papers around and my books and zerox copies of articles and what have you. I then get these long sheets of legal size paper and I sit down and begin to write with all this material lying around, On the floor, on the window sill, on the table, and I have a fairly good memory for knowing this bit of information is extremely well illuminated in my book. I go to my book and I find the page and I analyze it and immediately write the foot note on the second page and bring the thing together. Then having put it on paper, once and remember <sup>that</sup> ~~the~~ English is not my native language, I do two things, I began reading the damn thing aloud to myself. . .

H: This is after you write it all the way through?

D: Oh yes. After having completed the thing then I begin <sup>READING</sup> ~~writing~~ the thing through for how the thing sounds and then I can make grammatical corrections and            and what ever. Then I do what I urge every good husband to do; I give it to my wife who is also my greatest critic. She then goes through, and her English is better than mine, her spelling is far superior to mine, and she then proceeds to read it. Then I usually ask one or two colleagues <sup>a</sup> in the department to read it for me . Colleagues <sup>a</sup> have been very helpful. <sup>slur in</sup> Jim Rhonda, Agnes Smith, and Morris have all at one time or another read things for me and critiqued it . ~~And~~ only after having heard their criticism,

often again linguistic as well as criticism on the content, then I incorporate these. Usually not always, not all criticism is valid. I incorporate these things <sup>or then</sup> ~~that~~ have the secretary type it. That is how I work. Now, obviously on a lecture for class, the part about having my wife read it and colleagues is pretty well left out.

H: Do you take notes on ~~4 x 6~~ <sup>4 x 6</sup> cards?

D: Oh yes, I take notes, not on ~~4~~ 4x6 cards. Again, if I am working on something, notes are usually on long sheets. Notes are basically ~~non~~ where I will find material on a particular subject.

H: Not \_\_\_\_\_ ?

D: Usually not.

H: What do you do in work in the archives and so forth?

D: Now, that is a completely different story. This applies to situations where I have my own books available. I have notes on archival material, on cards, on sheets of paper, or whatever I was able to pick up.

H: Are they ~~the~~ verbatim kind of material?

D: They are obviously direct Latin quotations and that nonsense, \_\_\_\_\_, and what have you.

H: But if you have the book in your possession or readily accessible.

D: <sup>Then</sup> I underline more than I...

H: Your notes will tell you what it is, and where it is in the book, and what it is about?



D: Exactly.

H: So when you actually do the work, you actually go ~~get~~ the book itself?

D: Yes, and not the note. Which also eliminates a major source of ~~creating~~ problems. Because the more you recopy and the more you notes you take and then incorporate and recopy again, the chances of something ~~going~~<sup>going</sup> wrong are increased.

H: What time of day, ~~or~~ week, or season of the year do you work most productively?

D: Actually, I think I do work well two times a day. Unfortunately, I don't do it very often. ~~And~~ this is roughly ~~between~~ 9:30 at night and 1:30 in the morning. ~~And~~ then if I am under pressure, and I really have to get some damn thing out, ~~if~~ I get up early in the morning around <sup>five</sup> ~~5~~ or <sup>six</sup> ~~6~~ o'clock, usually by the time the rest of the family ~~has~~ slipped out of bed and getting ready to have breakfast, I had already written three or four pages of some material. But usually, I try to avoid this. I am a night person. I can go on reading and just messing around the house until ~~two~~ or three o'clock in the morning. But then getting up in the morning for me is a tribulation of horrors.

H: What seems to inhibit you working productively?

D: Two things, my innate laziness and to ~~some~~ degree family responsibilities.

H: It is hard to \_\_\_\_\_ this dining room scene when the place \_\_\_\_\_ .

D: Exactly. She knows that there is a conference coming up and that the dining room is going to look like hell for about \_\_\_\_\_

three days. She can put up with that. But if I drag the stuff out over and over again and proceeded to inconvenience everybody in this fashion, I don't think that would go over terribly big.

H: Are you familiar with various stories and sudden insights such as Newton and the apple, \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ experience? Could you tell me about any such experiences that you have had?

D: Unfortunately, never. I have always...

H: Have you ever run through the street naked looking for a typewriter?

D: No, unfortunately nothing like that ever happened. In the reflection period after I have read and I begin to see things, obviously there are things that begin to take shape, but there is never that great moment where some kind of tremendous revelation comes. And I don't think this ever will be.

H: Do you think that there ever was?

D: I am quite sure that in the minds of some original thinkers this is true. I am not a terribly original thinker.

H: You don't disbelieve those?

D: I don't disbelieve that it can happen. But then I am not a \_\_\_\_\_ or a Newton. I am not a Roto-Rooter man, but some where in between.

H: What do you see yourself doing ten years from now?

D: That I don't know and it frightens me. Not the uncertainty, that doesn't matter because after all your whole life is an uncertain process. I somehow or another would be very, I am not even sure that I would be terribly disappointed if I were still \_\_\_\_\_

~~be~~ running off three times a day to teach Western Civilization courses and that sort of thing. Some where along the line and I hope it will be soon, I would like to go to a new environment. Either again on a trip to Europe to sort of recharge my battery, to start on something new. This would obviously be after I have completed my book. Or I would like to go to a new job. In the sense that I don't want to become an electrician. I mean teach medieval history at another place. Some how or another, I <sup>just</sup> can not see being in Tod Hall in 1985 doing the same things over and over again.

H: You don't like the students?

D: No, it has nothing to do with the students or prestige. Look, I have been here <sup>eleven</sup> 11 years. Hopefully, maybe in a year or so, I will be promoted to — professor at the age of 38. I still have <sup>after</sup> that 27 years till retirement. I ~~just~~ cannot, you know, the prospect of doing what I have been doing for the last 10 years for another 27 years in basically the same way, I don't consider this very exciting. I have no illusions <sup>is</sup> that some day the ~~phone~~ <sup>phone</sup> will ring and Harvard will call and say that they just don't know <sup>how</sup> they have been able to get along without me for so long and that I immediately report there. I ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> like to go to a place of, if nothing else, to have a change of scenery, meet new people, new <sup>colleagues</sup> ~~colleagues~~. To grow by this new experience.

H: You don't feel *attached to your family?*

D: Look, I have a mother who lives here who will probably retire in about <sup>four five</sup> 4 or 5 years. If we would move to some other town, she could live ~~in~~ in her apartment there ~~was~~ as well as here. I have a

brother who probably at the first good opportunity to come will also leave, he is also in the academic field. My sister ~~lives~~ lives in New York and my wife's parents live in Cleveland. We see them six or seven times a years. ~~If~~ <sup>f</sup> I lived in South Bend I could see them that many ~~times~~ <sup>year.</sup> times. If I lived in Seattle, I would see them once or twice. ~~So~~ <sup>year.</sup> although I have actually grown up in this part of the United States since the ~~age~~ <sup>thirteen</sup> of 13, somehow or another I don't have this immense attachment to the place.

H: If ~~you~~ you were to move into another period of history, back to the period of 1938 ~~to~~ to the present and you wanted to write an encyclopedic history of that period, what would be some of the main themes?

D: Well, obviously I would bring to the history of that time a central European bias. Whether you call it a bias or an insight depended <sup>ed</sup> on how you look at the thing. ~~Again~~ <sup>year.</sup>, I think we have a tendency as Americans to look at things from a perspective of a large nation. We can say very easily that Austria should have behave in such fashion in 1938 in order to avoid the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~. Again, this ~~is a view~~ <sup>viewed</sup> from across the Atlantic, ~~3,000~~ <sup>three thousand</sup> miles. Not really aware of the implications of the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ is toward Austria, not really knowing how strongly ~~the~~ <sup>ly</sup> anti or pro Nazi the Austrians ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> and so forth. So if I wrote a history of this age, and let me assure you that I have no intention of doing so, I think I might be able to be a little more sympathetic to those smaller nations of Europe, Belgium, <sup>the</sup> the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, <sup>2</sup> Czechoslovakia, <sup>1</sup> ~~who~~ <sup>^</sup> surrounded by much more powerful neighbors ~~acted~~ <sup>acted</sup> in the specific way often for no more noble



than to save their skin or because there was no other alternative. I think if there would be any merit ~~in~~ anything that I wrote it would probably be in this field because I have a more sympathetic understanding of the practical realities of smaller nations ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the problems that they face because they are small. You and I can never understand how a midget feels. We see on campus here, one or two people who are ~~four feet~~ <sup>four feet by two feet</sup> or even smaller. We see them reach up for door knobs and what have you and say that that poor guy is unfortunate. But this is basically about as far as we go. We Americans look upon European policy and say well, the poor bastards, those Ukrainians, they really got it from both ends. But what it feels to be the son of a nation that is insignificant ~~is~~ is something that an American will never understand, just like you and I will never understand how it feels to reach up to that door knob. I don't know if I am making myself clear.

H: Would you have written that kind of history with that kind of understanding, had you written this history ten years ago?

D: Obviously not because even if I did nothing, read nothing, just sat around for ten years and went to class and ~~repeated~~ <sup>repeated</sup> my little speele, <sup>again</sup> that in itself would have matured me and I think each year adds a new dimension, <sup>to one's world view.</sup>

H: ~~This~~ <sup>This</sup> perspective is really not something that is terribly different from how you would have looked at things?

D: No, because ten years ago, I was a minority just like I

am today, or a <sup>de</sup>pendent of a minority in European politics. But again I think I would be less impetuous, probably more <sup>com</sup>passionate. Again my years experience in Hungary would probably come in here too again. The idea that the world is not populated by people who are either red and white and black and blue or what ever, but men are various shades. And I think as I pointed out, that the smaller the nation, the more shades you have to have <sup>i</sup>n order to survive.

H: How does this affect your treatment of the very powerful states and the very powerful leaders of these states?

D: I must say that I <sup>would</sup> have an extremely difficult time to be objective, and this is another reason why I am terribly glad that I am not in this field. I to this day have certain strong resentments toward various groups. Obviously towards Nazi Germany, <sup>for</sup> having produced this holocaust brought down upon mankind. I also have very strong dislikes or possibly even hatred, <sup>no</sup> I don't think I am quite capable of hating, I have a strong prejudice against the western allies who at Yalta and \_\_\_\_\_, redrew Europe again because they were members of large nations and did not take into account the lives of roughly seventy million people who might have wanted to shape their life differently. To encourage the Soviet Union to establish democracy in Eastern Europe, as FDR encouraged Stalin to do, this I think is the height of <sup>hypocrisy</sup> hipocracy.

H: *It was quite cynical*



D: Oh, I guess that you can make educated guesses and I <sup>think that</sup> defy you to find a historian, <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ most objective one, ~~that~~ who if you sit down with him as we are sitting here will not say "Well <sup>really</sup> ultimately China and the Soviet Union will get at each others throat." I am not saying that this is what I predict. But I am quite sure <sup>China</sup> an expert like Fairbanks would probably have some ideas.

H: Is this the same feeling that you feel \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_? Does this enter into your treatment of the fifteenth ~~century~~ century in Hungary?

D: What is that Don? The idea of a small nation being pushed around by ~~xxxxxxx~~ large ones or what?

H: That is partly it, also the question of whether you do ~~need~~ need strong leaders in a country?

D: No, you see the whole situation changes drastically when I get back to my period for the simple reason that this is ~~the~~ <sup>probably the</sup> only time that Hungary was a world power or approaching it, in Central Europe. The holy Roman Empire was in the \_\_\_\_\_, Poland was like always, usually divided internally, Bohemia was run by \_\_\_\_\_ between the \_\_\_\_\_ and the Catholics. Italy had its own problems. Hungary in the second half of the <sup>fifteenth</sup> ~~15th~~ century was the most powerful state in Central Europe. So the same ~~kind~~ kind of concerns that I had expressed for the period between 19<sup>38</sup> and today were, you have to look at things from perspective of small <sup>a</sup> ~~power~~ <sup>power</sup> did not apply to this particular case to the period that I am working on there because this is exactly the one time ~~in~~ <sup>probably</sup> all of its thousand year history that



Hungary was not among ~~small~~ powers.

H: Things got pretty bad immediately there after.

D: Yes, after 1536, yes. Now I have been toying with the idea of eventually moving into the <sup>sixteenth</sup> 16th century. They are actually the parallels between my own experiences, the ~~conditions~~ <sup>conditions</sup> in Eastern Europe today are quite striking. With the invasion of the Turks the 150 occupation of portions of Eastern Europe by the Turks, the constant attempts at "wars of liberation". The almost colonial exploitation is ~~defined~~ by the Turks who believe their country is \_\_\_\_\_ and carry off not only money but children \_\_\_\_\_ troops and what have you. And the obvious commercial and economic exploitation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union today. This would be an interesting <sup>parallel</sup> parallel and I don't know if I ~~could~~ prevent myself from going over board and seeing too many parallels between the two ages. So I might be safer if I went back to the <sup>fourteenth</sup> 14th century.

H: \_\_\_\_\_ too popular back in Hungary?

D: I think you see again, everything can be written up in such a fashion that it is \_\_\_\_\_, that is another art. Hungarians are very good at it.

H: Well, let me ask you one last question and then I will leave you alone. Looking back over our five conversations over a two week period ~~do~~ do you see any kind of themes or any patterns in the way you worked and lived as a historian that strike you?

D: As unusual or any pattern as such?

H: No, if you were to describe yourself and your life as a historian, are there any themes that ~~sub~~ <sup>e</sup>merge to you?

D: Don, I am sorry, I don't see any theme.

H: Any theme at all?

D: No, not really.

H: No, patterns at all?

D: I think my experiences in the field of history are not dissimilar to the experiences that any of my other colleagues would probably have. They might be slightly colored by my again my youth and the area in which I do my work, but generally I am not sure that I see any pattern. Why do you?

H: I am not sure, I had the feeling that I have only talked to three of you and it is very difficult to...

D: Establish a pattern out of three examples.

H: Oh some things struck me being remarkable similar. One thing is early childhood and relevant poverty in all three cases.

D: You have talked to Sid and Lowell.

H: And a surprising continuation in the role and the concern for money and making academic choices through at least the first employment <sup>next</sup> at Youngstown.

---

In other ways there are very dramatic kinds of differences.

D: Will you make other entries or do you think that the sampling of three is sufficient?

H: Well, it is exhausted.

D: It is also exhausting for you to sit around for hours and listening to colleagues BS for such an extended period is bad news.

H: Well, it was very interesting ~~!!!!!!~~

---