Imre Nagy
A Turbulent Epoch

IMRE NAGY
FOUNDATION

The house where Imre Nagy, the martyred Prime Minister once lived is maintained by the foundation that bears his name. An exhibition operates within the monument building, which worthily presents the memory of the Prime Minister's life, work and the 1956 Revolution. The publication was released in honor of the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Revolution and Freedom Fight.

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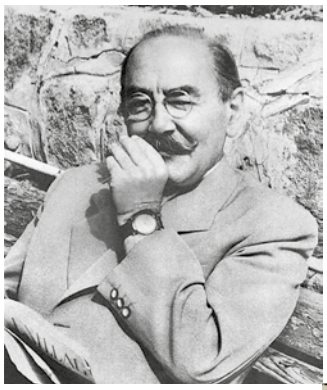

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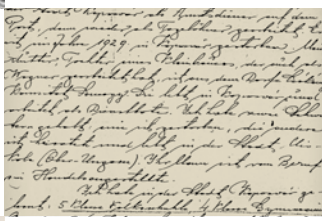

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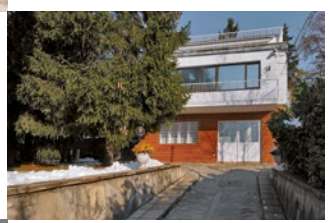

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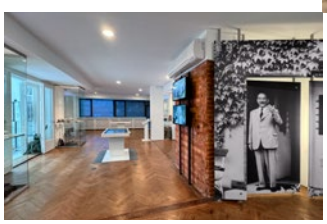

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The following biographical excerpt was written by Prime Minister Imre Nagy in 1957, during the last days of his imprisonment in Snagov, Romania. The manuscript was kept by the Romanian secret police, the Securitate, and was later handed over to the Hungarian Prosecutor General's Office, which attached it to the case materials of the trial against the Prime Minister. Its existence was shrouded in obscurity, and after the Hungarian regime change in 1989, it was handed over to his daughter, Erzsébet Nagy, and her family, along with the political essays of the statesman who had already been reburied and rehabilitated.

The Imre Nagy Foundation published the biographical passages that were interrupted at the moment of his arrest in a facsimile edition in 2002.

A turbulent epoch

1896–195…?
(Sketch of my life story)

I was born on June 7, 1896 in Kaposvár.
Social, political and cultural relations of millennial Hungary.

The landscape, people, social, economic, and cultural life of Somogy county.

Public conditions of Somogy county. Social, political, and cultural picture of Kaposvár. The past, people, landscape of the county and the city, a brief overview. In 1896, the Kaposvár state high school was inaugurated, where my mother took me as a newborn.

The landscape, people, economy, and customs of the Nagyatád district.

My father, József Nagy, was born in the village of Kónyi (now Ötvös-Kónyi) in the Nagyatád district of Somogy county in 1869. My grandparents were manor servants for a large landowner named Csernel. They were a Reformed family. My father, as his old schoolmates later told me, was a good-looking young man, a handsome man, loved by girls and had many lovers. Everyone loved Jóska. My father was a stableman at the Csernel "lordship". He had stepbrothers. My grandfather died early. My grandmother died with us in Kapos, in my arms, when I was a little schoolchild. She was a tall, gray-haired, pale-faced, barefoot old woman, dressed like a peasant. I loved her, but I was also ashamed of her in the town,

as a small schoolchild. My relatives lived in the villages of Nagyatád district and some still do today; mostly peasants. In Kónyi, the "kónyi Jóska", József Farkas, in Beleg, the Vargas, in Segesd, the Sámócis, in Somogyszob, etc. The Tóths were in Kéri-puszta, the Vargas were teachers in Kapos.

The landscape, people, economy, and customs of the Marcali district.

My mother, Rozália Szabó, was born in 1877 also in the county of Somogy, in the village of Csákány, in the Marcali district. My grandfather, József Szabó, was a small farmer with nearly 13 acres. My mother was an illegitimate child. My grandfather had 12 children, 6 and 6 by two women; 11 girls and one boy. In addition to farming, my grandfather was also a wheelwright. He had a workshop in the house. He worked alone with his son, my uncle Gyurkó, who was raised at home and helped my grandfather in agriculture and in the wheelwright's trade. At home in Csákány, there were two step-siblings: Annus and Mari from one woman, and Gyuri and Ilonka from the other woman, my grandmother, whose daughter my mother was. The others scattered, got married, some became servants in the manor, some went to Pest to work as factory workers. (Vilma was in the Wekerle estate in Kispest, my aunt Mari was in Nagy-Gomba, near Marcali, she was the wife of a shoemaker Lukaics. They had two daughters: Margit and Annus. My aunt Anna married Sándor Nagy in Csákány, who opened a butcher shop there. Mari became the wife of a manor blacksmith. The relatives are in Csákány, Nemesvid, Boronka in the Marcali district.

Ilonka married in Kapos the carpenter Tarnai. They still live there today. Both my great-grandfather and my great-grandmother died in Csákány, they reached old age, both were over 70 years old. After my great-grandfather's death, the 13 acres of land were divided between the children. Everyone received 1 acre, including my mother. She sold it immediately.

My mother ended up in Kapos as a maid. My father was a stable master for Csernel, who lived in Kapos. He then became a hajdu soldier in the county militia. They met there. My mother was barely 17 when she got married, and barely 18 when I was born in Kaposvár, on Fő Street, in the house where the Schwarz grocery and general store was located. We lived in a one-room apartment overlooking the courtyard. Judi, blacksmith kept a workshop in the courtyard. An elderly couple who were scrapers lived in the courtyard: Uncle Ferenc and Aunt Örzse. Ferenc Szalai was the old scraper, with whom and his wife I have many sweet and pleasant childhood memories. My godparents were a certain Dakó family, a friend of my father, whom I never met later, at least I don't remember them. I always considered the Jewish shopkeeper's daughter, Ilonka, who was barely 15-16 at the time, to be my godmother, because she baptized me. She also considered me her godson, and she still called me so when I grew up and got married.

We were four siblings in our family—I was the oldest and the only boy. After me came Mariska, who married Gyula Hubay, a Hangya employee originally from Miskolc. They lived in Somogyvár, then Kaposvár, and later moved to Miskolc. They had two sons: one, Gyula, a forestry engineer, now the head of the Jánosháza Forestry Directorate, the other, László, a lieutenant in the Miskolc police department. My sister underwent a serious kidney operation when giving birth to her second child, which later took her life.

My other sister Terus lived an unhappy family life. She had a daughter born illegitimately, and then the father, Ferenc Schossberger, a tailor's assistant, married her, but they lived a very bad, miserable, unhappy life. My sister was often ill, and her heart could not bear it, and it took her to her grave while still young.

1. My younger sister Terus was born in Dombóvár, where my father worked as a telegraph worker for a few years. Among our acquaintances there, I remember the Vati and Szóládi butchers. We used to rush around at the pig slaughters, eat fresh knuckle and sausage stuffing. The Szóládi had two children, a boy, Jani, and a girl, if I remember correctly, Margit, whom the parents—mutually—chose as my future wife.

My third sister, Erzsike, was born in Pécs, on Kálvária Street (no. 69), but died of some contagious childhood disease when she was a few months old. I remember how I nursed her, and also her funeral.

My earliest childhood memories are of the old road scraper and his wife, Uncle Ferenc and Aunt Örzse. They were childless and perhaps that is why they loved me as if I were their own sweet child. I actually lived with them, I spent the day there, and if they went somewhere they would take me with them. In his free time, old Uncle Ferenc played with me. I learned to speak from him. He was a thin man with a mustache and a stubbled face, a man with a pipe. My favorite toys were the pipe, the pipe smoke, and the tobacco pouch. Uncle Ferenc was a Calvinist, religious, and he never missed church service on Sunday mornings. He was dressed in a festive style, the neck, chest, and cuffs of his shirt were starched. I remember his shirts with a small horseshoe pattern (dark grey horseshoes on a white background). Later, this was my favorite shirt too—with horseshoes. On Sunday mornings, when I was barely a few years old, he would take me to church. In the afternoon, the old man would go to the Bukógáti pub for a glass of wine, where I would eat "salty cake." Once, he even made me drink wine, which made me feel sick. There was a big fight at home about it, and Uncle Ferenc was scolded. It never happened again.

Aunt Örzse baked delicious cakes and scones, the cupboard was always full. I already knew where it was, I just went in, opened the cupboard, sat down and ate. She used to make delicious toasts—with lard and garlic—in the winter. There were blackberry trees in the yard, I ate blackberries all day. I spent a lot of time around the blacksmith's workshop. I liked the fire, the whistle, the hammering of hot iron, the clanging of the anvil, the clatter of horses' hoofs.

When I was in school, Uncle Ferenc, who worked on Main Street, where I went to school, was always waiting for me with something. His bag was hanging on one of the gutter rails and either an apple or a scone came out of it. I ate it deliciously. It tasted better than the one I brought from home.

Later, I became separated from Uncle Ferenc and Aunt Örzse over time. But I always visited them with great love when the opportunity arose, and we welcomed them when they visited us. The two old persons greatest wish was that they would be able to see me grow up and get married. It was not given to the poor things, they died sooner. First Uncle Ferenc, and soon after, Aunt Örzse. I was there at Uncle Ferenc's funeral. Aunt Örzse handed over the old man's legacy: an old psalm book that he carried with him when he went to church with me on Sunday mornings.

2. We must also remember Aunt Kati, the old gypsy woman; they lived on the edge of the Nádasdi forest, they were trough-carving gypsies. They brought wooden spoons and troughs to the weekly fairs for the market. We had to go there before us. She did not fail to look in every time she went there. She was given a little bread, pasta, meat, food. She was a gypsy woman with a pipe. She loved me very much, she played with me. I got used to it too, I was already waiting, watching for her to come. Aunt Kati visited us for many years. I had already grown up, and even then she only called me Imre and called me by my nickname. When I was a soldier during the First World War and went to the front, she was always interested in me. My mother wrote to the front and to the prisoner-of-war camp about Aunt Kati, who made me cry over and over. The man had long, waist-length gypsy hair, and the hair on his forehead was braided.

I spent my childhood among poor people of our kind. We lived in Kapos on the outer part of Main Street, in the house of Uncle Wéber, the "leather mustache" Uncle Wéber. A poor widow, Aunt Schmidt, lived there with her son Jancsi, who was much older than me, but I was friends with him. Aunt Vica lived in the house, who was a scoundrel and sold fruit from baskets in front of the house on the street. The children of the street had

two amusing figures: one was Ödön, the half-witted, foolish young man. He wore a tailcoat and a top hat, and he did many tricks. He was the terror of the women, because if he could, he would unfold the ventilated cushions and pillows and let the feathers fly. They chased him for it. Ödön tossed and turned a lot, he would pull himself up in brick kilns. He died there too. He fell asleep, and without anyone noticing, they closed the furnace where he burned. The other was Marci, a cripple who sold newspapers and delivered the Kis Ujság to subscribers. In winter and summer, he went barefoot in baggy blue canvas pants.

I had to go to the first class of the elementary school far away in the town centre, next to the Catholic church, in the building that later became the upper elementary school, where Aunt Fikli taught. Later, I went to the school on Anna Street, closer to home. We fought a lot at school too. In the yard of the school on Anna Street, during a fight, they threw a stone at my head. We were organized into teams according to the streets. I was in the main street team. Our biggest enemy was the Pécs street team, which had to go home on the main street. The fights took place almost every day towards Cigli. In the summer, we went to the Kapos River to swim. There was fighting between the teams here too. I remember once we were swimming in the middle of the day when the Pécs street team came and threw our clothes on the bank into the Kapos. Of course, it ended in a fight, we fell to them naked and wet. I beat one of them, who bit my naked stomach in self-defense, but it bled and the mark was still visible decades later. In the winter, we skated under the meadows, on the frozen Malom-arc. How many times did we break in and sneak home soaked to warm up and dry off? At Easter, they made us red eggs, very beautiful coloured and patterned eggs. They said they put them in a purse. At Easter, we threw sixes (20 fillérs) into oranges and eggs. We put the orange on the ground and had to hit it while standing so that the six landed in the orange. Whoever didn't hit it lost the six. Whoever hit it got the orange. You had to hold the red egg in your hand, hold it with the wider part upwards, and leave a space as big as a silver forint. You had to hit it there with the money. We always got new clothes for Christmas and Easter. Once on Easter Sunday, my two sisters and our friends went to the meadow next to the mill to watch the bunnies when they were laying eggs. We were in brand new clothes and yellow shoes. It was a fine, slushy, dewy morning, and by the time we had walked around the meadow, the new clothes and shoes were like rags. We got a good scoulding for it. For us children, whipping and St. Lucy's Day were good opportunities to earn money, when we went to greet people. We recited poems that contained good wishes, very thickly told jokes, which we, as children, but also the adults, women and girls, took kindly to. (Let her tits be as big as the milk jug, etc.) The person who was not greeted was offended. On such occasions, we earned 60-80 kreutzers, sometimes 1-2 forints. The money box grew.

Later we went to live in the Markó house next to the Cigli school, also on Fő street. It was a big house with many residents, all with one-room apartments. A big yard, a big garden, which opened onto the fields that were still undeveloped at that time. This garden and the fields, the fruit trees, the cornfield, the wheat fields, the barns, the stacks—this was our farm. We played here with the Valenta children, from the family of a poor tailor's assistant, the Gazda children—Jenő, Jóska, Mariska—, whose father was a boilermaker for MÁV, with Jóska Riba, and the Markó children. We built a hut out of corn stalks, and hunted birds, kites with a slingshot (rubber gun) and a 6-gauge pistol.

With Jóska Salamon, with Feri Csinóth(?), with Sanyi and Jóska Vukman (children of a railway painter. Their father painted pictures masterly. One of his sons became a painter, with a hungarionized name.)

I went to the elementary school on Baross Street from here, we had to go past the nursery garden, which used to be a cemetery. There were still cow herds on the road, and we were afraid to get mixed up with them on the way to or from school. It was during these times that the neighboring village, Szentjakab, was almost completely burned down. I remember it, I was there, it was a terrible sight, the many burnt animals, cows, horses and the gangrenous ruins, the many weeping women and men.

I also remember the burning of the Mir mill. There were often big fires at that time. Opposite us was the house and farm buildings of a large farmer named Riba. There were buildings covered with straw. They also burned down. At that time, cars were still a novelty. We always ran out when they came with a loud bang on the highroad. Once, such a car crashed into the railing of the bridge in front of the Mir mill at high speed and was crushed to pieces, the people inside died horribly.

It was a common pastime of ours to go to the front of the soldiers returning from the Nádasdi forest from exercises and target shooting and escort them to the barracks. The later famous 44th Infantry Regiment, the "rossebb" (bloody) regiment, had a battalion in the Baross barracks. They usually came with music and a military band, and out of mischief we would run and jump in front of the marching band and lick lemons, which disturbed the brass band, because at the sight of the lemon their mouths would salivate and the trumpet would fill up in a flash, making a crackling sound. At such times the officers would disturb us with one or two soldiers. We also lurked around the barracks a lot, especially when there was a distribution of cibak (zwieback) and prófunt (brown bread). They carried the cibak in a tent sheet, and perhaps it was no coincidence that quite a few of the pieces fell off that we picked up.

My father, who was a telegraph worker at the time, was transferred to Pécs. We first lived on Kálvária Street. Vince Klement, the son of the bell ringer of the Kálvária chapel, was a good friend of mine. I always spent the time there with him. The Kálvária garden was our playground. We did a lot of childhood pranks and mischief. Sometimes we would play here instead of school. I learned to ring the bell, to stop between verses, to finish, to ring the soul bell, etc. From the coffin of Christ, which was covered with a thick lattice, we could take small money with a stick with a cut end. But we also found a way to take money from the boxes. The Kálvária garden, where the stations were, was surrounded by a stone wall. There were beautiful Duránci peaches next door. We often stole them too.

From Kálvária Street, we went to live at Petrezselyem Street 17, in the house of the shoemaker Heiman. I went to school in the city center, on the corner next to the Public Gardener. My teacher was named Germán, a bearded, tall, friendly, handsome and good man. Our house where we lived was separated by a low stone wall from the castle garden, the castle church and the garden of the bishop's residence, which we walked through. I fell in love with Pécs very much. The city and its surroundings, the Mecsek, left very deep traces in me. The specific southern climate, vegetation, historical past of the city and its surroundings, which goes back to the Roman era, the historical monuments from the Ottoman era, in the city itself, the Tettye and its spring, the Havi chapel on the rocks(?), Hatház Street, Lake Balikányi, left vivid memories in me to this day. Outside of Budapest, I consider Pécs (and Sopron) to be the most beautiful Hungarian city. Later, I always visited this city with pleasure and fondness. I visited Pécs countless times when I was a student, later during my military service in the years of the First World War, and then after the liberation. We lived there in 1904-1905.

Acquaintances from Pécs: Irén Heiman, Aranka Méhes (daughter of the postman living in the house), postman József Ispánki and his family (the old man currently lives in Kaposvár).

Moving back to Kaposvár, we lived for a short time in Baross Street, a veritable rat's nest. There were so many rats in the whole area that it was impossible to defend against them. They even attacked the little children, took away the food, we could sleep with the lights on at night, but even so they came into the room. The Lutos lived next door to us. Their son, Miklós, became a locksmith's assistant, and later I worked alongside him as a footman.

From there we went back to Fő Street, to live next to Cigli. After the fifth grade, I started attending high school here. I was an average student. The principal was Ottó Dsida, for maybe two years. Then Pongrácz became the principal. There were parallel classes, I attended B.

My class teacher was László Hudra, a young unmarried teacher who was a Latin-Hungarian major. I thought he was a good teacher. He also visited the children at their homes. I remember him, he was at ours too. I was just climbing the walnut tree when he came. Of course, the lesson wasn't ready yet, I hadn't finished the Latin preparation yet, I didn't know the words. I got punished for it, but it's okay, it's over. Hudra took Latin and Hungarian classes in the high school yard from early spring to late autumn, when the weather was good. We sat in a circle and he explained and asked questions there, which we really liked, he was much more relaxed than in the classroom. Hudra's educational work left deep marks on us, at least on me. His ardent patriotism, hatred of the Habsburgs, respect for Kossuth, a devoted fighter for the idea of Hungarian national independence and freedom, Hudra instilled these great and noble ideas in us through the teaching of the Hungarian language and literature. His democratic thinking and socialist ideals manifested themselves in his later career. In 1919, during the proletarian revolution, he exposed himself, stood up for the idea of socialism, for which he was sentenced to prison after the fall. After serving a few years of his prison sentence, he made a living as an English teacher and gave lessons, and later we helped him to do administrative work at the Workers' Consumption Cooperative. He died in Kaposvár in the spring of 1945. Many bitter and pleasant student experiences are linked to the Kaposvár State High School and its teaching staff of my time there.

After Hudra got married, he lived in a family house with a large garden on Tallián Gyula Street. When we took the papers to her apartment to be corrected, we usually stayed and helped him work in the garden, digging, hoeing, watering—in return for a good snack.

To our great joy, as head teacher, he ordered that we must attend dance school. We enrolled, and as soon as we started, Hudra cut all of us bald so that we would not charm the girls but learn manners. We were very upset about this, the beautiful hairstyle was gone. We generally liked our teachers, of course, there was hardly one among them whom we did not tease for some reason, due to their personal qualities, or tease with an innocent joke. We mostly made fun of their manners and habits. Vas, Botár, Kocsis, Kengyel, Kurgócs, Dörre, Bernát, etc. are still alive today as vivid memories. We had the most trouble with our German teacher, Majunké. Also because of the language, which was unpleasant to us due to our upbringing. But we did not like Majunké himself either. He was a loud, rude man. He wore a sideburns and wore a large hat and a round collar. He had a big pocket knife that he played with during class. He was an anti-Semite, he hated our Jewish classmates, and he showed it and expressed it, even though there was no trace of anti-Semitism in our circle, we were the best of friends with our Jewish classmates, the religious question never even came up, except when they were away on their religious holidays, we envied them. We considered them lucky because they could celebrate their own Jewish holidays, as well

as Christian holidays. There were relatively many Jewish children among us, because the children of the local and county wealthy Jewish merchants and intellectuals all went to high school. Then there were even more children of the urban petty bourgeoisie and civil servants, these were the majority of the students. There were few of working-class origin, the fewest were peasants, and those were from the wealthier social class.

For us, the Reformed, Márton Csertán, the Reformed pastor of Kaposvár, was our religion teacher. He had been a pastor in Kaposvár for quite some time, as he baptized me. He was a man with democratic feelings and an enlightened mind, which was evident in his religious education as well as in his pastoral activities. He intended me to be a Reformed priest because of my appearance, speaking skills, manners and good voice. Later in life, even after leaving school, I enjoyed talking and arguing with him about social and political issues. When I went to the pastor's house, he often spoke to me. He knew my communist views and still held me in high regard. He was a bit resentful when I got married and married a Roman Catholic girl, not a Calvinist, and signed a reversalis, which meant that I would renounce the idea that my sons would follow their father's religion, that is, become a Reformed.

The high school had a very developed sports life. It was not allowed to be a member of a sports club. But within the framework of the school, wide opportunities opened up. A spacious, modernly furnished, well-equipped gymnasium was available. There was also gym equipment in the yard. It was so spacious that it was possible to play ball, or long-meta, which was a favourite game at the time, to run around, play the bouncer game, and even play football very well.

Football fever had already seized us. And the school opportunities were not enough for this. As soon as we were freed from school duties, we would go out to the Honvéd field and kick the ball until dark. This went on for years. Many good football players emerged from among us for various local and Budapest sports clubs. I was also a pretty good player, I played right cover, and I also played against Bp. Vasas in the Kaposvár Brotherhood team. In winter, instead of gymnastics twice a week, we went down to the KAC skating rink to skate, which everyone had to learn. In the spring and summer, and then in the autumn months of the next school year, we made frequent excursions to nature, to the surrounding forests, but also to more distant countryside, near Lake Balaton, to Szigetvár, etc. (to Somogyvár).

We couldn't go to the theater, primarily because there was no permanent theater in Kaposvár, the seat of Somogy County at that time. There was a summer theater built of planks in the Promenade (the promenade garden was called so). We would go to the back entrance of the theater to at least see the actors coming out to take a breather during the act or after their appearance, because we didn't have enough money for tickets. However, this theater also burned down once. From autumn to spring, it was a hay barn.

There was no permanent cinema in Kaposvár when I was a student. Silent films were occasionally shown under a tarpaulin in the wheat square. Since there was no electricity, a steam threshing machine powered the cinema. We would sneak in here under the tarpaulin if we didn't have money for the entrance fee.

As small schoolchildren, we were not allowed to go anywhere else except for school celebrations. Our biggest holiday was March 15. We prepared for it very well and always celebrated it with a wide range of festivities. We proudly marched to the celebration in a festive manner, with national-colored cockades on our chests and Kossuth badges. There was a serious self-education circle life in the high school. The most active was the literary circle, which greatly contributed to the deepening of our studies. The two most important subjects in the high school were Latin and Hungarian language and literature. I don't know whether the teaching method was correct or not, but I do know that what I learned I still know well today and not just by rote, but with meaning. I can still recite and translate Aesop's fables, which we learned in first grade in Latin, or the Four Ages of the World from the speeches of the great Cicero. However, the Hungarian language and literature gave me the most. A large part of this was due to my teacher László Hudra, but also to the material I learned. He gave me a thorough, broad knowledge of Hungarian language and literature, as well as Hungarian history. I feel that I received the best foundations in this area during my high school years.

In addition to the anxiety, fear and mischief of the high school years, the janitors caused quite a bit of joy and annoyance. But I still remember them fondly today, old Uncle Körtés, to whom we caused quite a lot of annoyance. The beginning of the school year, "Veni sancte…", was always a great, serious experience every year. We started studying with anxious feelings, but with the joy of seeing each other again, of starting a new life and of moving forward!! The serious test of exams, and then freedom, the vacatio—this was the height of happiness.

I spent most of the summer vacation with my grandfather in Csákány. I lazed around for a while, resting the fatigue of learning, but not for long, because my grandfather made me to work, to earn my living. I knew how to mow hay, rake, turn, bring in shoots, hay, and alfalfa. Hoeing was not a man's job, that was the job of girls and my aunts. I went to work with Gyurka. I loved peasant life. My grandfather's house was an old-fashioned peasant house, with a thatched roof, an open stove, or a rather smoky kitchen, and a front and back room. We could only go into the front room on holidays, on the day of the feast (August 15). At other times we were in the back room, but mostly just for sleep. Mostly we were outside in the courtyard. Not all of us could sleep in the room, some of us slept in the stable or the barn. I preferred the fragrant hay in the barn instead of the steamy warmth of the stable, which the cattle provided. (4.)

4. My grandfather was a good-looking man, and although he only graduated from a village elementary school, he was an enlightened man. He was a man of quite few words. Sometimes he would tell me stories about the Bosnian campaign, in which he had participated as a soldier. He was quite a homebody and a bit stingy. He liked to dress up, he had good clothes and shoes, he was a party man, his attire was more that of a craftsman than a peasant. However, the food was quite meager. We could eat and drink enough of what was around the house, especially milk. We ate a little meat, only on Sundays, and then not always. We ate a lot of pottages, beans, lentils and pasta. A lot of bread was consumed. My grandmother baked 6-8 rye loaves at one time in the oven at home. She put them on a board under the bed in the earthen room so that they would not dry out.

During the summer, many experiences and events took place around me. One early morning, my brother Gyurkó and I went out to the meadow in a cart. A young foal of one of our horses was running next to the cart. I played with it from the cart. As soon as we got off, we turned the horses out to graze. The foal continued to neigh, and it seemed to be in the mood to play. It was lying on its back in the dewy alfalfa and I started patting its rump in a friendly way with my hand. Suddenly it jumped up, and I suddenly stood up too, and it kicked me in the stomach so that I immediately curled up like a worm, I couldn't even speak, I blacked out completely. As soon as I came to my senses a little, my uncle put me in the cart and drove me home with him, so that there wouldn't be any more trouble. I felt better in the cart. I was angry with the foal, and as it was running towards its mother, I hit it as hard as I could, with the handle end of the whip. When we got home, of course there was a great commotion about what had happened to me. We told the story. I was immediately taken into care. Meanwhile, my grandfather came, but he also saw the marks on the foal's back caused by the whip handle, and although he was sorry for the kick, he was about to beat me because of the foal.

The other incident that remains in my memory was less tragic. In the evenings, we would sit on the threshold of the courtyard and wait for the herd to return from the pasture. The herdsman, the shepherd, would drive the animals home with great noise. The pigs, cows, and horses already knew their own houses, and upon arriving there, they would enter through the gate and not even stop until they reached the stable, stirring up a terrible cloud of dust after them, which covered the entire village for a good hour. Several times, as soon as the horses turned from the road into the courtyard, I would throw myself onto one of them without a saddle, and they would take me to the stable, where I jumped off. Once, however, I don't know why, perhaps it was frightened by something, jumped under me in the courtyard, and unexpectedly rushed straight for the stable door. I didn't have enough time to jump off it.

The stable door was so low that the horse had to bow its head when it went in. It so happened that the horse galloped through the stable door, but I stayed outside, the horse ran out from under me, and I fell to the ground. Apart from a little fright, no serious harm happened.

There were still quite a few buffaloes in that area. I didn't like them, although they had very delicious milk. They were very gloomy animals, I was afraid of them. And I heard that when they get wild, they are very unbridled and bloodthirsty. I also knew that they were very lazy, and if they saw a puddle they would roll in it, and you couldn't even get them out with a pitchfork. And the buffalo bull can be especially dangerous.

The kermis (saint's-day party) in Csákány is on August 15, the day of Our Lady of the Assumption. For this holiday, relatives who had left the village always return home to Csákány. This was the custom in the village, and we also observed it. My two sisters and I had been there all summer, and we were waiting for our mother from Kapos for the farewell party the next day. She came by train via Somogyszob, where we had to change, on the Balatonszentgyörgy line to Marcali. And there a car went to pick her up, because there was still 12 kilometers to go to Csákány. The three of us children went to meet her on the road leading to Vése, which takes us past the large pasture, all the way to the Cifra mill. We waited and waited, but the car did not come. We started back.

Then we noticed that the buffalo bull was rampaging across the pasture, and the herd was trying to chase it away. We had already heard about how dangerous it was, so we started running, towards the road that leads between two rows of acacia trees, surrounded by two banks, towards the village. We climbed up the bank in despair and dragged ourselves to the side of the trees. We had barely reached the top when the bull came galloping down the road towards the village with wild fury. We did not dare to move for a long time, wondering if the buffalo bull would come back. We returned home to the village with friends, and there we heard that it had trampled the herd to death.

The entire male population of the village rose up with pitchforks, clubs, and chains to restrain the raging bull. It took about half an hour before they were able to tie it up and herd it into the bull pen in the center of the village, where a special guard was posted next to it until it calmed down.

Not a single kermis went by without a bloody fight, and not infrequently there were deaths. The gendarmes were called out, but they also avoided the pub, preferring to go to the other end of the village. By the time they were brought to the scene of the fight, most of the participants in the fight had dispersed. More than once, however, they also attacked the gendarmes, and were than chased away. And if the brawlers were scattered around the pub or somewhere else at the kermis, they continued to fight in the gardens. I have seen countless fights. How did they start, what was the point of it?