

Marika and András

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Figure 1: András and Marika, late 1945

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The letters published in this volume bear witness to a love story in the time of deep political upheaval. The couple, Marika and András, meet in late 1945 and separate in June 1949. They are my parents. The letters document life after their separation, from June 1949 till September 1951. Behind their love story various forces influence their fate: Both their fathers were important players in the economic history of Hungary immediately after World War II. Their roles and actions defined the social perimeters in which this love story evolved. However, nobody as an individual is completely free in his actions. Larger scale political events, national and international, interfere, often in unexpected ways. This preface tries to put the letters into their social and historical context.

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Marika and András met in late 1945 in the office of Dr. István (Pista) Ráth, manager of Servitas, a newly founded pharmaceutical company. Marika was the daughter of Sándor Deutsch, one of the main shareholder of Servitas, and CEO of HUNGARIA, Chemie und Hüttenwerke¹. András was a friend of Pista, but also one of the first lieutenants of AVH², originally recruited to hunt down collaborators of the fascist regime. According to his own testimony provided by the Historical Archive, András left the AVH in December 1945³ to join the diplomatic service in the Ministry of Foreign Trade. András was the son of Markovits, Jenő, the communist member of the *Committee of Five* overseeing the economical reconstruction of Hungary after the defeat in January 1945. At that time both Jenő and Sándor were committed to the economic reconstruction of Hungary, believing in its possibility, provided rational men as they were, would be allowed to be at the helm, even if placed on opposite liberal ends of the political spectrum.

Marika was 22 and András was 21. Marika and András immediately fell in love, embarking on love story with many ups and downs, which never really ended, but was brutally disrupted in 1949. The letters published here were written in the period from July 1949 till September 1951 by András. They cover the time from Marika's emigration till her marriage to Gabriel (Gaby) Makowsky. Marika responded regularly, but her letters are lost.

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I have several sources of the life of Marika and András, their parents, and other people involved. I was already curious as a child inquiring about the past of the family. I interrogated family members repeatedly and I continued to do so as long as I could talk to them. I also have a large collection of letters and documents, besides the letters published here. Among these there are a CV of my father, written for the French police in 1961 when he first applied to become a naturalized French citizen, a CV of Sándor, written for the Swiss police, when applying for residency rights in 1951. I have searched various archives⁴, the internet, and books relevant to my family history. Finally I applied for

¹ HUNGARIA was a multinational company employing in 1944 7000 workers and 300 employees, with factories and mines in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and offices in Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels. The Belgian chemical company, SOLVAY, was an important shareholder of HUNGARIA.

² The State Protection Authority (Hungarian: Államvédelmi Hatóság or ÁVH) was the secret police force of Hungary from 1945 until 1956. It was conceived of as an external appendage of the Soviet Union's secret police forces, but attained an indigenous reputation for brutality during a series of purges beginning in 1948, intensifying in 1949 and ending in 1953. (cited from wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Protection_Authority)

³ According to the police files from 1953 this lasted till 1947, according to his own testimony in the police files from 1953 this lasted till December 1945.

⁴ In 2001-2003 I employed a history student, István Sziklay, to help me search various archives in Hungary. His work was most helpful.

documents concerning my family at the Historical Archive of Hungary, and I have received, so far, the complete records concerning my father's imprisonment in February 1953. Here I try to be brief, concentrating on what is needed to put the letters from András to Marika into context.

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Marika was born in Budapest in 1923 into an emancipated Jewish family. They lived in a splendid villa at Lenday utca 16, near the Millenium square. Her father was at the time one of the most successful industrialists emerging after WWI. He also held twice the position of a Privy Counceler (Geheimrat, Kommerzrat), once 1922-1927 and then again 1940-1942⁵, serving in the Hungarian commission for the fixation of the statistical values of commercial data⁶. Marika and her brother, Dénes, born 1921, grew up in a privileged household, surrounded by domestics, nannies and gouvernantes, with their parents more busy with their professional obligations, than spending time with their children. Parental love was distant, but the parental bond was strong. Dénes was sent to a protestant boys Gymnasium, the best in town, and Marika similarly to a Catholic girl's school. At both schools about a third of the children were Jewish and both schools provided also for Jewish education. For the Deutsch children life was predicatble and uneventful. They were spoiled and the neighbors called them, with a mixture of envy and spite, the royal kids. After his matriculation, in



Figure 2: The mansion of Pajta Puszta

1939, Dénes was sent to Switzerland to study chemistry at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH). He finished his PhD in 1945 and emigrated to the USA, never to return to Hungary. Chemistry was not his choice, but his father's wish. Marika passed her matriculation in 1941 and was sent to the University to study animal husbandry. Of course this was not her choice either, but an economic necessity. Her father's big estate of 1000 hold, a model farm

⁵ Geheimrat was the title of the highest advising officials at the Imperial, royal or principal courts of the Holy Roman Empire, who jointly formed the Geheimer Rat reporting to the ruler. The English-language equivalent is Privy Councillor. In the Republic of Austria the title was officially abolished in 1919. In Hungary this title was in use till 1945.

⁶ Magyar Kereskedelmi Statisztikai Érté megállapító Bizottság. In French: Commission hongroise pour la fixation des valeurs de statistique commerciale.

experimenting with new agricultural technologies, could only be safeguarded against complete nationalization during the Horthy period, provided the owner was working the land by himself. So Marika became the proud owner of Pajta-Puszta covering the villages of Héhalom and Palotás not far from the city of Hatván. Marika was also engaged to Dr. Ferdinand (Ferry) Freund, a lawyer and gifted amateur tenor, coming from an equally privileged family. His father owned several private hospitals, and one of the four corner buildings at Kodaly square on Andrásy út. This liaison was welcome to both families, but was not arranged, and Ferry and Marika were truly in love.



Figure 3: Marika and Ferry, late 1943

They were to get married in April 1944.

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Marika's protected bourgeois life collapsed in March 23, 1944, after the German occupation of Hungary. Her father, Sándor, was arrested already a day before as one of the leading industrialists, and kept in custody at the Pension Miranda, on Swab Hegy (Swabian Hill), by the Gestapo⁷. Marika and her mother, and other relatives, were arrested and kept at Kistarcsa, site of the German Nazi camp for political prisoners during the German occupation. Ferry Freund was drafted for forced labour. The wedding did not take place.

From May 1944 till October 1944 Marika and her father were allowed to correspond (in German). Both sides of this correspondence are preserved. In August 1944 Marika and her mother were freed due to Sándor's privileges arising from his membership of the Hero's Chapter⁸ of people who risked their life in fighting against the Hungarian Soviet Republic under the leadership of Béla Kun.

Marika and her mother, Rozsi, went underground in August 1944. Marika managed to buy a false identity as Helén Pécs, a Christian Red Cross nurse. They also got themselves protective passports (Schutzpässe) both from the Swedish embassy via R. Wallenberg, and from the Swiss embassy via Consul C. Lutz.

⁷ March 1944–October 1944 Sándor was a special prisoner of the Gestapo, under direct control of Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei, Abteilung VI, Schwabenberg, Pension Miranda.

⁸ Országos Vitézi Szek

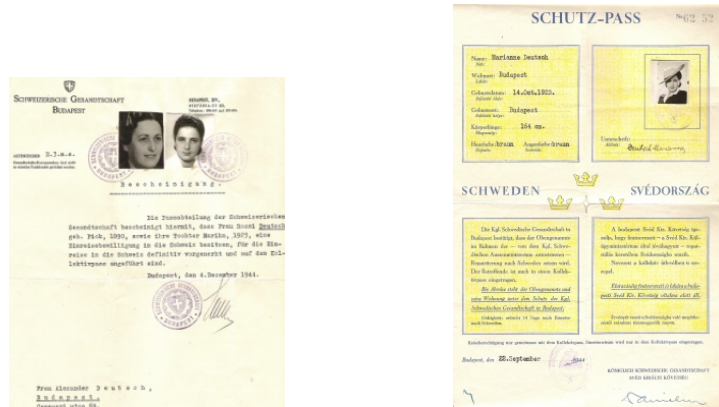


Figure 4: Marika's protective passports (Schutzpässe)

They survived the siege and battle of Budapest. Marika regained her original identity in February 1945, and was allowed by the Red Army to manage her farm Pajta Puszta. Their villa at Lendvay útca was completely destroyed in the last days of British bombardment of Budapest, after having been plundered before.

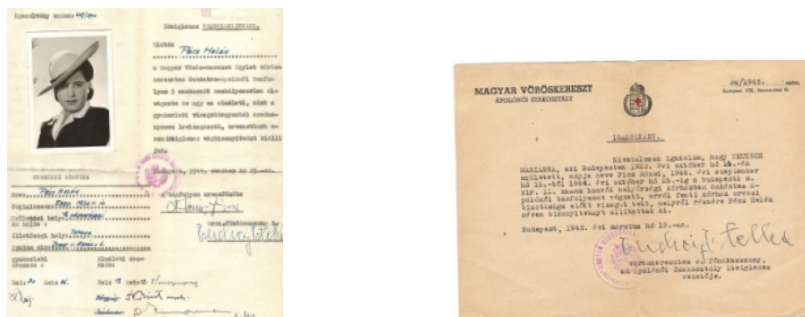


Figure 5: Marika's false identity paper and the permission to regain her original identity.

After Szálasi's coup in October 1944, Sándor was deported by the Gestapo, via Mauthausen to Berlin⁹. In June 1945 Sándor Deutsch returned safely to Budapest and resumed his position as the CEO of HUNGARIA. He immediately started to rebuild his former industrial enterprises, and had ideas beyond.

⁹ October 1944 - May 1945 Sándor was interned in Berlin in a "Intelligenzlager" together with about forty other Hungarian Jewish industrialists. They were treated reasonably well and worked on plans for the reconstruction of the German economy after the war. They were freed by the Red Army in early June 1945.

In February 1945 Ferry returned safely from his Arbeitsdienst. He refused to honour his engagement to Marika, because the whole situations had changed. He became one of the prosecutors in the provisorical government in charge of persecuting collaborators. At the end of 1945 he was accused of a romantic involvement with one of his suspects and favoritism. It is not clear whether this was true or slander, but in any case he decided to emigrate to Australia, as long as this was possible. Marika and Ferry never met again, but she stayed in contact via Lea Ziegler, née Freund, his sister. Lea stayed in Hungary and founded in the 1950ties with her husband, Tibor Ziegler, the wafer bakery which became Ziegler, Trade Ltd. Marika resumes her studies in fall 1945 at the Budapest Royal Hungarian University "Pázmány Péter".

6

András was born in 1924 in Nagyvárad (Oradea Mare) in Romania also into an emancipated Jewish family, originally from Szatmár. His father had joined the Communist Party in 1920 at the age of 21, when the Hungarian government introduced the Numerus Clausus to limit the number of Jews at Hungarian universities, and Nagyvárad was still Hungarian. Being excluded from university studies he became a bank clerk and later an independent textile merchant. He was commercially successful and throughout his life he donated part of his income to the Communist Party. Also András, a single child, grew up in a privileged and elegant household. András' nanny, Annika, remained friendly with him, as is also evidenced in the letters published here.



Figure 6: Nelly and Annika with baby Andr'as, 1924

In 1938 András was sent to Paris to study at the Lycée Louis le Grand.

At the beginning of WWII he was sent back to Nagyvárad. When Nagyvárad became again Hungarian in 1940, András had to leave his original secular Romanian school, and had to continue his studies in a Jewish Gymnasium. Two



Figure 7: András' school ID in France, 1938-39

weeks before the matriculation exam he was relegated from the school because he distributed antigovernment leaflets. Also in 1940, András' father, Jenő,



Figure 8: Jenő Markovits and Petronella (Nelly) Markovits-Braun, ca. 1940

moved his business to Budapest commuting between the two towns. In 1943 András and his mother, Nelly, also moved to Budapest. Jenő was part of the illegal communist movement since 1930. In October 1943 Jenő and András were arrested by the Horthy police (VKF/2). András was released after 10 days. In 1944 András was drafted to forced labour (Arbeitsdienst) in the army (10th division) in Nagybánya, from where he escaped in November 1944, while being in a field hospital due to leg injury. Until January 18, 1945 he was hiding in various places till the arrival of the Red Army in Pest. According to Nelly's testimony, András and Jenő were hidden in late 1944, on orders of the communist party, in a mental hospital where Nelly worked as a nurse.

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According to his own testimony András served under Gábor Péter¹⁰ in the ÁVO (ÁVH) as a first lieutenant in charge of hunting down fascist collaborators from January 1945 on. He joined the Communist Party in February 1945.



Figure 9: András ca. in 1945

András was extremely handsome and a known womanizer. He was impulsive and careless. During the summer of 1945 he had a stormy affair with Anna Kelly¹¹, a famous singer a few years older than him, who was accused of having been a collaborator during the war. It was András who extricated her from such accusations. In the same summer he also was involved in brawl with the head of

¹⁰ Gábor Péter (born as Benjámín Eisenberger in Üjfehértó, 14 May 1906, died in Budapest, 23 January 1993) was a Hungarian Communist politician, of Jewish origin. Between 1945 and 1952 he was the absolute leader of the State Protection Authority (Államvédelmi Hatóság ÁVH) which was responsible for much cruelty, brutality and many political purges.

During his early years he worked as a tailor. He took part in the labour movements from the last years of the 1920s. In 1931 he joined to the Hungarian Communist Party.

In January 1945 he was appointed as leader of the Budapest Police Main Command Political Department (PRO). Péter's career rose quickly then: he became leader of the Hungarian State Police State Protection Department (ÁVO) then the State Protection Authority (ÁVH). Under his leadership the organization committed serious illegitimacies and crimes against the humanity. Gábor Péter had big role in the organizing of the show trials.

In 1952 he was discharged from his position. Later he was arrested in Mátyás Rákosi's villa. According to historian Tibor Zinner, Gábor Péter was present on an official visit. Unexpectedly a handcuff clicked on his hand put back. After that Mihály Farkas stepped forward from behind the curtain and said: "the game is over". Gábor Péter's wife, Jolán Simon who served as Rákosi's secretary was also arrested.

He was accused of being a Zionist spy who cooperated with Laszlo Rajk, Rudolf Slansky and other "agents of international Zionism". In 1954 a court martial sentenced him to life imprisonment. In 1957 his term of imprisonment was significantly reduced and in 1959 he was released. After that he worked as a librarian.

¹¹ Anna Kelly, 1919-1965. Singer and performer. Studied singing privately, in 1940 and took up dance songs and operetta. 1941 with the Margaret Island Open Air Theatre, 1943 with the Budapest Operetta Theatre. About 60 recordings made with the record company Patria. She married in 1948 in Romania, where she appeared in the Bucharest Operetta Theatre under the name of Anna Vasilopol. See also http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly_Anna

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Dr. István Ráth plays a crucial role in our love story, but even more so on a larger scale. Ráth is a very colorful personality with a shady background. He emerged from the war in the beginning of 1945 in Budapest, coming from Transylvania as a rich financier. Rumors were abundant about the shady source of his wealth. In 1945 he managed to recruit the Nobel prize winner Albert Szent-Györgyi¹² and leading industrialists of the chemical and pharmaceutical industry, among them Marika's father Sándor Deutsch, to finance and work for Servita, a newly restructured pharmaceutical company engaged in providing Hungary, and the Soviet Union with a licence to import and produce synthetic penicillin and produce vitamins. Marika was ordered to work at Servita by her father in fall 1945. Albert Szent-Györgyi was a communist sympathiser who befriended Molotov in Moscow, became the head of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and was also discussed as a potential president of the newly founded Hungarian republic. Servita's projects found approval in government circles and flourished till the beginning of 1947, when the political climate became more militant. Szent-Györgyi failed to implement his program for science and education policies and got involved in bitter feuds with his opponents. According to Marika, Ráth contacted the American Embassy offering to recruit top scientists, among them Szent-Györgyi and his collaborators, for emigration to the US, provided they were offered appropriate opportunities. First the Americans were skeptical, but finally they made an offer. In the mean time the government started to accuse Servita, and Ráth in particular, of various administrative irregularities, and to make undue profits from their penicillin business. Finally, in the fall of 1947, while Szent-Györgyi was lecturing in Switzerland, Ráth was arrested. Szent-Györgyi tried to intervene against Ráth's arrest from abroad, first the Hungarian government, and when this did not help, directly via Molotov, by threatening to sabotage an international scientific conference dear to the Soviets. Upon Molotov's intervention Ráth was freed and left first for Switzerland and then moved to the US. Szent-Györgyi got his own research institute in Woods Hole, NJ, and Ráth became its financial administrator¹³.

¹² Szent-Györgyi won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1937. He is credited with discovering vitamin C and the components and reactions of the citric acid cycle. He was also active in the Hungarian Resistance during World War II and entered Hungarian politics after the war. (...) After the war, Szent-Györgyi was well-recognized as a public figure and there was some speculation that he might become President of Hungary, should the Soviets permit it. Szent-Györgyi established a laboratory at the University of Budapest and became head of the biochemistry department there. He was elected as a member of Parliament and helped re-establish the Academy of Sciences. Dissatisfied with the Communist rule of Hungary, he emigrated to the United States in 1947. (Cited from wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Szent-Györgyi)

¹³ According to the wikipedia entry, *Szent-Györgyi established the Institute for Muscle Research at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts with financial support from Hungarian businessman Stephen Rath. However, Szent-Györgyi still faced funding difficulties for several years, due to his foreign status and former association with the government of a Communist nation. In 1948, he received a research position with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland and began dividing his time between there and Woods Hole. In 1950, grants from the Armour Meat Company and the American Heart*



Figure 12: Szent-Györgyi's team in Woods Hole
 Most left: Dr. István Rath
 Center: Szent-Györgyi flanked by his wife and Ráth's wife
 (photograph from the Szent-Györgyi Archive)

9

As I said before, Marika and András met in Ráth's office and started an affair. In spring 1946 Marika discovered she was pregnant. Pista and András helped Marika to have an abortion in Switzerland, so her parents would not know of it. Officially she was to go to Geneva to study law. She was enrolled in Geneva, but spent much time in Zurich (with her brother) and in Davos. András and her mother Rozsi visited her in Zurich. The abortion was performed illegally by a private doctor. But Marika was struck by regret and guilt feelings. She decided to return to Budapest, get married to András and have a child with him.

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Marika and András got married on December 19, 1946. They are both listed as Roman Catholic. Marika had been baptized, against her father's explicit wish, in October 1944, and now required that before their marriage, András would do the same. The document states that András is secretary at the ministry of Foreign Trade. The witnesses are József Benes, at the time still President of

Association allowed him to establish the Institute for Muscle Research. (.....) The death of Rath, who had acted as the financial administrator of the Institute for Muscle Research, left Szent-Györgyi in a financial mess. Other sources hint at more serious irregularities in Ráth's administrative leadership including tax fraud.

HUNGARIA, and Ference Csont¹⁴, CEO of the Monetary Institute¹⁵. Bénes was a friend of Sándor and Csont a friend of Jenő. Sándor was at the time CEO of HUNGARIA, and Jenő was vicepresident of the Monetary Institute.

This looked like a bourgeois marriage with a prosperous future, in spite of the political differences.



Figure 13: Benes, Marika, András, Csont after the wedding

HUNGARIA was in the hands of its former managers and was on a recovery course. The government had given its green light in allowing foreign investors and SOLVAY in Belgium, the actual majority share holder showed interest in doing so. SERVITA became an important new player in pharmaceuticals, and I. Ráth and Prof. Albert Szent-Györgyi had big plans. The inflation had been successfully stopped and the Monetary Institute under the leadership of Jenő and his colleagues enjoyed their success.

The marriage started on an optimistic note, the couple was in love, and their social and economical future looked splendid. The couple lived at Golomb utca 7, close to the Danube and the Erzsebet Bridge. They were supposedly happy together, although the wedding pictures seem to tell otherwise. They travelled a lot, to Romania, to France and to Switzerland using the possibilities arising from András' work for the Ministry of External Commerce.

In August 1947 Marika was pregnant again, but by then external events had started to interfere. I was born on March 12, 1948. The couple asked for a divorce on January 22, 1949, and was granted the divorce on February 28, 1949.

The divorce was legally based on mutual agreement by the couple, and Marika waved her right for financial support. Practically the divorce was the

¹⁴ Csont Ferenc (1898-1967), since 1945 chief executive officer at the Financial Institutions Center staff, since 1949 its vice-president. In 1950 arrested and convicted in 1952 in the show trial of Ernő Sziucs to life imprisonment. The sentence was reduced in 1955 to seven years, but he released immediately, although formally rehabilitated only in 1965. In spite of the late rehabilitation he became chief accountant of the State Mint and from 1960-63 he was CEO of the trading company Keravill.

¹⁵ The Monetary Institute (Pénzüntézeteki Központ (PK)) was the authority overseeing all banks and banking relations. From 1945-1949 it played an important role in the transformation of the Hungarian economy from a capitalist to a socialist system. cf. http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyszintu_bankrendszer



Figure 14: Marika, infant János and András, spring 1949

result of Sándor's decision to emigrate and take his family with him. Sándor and his wife, Rozsi, used all their manipulative skills exploiting the circumstances to coerce Marika into agreeing to divorce. When Marika finally agreed she nevertheless continued to see András and to spend weekends together even after the divorce, and they both were still very much in love. Rozsi arrived in Switzerland in April 1949, and Marika emigrated with me to Baden near Zurich in June 1949. András tried till the last minute to prevent Marika to leave. He even used his connections with Gábor Péter and had Marika summoned by the ÁVH for interrogation concerning her supposed attempts to emigrate with me illegally. Fortunately, the ÁVH people understood that this was an internal family affair. "Children, sort it out between you", the prosecutor said after he had revealed that András was the informant.

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So what were the external events which led to this divorce?

Sándor spent early 1947 abroad negotiating with the majority shareholder of HUNGARIA, SOLVAY in Belgium. In early 1947 the Hungarian government seemingly still favored foreign (western) investments for the reconstruction of its industries. Also SOLVAY was willing to explore its possibilities in maintaining its assets in Eastern Europe. On March 20, 1947, the *Pesti Tőzsde (Pester Stock Exchange)* reported about Sándor's successful negotiations upon his return to Budapest. In April Sándor was offered the position of head of the neolog Jewish community of Budapest, which he finally declined, citing his unclear future in Hungary. In June Sándor celebrated his 60th birthday in Budapest as the CEO of HUNGARIA. In December 1947 an agreement was signed between SOLVAY and HUNGARIA for further investments of 1 million Swiss Francs, and other mutual commitments.

In the meantime the political interests of Jenő and Sándor diverged. Jenő rose in power. Already in December 1946 as vicepresident of the Monetary In-



Figure 15: Marika's arrival in Baden, Park of Hotel Verenhof, with me and her parents

stitute, he described in the newspaper *Pesti Tőzsde* the goal of this institution as "controlling industrial and commercial companies as well as cooperatives, which were given bank credits, and supervising their financing, replacing valueless bonds, and making sure that money could flow unhindered within Hungary, in short supervising all aspects of industrial banking". In February 1947, in the same newspaper, Jenő outlines the three-year plan of the Hungarian Communist Party. In December 1947, again in *Pesti Tőzsde* he gives an account of democratic economy, where he writes that, while 1946 was the year of stabilization, 1947 was the year of progressing towards rising the standard of living, of nationalization of the banking system, and of the conclusion of commercial treaties between Hungary with Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In January 1948 a similar treaty was signed between Hungary and Romania, which was prepared by András while working for the Ministry of Foreign Trade. At the same time András changed from the Ministry to a high position at HUNGARIA.

In March 1948 Jenő replaced László Faragó (social democrat) as the general director of the Monetary Institute. On April 1, 1948 the headlines of *Pesti Tőzsde* announced that already 500 companies were nationalized fulfilling the directives of the nationalization decrees, directed by the directors of the Monetary Institute Jenő Markovits, Galló and Almási.

Already in late 1947 the climate for western investments in Hungaria had worsened, and due to various factors, including Ráth's plan to offer the whole scientific staff of Servita to the Americans, Servita and in particular Sándor, came under attack by the populist factions of the political echelons. Finally, Ráth was arrested while Sándor was abroad. Friends called Sándor, not to

return to Hungary, as also his arrest would be imminent. In December 1947, instead of returning from Brussels to Hungary, Sándor stayed in Zurich waiting for further developments and exploring his business possibilities in Switzerland. He may have met Ráth in Switzerland¹⁶.

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Due to the nationalization of SOLVAYS's holdings in Czechoslovakia in January 1948, the agreement between HUNGARIA and SOLVAY was canceled in February 1948. Sándor travelled to Brussels trying to save the agreement. But SOLVAY wanted to sell HUNGARIA to the Hungarian government. Sándor was also asked by HUNGARIA and the Ministry of Industries to sell some industrial machines in the possession of HUNGARIA, and was given relevant power of attorney on April 3, 1948. I am in possession of letters from this time Sándor wrote regularly to his son Dénes in the US, recording the events in detail. Sándor perceived the cancellation of the agreement between HUNGARIA and SOLVAY as a betrayal and a personal blow which left him, alone in Zurich, in a deep crisis. What should he do? Starting all over again after 40 years of a successful career as an industrialist is a difficult decision to make. What about his wife, daughter, grandson? He describes the popular mood in Switzerland as panic of a new war, a proper war psychosis. For two months he does not write to his son, then on March 27, 1948 he writes a long letter. He wants to wait for the result of the election in Italy on April 18, 1948. He hears of the announcement of further planned nationalizations in Hungary of all companies with more than 100 employees. However, HUNGARIA is not among them, because foreign investors and owners are involved. Nevertheless, he decides not to return for the time being.

Back in Hungary, András, instead of loyally working for HUNGARIA, is also involved in mobilizing the workers for a strike. There are also rumors that András is unfaithful to Marika, but no proofs exist. This led to a big outburst in the family on March 11, 1948, as result of which I was, according to Marika's testimony, born on March 12, 1948, one month early.

In Zurich, Sándor explores all his options. He takes English courses at Berlitz. He is approached, on a recommendation of a former engineer of his own enterprises, by Tata Industries from Bombay to head their newly founded chemical enterprises. Negotiations are already quite advanced with the Indian Ministry of Industries and a visa to visit Bombay is issued. Discussions with various exponents of the Swiss chemical industries also progress well. On Sept 17, 1948, R. Wenczler and D. Veisz, directors of HUNGARIA, issue an ultimatum: Sándor is supposed to return immediately, or to resign. He decides not to return. The immediate problem now is his wife and daughter. András does not want to emigrate. He sees his future in Hungary and wants his wife and son to stay. During October 1948 Sándor charges a detective to observe András. He wants proof of András' infidelity, so as to be able to convince Marika to divorce.

¹⁶ In his letters Sándor writes he met R. on his passage through Switzerland.

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The detective is successful. András has secret meetings with a young woman near where he lives. The detective convinces Marika to follow him to see for herself. They catch András and his lover in flagranti. The lover is terrified and runs away. They run after her, find her on the bridge near by, threatening to jump and take her life. It all ends melodramatically in tears. András asks Marika for forgiveness, asks her mother for forgiveness, asks his mother for forgiveness, and promises to be a good boy. Marika forgives, but her father and mother coerce her into a divorce.

When the ultimatum expired on November 1, 1948 Sándor resigns as CEO of HUNGARIA. To secure the emigration of his wife, daughter and grandson, he forfeits his pension stipulated in his work contract, valued at 1000 gold pengő per month during his life time, and 750 gold pengő per month for his widow, life long, in case she should survive him. He also waves all his financial claims from HUNGARIA. The next day he files an affidavit in Zurich, that he had signed the resignation document under duress, hoping to be able to use this later in court. HUNGARIA was nationalized on December 28, 1949 by decree. The money was lost.

On May 25, 1949 Marika sent a telegram to Zurich announcing her arrival. She arrives with me in Dübendorf airport on June 4, 1949. András starts writing his letters the same day. The last letter is dated September 1, 1951.



Figure 16: Sándor and Rozsi in Tarasp, Switzerland, 1952

14

The times from 1951 to 1958 were difficult for both András and Marika.

András lost his job at HUNGARIA already in 1948. He had various jobs, in state owned trading companies, in an ammunition factory, but in mid-1952 he was unemployed. He could not adjust to the new order and was usually fired from work due to all kinds of irregularities, possibly including alcohol abuse.

In February 1953 he was arrested on various charges, most of which remained unsubstantiated. I have the files of his trial. He was arrested on the basis of testimonies of previously arrested people. The accusation had to do, on one side, with his nearness to Gábor Péter, the former head of ÁVO and arrested at the same time¹⁷. On the other side the accusation concerned black marketeering, dealing in foreign currency, and helping smuggling people out of Hungary. They also tried to prove spying for foreign powers, illegal contact to the foreign press, Zionist conspiracies and the like. At the end, of all the charges against him, little was left. He had helped Marika's uncle, Sanyi, to leave Hungary illegally (mentioned in the letters). He had helped Marika and her parents to bring parts of their household to Switzerland. He had passed money in foreign currency to Rozsi's brothers, Sanyi and Marci. He also admitted to minor charges of black marketeering. The contact to the foreign press was reduced to his friendship to the head of the office of *Agence France Presse* in Budapest, Blanchard, dating back from his stay in France in 1938-39. Nevertheless, he was first sentenced to 12 years in prison, then the sentence was reduced to 4 1/2 years and he was released in 1955. In 1956 he left Hungary illegally and asked for political asylum at the French Embassy in Vienna.

He also married again in 1952. According to the police records from András' arrest in 1953, his wife, to Maria Garamszegi, né Sellay. was married twice previously, in a first marriage to a member of parliament of the Arrow Cross Party,

¹⁷ After Péter's arrest, Rakosi gave a report to the Central Committee that included a long analysis of the situation of the Jews in Hungary: *After the defeat of fascism, the Jews were looked at in a very sympathetic way, as everybody assumed that their horrible experiences in the concentration camps and the death-factories, would turn them into the friends of democracy and the supporters of the Soviet Union, as it was the Soviet army that liberated them in Auschwitz and the Budapest Ghetto. And indeed, at the beginning, these Jews saw that the Communists were the only real enemies of the Fascists, fighting them relentlessly. I remember that in 1945 and 1946, when petty-bourgeois Jews were applying to the Party, it was enough to say that he had been in Auschwitz or three of his relatives had been killed, to get accepted in the Party. The real changes took place at the moment when the US discovered that the People's Democracies became strong, and that America could not count on these countries anymore. The front has changed and instead of German fascism, American imperialism became the real enemy. At the same time, a large portion of the Jewish petit-bourgeoisie lost the ground under its feet, as there was no need for small-scale industry, retail commerce, small merchants anymore, and the Jews discovered that their world so perfectly compatible with capitalism, does not fit in the People's Democracies, so they turned against the Soviet Union. The greatest Zionists are in America, and what is even more important, the Zionists get their financial support from there. On the first sight, it seems obvious that the most important spy-center is the Catholic Church. However, in light of the fact that the Catholics comprise a minority in the Soviet Union or in Bulgaria, but Jews can be found everywhere, besides the Catholic Church, Zionism gained real importance as a spy-organization. This already became obvious in the Rajk case; as the Comrades know, most of those who were sentenced to death, were Jewish petit-bourgeois: Szonyi, Szalai, the so-called leftwing police informers, who came back from Switzerland and England. Now, after the Slanký case in Czechoslovakia, and at the time of the 9 doctors' case in the Soviet Union, it is obvious that we, too, recognized these facts, and in the course of the investigation of the Péter's case, we discovered that these police informers had been either Zionist or active fascist, the men of the Gestapo.*

Quoted from the *Archive of the Institute of the Party (PIA)* 276.f. 65/30. o. e. 1-21. Matyas Rakosi's report at the meeting of the Central Committee of the MDP, 17 February, 1953.

and in second marriage to somebody who was imprisoned for trying to flee Hungary illegally. She must have been a beauty and a colorful personality. András met her through a dubious friend, M. Tóth, whose girlfriend Maria was at the time. It turned out that András was denounced to the AVO by the former boyfriend of Maria, M. Tóth, and his own former lover, R. Jelinek. They both had a grudge because of his marriage to Maria. But in a confrontation of Tóth, Jelinek and András, arranged by the investigating officer, these denunciations collapsed and were recognized as personal vendettas.

Marika got remarried on August 10, 1951 to Gaby Makowsky. She was widowed on February 5, 1958. A year later both her parents died in Zurich. Her life had changed again. When she got married, Gaby was a very rich adventurous businessman, divorced with two daughters, madly in love with Marika, and more so with the fact that Marika had a son, who should grow up as his son.



Figure 17: Above from l. to r.: Marika, Gaby, Dénes and his wife Hanny
Below from l. to r.: Sándor, János and Rozsi, 1956

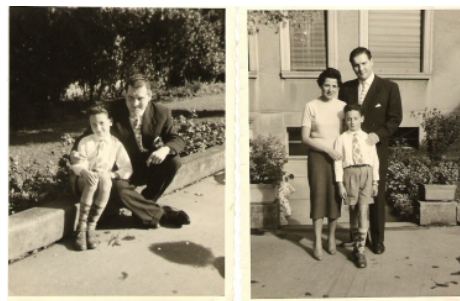


Figure 18: András' first encounter with Marika and János after emigration, 1957

After he had to declare a third time bankruptcy, and András showed up in Zurich in 1957, shattering Gaby's dream of having a son, Gaby committed

suicide on February 5, 1958. András, upon hearing of Gaby's death, rushed to Zurich to propose again. But Marika refused. "You are a good friend and lover, but a lousy husband", she told him. He returned to Paris and had two more wives, Nicole (1959-1966) and Lily (from 1967 on).



Figure 19: Marika as a young widow, 1958

In 1968 András became a French citizen. His mother died of cancer in Paris in 1964, his father died in 1971. At the end he was an alcoholic. He died in 1977. Rumors have it that in the last years of his life he worked for the Hungarian secret service.



Figure 20: Andras and Lily, 1966

Marika never remarried. She saw András occasionally, when she had business in Paris or he showed up in Zurich. Marika had to build her own professional career. Starting as an accountant with a local distributor of beer and soft drinks in 1959, she became a fashion distributor, first employed, then with her own company "Modeagentur Marianne Makowsky", representing mostly Italian and French labels, the most famous among them being Yves St. Laurent, Hanae Mori and Nino Cerruti. Marika died in 1987, after a prolonged illness, at the peak of her fashion career.

Once, at her 40th birthday, history caught up with old stories. Uncle Sanyi, one of Rozsi's brothers, visited Europe with his wife from his exile in New Zealand, and by pure chance (or not?) András showed up as well. We all had dinner together, it was very cheerful, and András and Sanyi dwelled in grotesque memories of how András had smuggled him on a Red Army truck, disguised as a Soviet soldier in a uniform much too big, to get to Vienna. When András died, his last wife, Lily, to whom he was married for ten years, called Marika immediately. They shared their grief. Both for András and Marika, their short marriage and their long love story had marked their life profoundly.

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And their fathers?

Sándor founded in 1949, together with A.H. Meyer of FRANZ AG in Zurich, a new chemical company, Rhein-Chemie AG, Kaiseraugst and Zurich. He also traded in the early 1950s together with Gaby in copper, circumventing various trade embargoes. In 1957 he brought his son, Dénes, back from the US to become involved in Rhein-Chemie. But they soon had very serious disagreements about the business orientation of Rhein-Chemie, and 1958 Dénes left Rhein-Chemie and joined CIBA in Basel. When Sándor died in 1959 the family had not enough capital to join the refinancing of Rhein-Chemie, and were bought out by A.H. Meyer. After paying taxes the family fortune was reduced to virtually nothing.

Jenő left the Monetary Institute in 1949 to become CEO of MONIMPEX¹⁸, the newly founded state monopoly for import and export of consumer goods. Around the time when András was arrested, in 1953, Jenő was appointed as (or demoted to?) head of the textile and fashion section of MONIMPEX (or demoted?). In 1965 he published a booklet *A divát 'es meghatározó tényező* (*Fashion and its determining factors*) which was widely discussed in the media. Its main thesis was, roughly paraphrased, that fashion is not a decadent bourgeois fad, but a way of expressing self esteem. Even proletarians and true comrades are more productive members of society, when they like what they see in the mirror. The booklet ushered in a new period in the socialist societies of the Eastern Block: Women (and men), from Moscow, Leningrad, Sofia, Berlin and Warsaw started to buy Hungarian textiles in fashionable designs.

During all his career Jenő was an innovative entrepreneur, even during communist rule. In 1969, in Paris, Jenő told me that he was disappointed by communisms. But he did not refer to the authoritarian character of the communist regimes. His two biggest diasappointments with the communists were their economic dilettantism and their inability to dress women.

¹⁸MONIMPEX was privatized in 1986.