

An Interview with Eva Szabo

Survival: Lives of Hungarians under Communist
and Capitalist Governments 1956-2006
Oral History Series

Interviews conducted by
Virginia Major Thomas
in 2006

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It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Eva Szabo, "An Interview with Eva Szabo", conducted by Virginia Major Thomas in 2004, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2006.

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Biography

Dr. Eva Szabo (Dr. Bara Denesne) was the daughter of a factory mechanic and an obstetrical nurse practicing in the countryside, where her daughter attended country schools for the first three elementary school years. Eva decided early that education was necessary to “become somebody”. Coming from a working class background she had no trouble getting in the university after later elementary and gymnasium education in Szeged. After graduating from the university she went on to medical school.

The most frightening events of her life were the American bombing of bridges in World War II and the coming into Hungary of the Russian army tanks in November, 1956. But she says she and her family never suffered a bit during the period of the Communist government, when as under most governments the doctors were appreciated. She describes the gentle pressure to join the Communist party in the self-criticism groups in the university during Communism. But she was never a party member: “I was not an enemy. I was neutral”. She was a medical officer in the army with non-medical duties, but she was also able under the Kadar regime to do a year of advanced medical studies in the Netherlands after her husband, also a doctor, had studied for a year at the College de France in Paris.

She discusses “the so-called tipping of doctors”, her religious beliefs and practices, and the current political and economic situation in Hungary and the divisiveness in the country resulting from political differences. Her husband, Dr.Denes Bara, adds a short summary history of Communism and the influence of America in changing the system of government in Hungary.

MT: Major Thomas

ES: Eva Szabo

DB: Eva's husband, Dr. Denes Bara (occasionally contributes)

MJ: Miklos Jakabffy (translator)

MT: This is Major Thomas on November 15, 2006, and I am at number 24 Jozsef Attila sgt. in Szeged, Hungary and I am interviewing Dr. Bara Denesne, Dr. Szabo Eva, and so I will begin by asking you, Eva, when and where you were born.

ES/MJ: I was born in Szeged on December 14, 1927.

MT: And tell me a little bit about your parents. Who was your father, who was your mother?

ES/MJ: My father, Imre Szabo, and my mother's maiden name was Maria Szikora. My father worked in a factory as a mechanic who was doing smaller instruments and my mother was working as a nurse helping women to deliver babies.

MT: And where did you go to school?

ES/MJ: I went to 4 different schools during the first 3 years of my studies, to schools in the Hungarian countryside which were founded by Count Kuno Klebelsberg who was the minister of education at the time, and I want to emphasize that because I appreciate his work, what he has done for the country can be only compared to what was done by Count Szechenyi in Hungarian history

ES: Klebelsberg, one of the greatest Hungarians.

ES/MJ: I had to go to different schools because my mother, who was helping delivering babies, was sent to all these places where her work was most needed. So as she moved around to small tiny villages around Szeged, in the vicinity, I went with her to different locations.

MT: This is elementary school, obviously.

ES/MJ: Yes. The results of going to different schools for 3 consecutive years in my first 3 grades, the result was that I could very well read because I was always interested in books, but I couldn't count more than to 20 because the teachers in different village schools were happy to use my volunteer help to them,

things I was not permitted to do at home but that were very welcome to the different teachers, like cutting wood for the fire, for the oven, or to give food to the chickens and so forth. So after 3 school years my mother saw the results and concluded then, if my parents wanted me to become somebody, I needed to be put in an ordinary school. It was decided I would have to continue in a reliable school and I was put in one of the best schools of Szeged which was run by nuns.

MT: The schools in the country, were they very different the way the children were taught from the schools in the city? In America, it used to be that country schools were small, all the classes were together, first grade, second grade, third grade, all in one room.

ES: Oh yes, the same. The same here.

MT: So you finally went to a city school in Szeged and finished elementary school. Did you learn to count?

ES/MJ: It was a very hard year for me, the fourth school year, because I had to compete with girls, the children of judges, of lawyers, of politicians of the town, of officers, and I was everyday traveling to and from this school by train and in winter time there was a lot of snow and the roads were not cleaned as they are today, so often the snow was higher than I was. But I made the effort and graduated.

MT: Did you feel that the competition from the other students was because they were better prepared, they had had better schooling before?

ES/MJ: Very much, because they had nurses at home who took care only of the child or children of the family. So it was a big challenge. And I wanted to become somebody. My father had no more education than a few grades, like the first 3 grades, he went to work in the factory at the age of 10, or maybe earlier. My mother had higher education, she finished eight grades. And my good father, every day, when he started in the early morning at home to go to work on his bicycle, very often told me how good it was going to be when you become an adult, you will work also in the same factory where I work and every morning we can go together on bicycles to work. And he started work at 6 in the morning. So I didn't need any more encouragement to be interested in more studies, and higher education, because I was pretty sure that I didn't want to become a worker in the same factory where he was. I wanted to become somebody with a higher education, and I saw that the result is only by learning. So at the end of the 4th grade my very good teacher, who was a nun and had appreciated my achievements of that year, asked me what I wanted to do after the first 4 grades, and I said I definitely wanted to go to high school. At that time there were 4 elementary grades and 8 years of high school. She said, okay, but you have to understand that the work that is waiting for you

will be as hard as what you have done this last year. And I decided I wanted to do that.

MJ: Denes wanted to add that she shouldn't talk that much at once because it can't all be translated. Eva said I don't have to translate it word by word, I have to just translate the conclusion.

ES/MJ: So I had to do a tremendous amount of work to complete my studies in the first high school class. It was really as hard as the 4th grade in elementary school, but that made my mind open up, and since the 2nd year in high school I have never ever had a problem to learn and study. I completed the second year of high school with all the best marks except for one class and that was 2nd best. So I never had trouble studying and learning after that.

MT: What do you mean by open up? Is this understanding how to learn?

ES/MJ: I mean that I could easily understand and I could easily memorize what I had to learn. I could easily and quickly learn and understand.

MT: When did you graduate from the gymnasium?

ES/MJ: It must have been '39.

MJ: Denes interferences (laughter) and says that it was 1947. Oh here is the photo, isn't she pretty, and it says 1946. She was 19 years old. Because she was ill, she missed more than one year of school.

MT: So you were in the gymnasium during World War II. And how did that affect your life, the war?

ES/MJ: My mother was moved to Szeged, then my younger brother Zoltan was born, that was in '43. Our country was at the time the ally of the Axis powers. In October 1944 the Nazis destroyed the central bridge of Szeged. With their Hungarian sympathizers, and with those whom they could force to do so, they retreated to the Dunantul. Without a gunshot, the front went across Szeged committing few atrocities because the leaders of the town had made a deal with the Soviet army. I spent this period living in the Szeged convent school. When life began to return to normal, I returned to my parents' house at Szentmihalytelek, a village near Szeged. Again, I began commuting to the convent school where I graduated in 1947. The same year I continued with the first year of the university. And I graduated from the university in '53.

MT: How did the coming of Communism affect your life? Did that affect your life?

ES/MJ: My family didn't have any bad luck or anything bad because of that change, because my mother was repositioned. Our advantage was that my mother was given a job in Szeged and so we had to move to Szeged, so we had to rent

parts of an apartment from a private person who owned that apartment. But later also that house where our apartment was located was nationalized, so the person lost the private property, and after that we had to pay the rent to the state. But we were free to use that part of the apartment. When we moved out we were given a 4-room apartment without paying a penny for it. This was an advantage for us.

MT: Who gave them the apartment?

MJ: The state.

MT: Why?

ES/MJ: In the first apartment there were 3 rooms. When I married, the 3 rooms were sort of arranged so that we had one room and my mother used the other 2 rooms with my brothers together. That was a pretty house but not very solidly built, it is located in so-called new Szeged, it is a smaller house where the walls are not very solid. And my husband wanted to move closer to the city center, and there was a family who had a 4-room apartment in the center of Szeged, they wanted to have a garden, so we just traded, and they got what they wanted and we got what we wanted. Later the family which moved to our part could sell it and the original owner of the house could get a refund from the state which was at the beginning of making this country bankrupt.

MT: Under Communism, you could trade apartments but you paid rent to the state.

MJ: Yes.

ES/MJ: So what we got from Communism was, we got the 3- room house rented by my mother which could be traded for a 4-room apartment. Although there were some unlucky parts to that story too, one was that only one room in that apartment could be heated in winter time. But in the meantime my mother got the chance to use a little but very attractive fruit garden in the outskirts of Szeged. That was nationalized by a person who had several such beautiful gardens, and the Communists said that one person should be happy and satisfied with one garden, you don't need several of them.

ES: Yes, I think it is interesting for you, how we could live in the community.

MT: Yes. You had to share.

ES/MJ: Yes. So she got that beautiful fruit garden where later on, decades later, the entire family with family effort could build the house where now my younger older brother lives, Imre. And we got the 4-room apartment in Szeged city center. And my husband got one year scientific practice in Paris, and during the year when my husband was away then I traded that 4-room apartment for this one, where we are now, this is a beautiful apartment, and in 1992, the year

of the so-called big privatization after the change of government system, we could buy this apartment from the state, although the building has 2 entrances. The back entrance is to a side street, the other entrance is to the main street; because it has an entrance to the main street it was a much higher price than it would have been for the side street. We had to pay, to own this apartment, one million forints, and now it is worth about 25 million forints. So this is, including the house where my brother lives, and this one, this is what I have to thank Communism for.

MT: That's interesting.

ES/MJ: And I had no trouble getting in the university because I was from a worker family. But I never was a Communist party member. They could not do anything to me to make me be a party member, but I was not an enemy. I was neutral.

MT: Getting back to medical school, was there any change in the curriculum, the courses offered, when the Communists took over? I have been told that the curriculum in the medical school did not change under Communism except there was added a course in Marxism-Leninism. Did that happen to her?

ES/MJ: Yes, this is right, that is for sure, the study of Marxism-Leninism was introduced. There were so-called study circles made up, meaning a lower number of students studying together, and it was a must for the girls as well to volunteer for the military.

So I also volunteered, as it was a must, and I became a one-star lieutenant, an officer of the army.

ES: This is another story! I have many stories!

MT: Did you have to serve in the army and go to an army camp and be a doctor to the army?

ES/MJ: What happened actually was I had to go to classes of so-called defense studies and we had to do the different studies, but that was not more than a few lessons, a few hours. We were lectured on how to use the revolver, because as an officer I was given a revolver which I actually never used because there was no need to during the day and it was heavy, I didn't want to have it on me as it was unnecessary so I put it aside. But at that time, when I got to the military hospital, it was just turned down, the military hospital, so it was no use, actually at the end there was nobody in the military hospital, there were no patients, I was on duty, but actually my duty was to guard the building, and I was told that if somebody were to intrude, I was to tell them that they must not continue and if they were to persist I would use my gun. Luckily there was not even a dog coming in so I could comfortably make use of the room where there was sort of a full bed which was my accommodation.

- MT: Did she have to serve, when she was in I guess the army medical corps, did she have to serve, like, 2 weeks every year, go to the army and then come back?
- ES/MJ: Not me, my husband yes, not me. He served twice in the army for 6 months each. My son was born in '54 and my daughter in '55. We were married in July 1953. There were 2 periods of my life when I was anxious, really afraid for my life. The first was in 1943, when because of the war events, school teaching was suspended and the students were sent home. We were in lesser Szeged, which was in the outskirts, and the American air force bombed the train bridges over the river, and we were very close, meaning about 15-20 kilometers, which would be about 10 miles. But there was no other shelter except the regular potato storage cellar of our neighbors, where all of us were, our entire family and the neighbors' family, and it was life-threatening. We heard the noise of the falling bombs and the explosions as if it was just next to us. That was one. And the second, it was in 1956.
- MT: Where were you?
- ES/MJ: In Szeged. We were in the 4-room apartment in Szeged city center. The next door building was the Communist party headquarters. My husband had just returned from the Hungarian-Austrian border as a doctor to the army, from the task of taking the mines from the minefields, he returned between the 15th and the 18th of October, just a week before the events. In those days because of the freer talk of people, we could hear the voices of the university students, it was in the air that something was going to happen. It was common understanding, my husband was a witness, that the western borders of the country were not open but, if crossed, were without danger. In the first days of the revolution the red stars were taken off or destroyed and people were talking about leaving the country to go to western Europe. But it was also common understanding that the Russians would not allow the revolution to win. So it was a very uncertain situation, and I had my child and my baby, and I understood that they needed warm housing, the baby needed to be fed every third hour, and had to be kept clean, and if we hit the road these possibilities would not exist and the baby would probably die, and so it was a desperate situation, what to do, to stay, to go, but to go was sort of a commitment to die, so we decided to stay. But then, shortly after midnight on November 4, when we went to our balcony we could see the river and we could see the bridge, and there was a terrible, terrible noise, it was a continuous noise, it was the noise of the army, the armored vehicles, the tanks were moving with their guns, their cannons pointing straight forward. And I thought they come just to shoot everything down, to shoot the entire town, to destroy the town. My husband had told me how badly Budapest was damaged at the end of World War II, so we expected the same to happen, and who else than us would be the first next to the party headquarters and what else would be destroyed first than the buildings which had the view of the river and the view of the bridge. So the bombings during World War II were just pleasant dreams compared to the

fear I had during those hours or days. And what happened? The army went over Szeged, there were a few tanks staying, but there was no shooting. We knew that we had no chance, all sane persons knew that there was no chance against that mighty and tremendous army. And the major threat was, and we were praying that there would not be, any mentally disabled persons who would shoot with handguns at the tanks, that was the only threat, and we were praying that that would be avoided.

MT: How did your life change, did your life change after '56? Was it different from before '56?

ES/MJ: I was working in the dermatology department as a practicum. [She was not a full duty doctor, I think that is the education, the study, to be specialized as a doctor for dermatology, she was a general practitioner and wanted to specialize]. There was a briefing of all of the professors at the university, at the hospital, by the dean of the university. I was just in the secretary's office when my professor returned, he returned in a good mood with a big smile on his face, relaxed, and he told us, "People, you have to continue to work, you do not have to open your mouth unnecessarily, you do not have to say stupid things, you just have to pick up the work and do the job and we will see how it will continue". This was Szeged.

MT: It sounds as if life did not change.

DB/MJ: I have to help my wife here to remember. It was the Kadar regime which we think was of 2 parts. The first part, which was from 1956, actually from 1957, to 1963, that was the period of retaliation. And then there was the second part, which was the peaceful vegetation.

ES/MJ: During this period my husband was lucky to be given, one of the first from Szeged, a study option for one year to Paris.

DB/MJ: That year I had the option to work for one year at the College de France in Paris.

ES/MJ: Then, it was in 1970 that I was given a year of study in Amsterdam. There was a new method of dermatology I had to learn and introduce here at the university in Szeged.

MT: Did you go with your husband to France? And the children?

ES: No, only for 2 months, but without the children.

MT: And he went with you to Amsterdam?

ES/MJ: No, he visited me for 3 weeks only. And my daughter was living in Belgium during the year I was in Amsterdam, with a very good family. My daughter

was corresponding, as children's corresponding was very common at that time, she corresponded with friends in Belgium, and the family noticed that I myself was going to Amsterdam, and for that year they invited my daughter to them where she went to school and had an excellent chance to practice and perfect her French knowledge. And also my work was highly appreciated. Quick and easy learning was again my skill, needed to understand what the study was about, and I made myself ready to do that, and my professor in Amsterdam highly appreciated my work and job and he gave me a very good, very appreciated income, which made it possible for me to supply the family in the technical fields so that all the machinery needed for the household as well as a car I could bring in.

MT: I want to ask this question. I have the feeling from what you say and from what I have heard before that physicians were valued in Communist times and therefore perhaps had an easier time, got along better with the government, were favored more by the Communist regime, than perhaps other lines of work, other professions. In the United States right now physicians are generally highly regarded, are a special class of people, kind of. Was that true, do they think that physicians had a privileged position, as far as social attitudes, state attitudes, not necessarily that they made a lot more money.

ES/MJ: Yes. Actually, everybody thinks of himself, herself, and whatever society, whatever political situation it is, doctors are needed, doctors are appreciated, so we can clearly say, yes, doctors are today appreciated and doctors were appreciated during the Communist times as well.

MT: So perhaps there was less change in their lives, in their everyday lives, under the different political, economic regimes.

ES/MJ: This is where to include the activities of this existing government which wants to stop the illegal part of the doctors' income, which is the so-called tipping of doctors. Because all the time after World War II and also a bit before, the doctors had so-called second or private practice at home after their work was done at the hospital or work place.

MT: What we call private practice. I thought that was not allowed under Communism.

ES/MJ: It was 2 parts. There were some doctors who had private practice and paid a symbolic tax, they had to pay a certain part of their income as tax. But there was a larger part, those doctors who needed, not officially, but actually to get the tips. So every doctor said that I am too busy in my work place so you come to my home and I will see you, and obviously the patients had to pay or were expected to pay, to tip the doctor for that part of the job.

MT: Didn't the tipping start under Communism?

- ES/MJ: Actually the tipping for doctors and lawyers was sort of building up in what I would call the 2nd part of the Kadar regime, after '63, when the people started to have slightly but always a little more income, a little better life, so people could have afforded to go to doctors, and wanted to have a better supply, better medication.
- MT: Was this true with Medgyessy as well as the current prime minister? How would Orban stand on this?
- ES/DB/MJ: The Medgyessy government declared, and that was part of why he was elected, that in accepting to remove the tipping he wanted to increase the official income of the medical, not only the doctors but the medical service people. Most of what they got was for the specialized doctors, but included were all doctors and the nurses and people who worked in hospitals. Obviously this and the average 50% salary increase universally was a tremendous flow of money out of the state coffers. This was part, the other part was the so-called privatization, which was partly in real estate, partly in goods, partly in money, for example the family part of whose house we got at the very beginning. So this was tremendous expense for the state. And to answer the second part of your question, if Orban is for or against, everybody who is not dedicated to either side, right or left, can see clearly that what one side says, the other side opposes, no matter if it is sane or not. And we should end these contradictions. We would like to live in peace. I am anxious that the European Union may be fed up with this war of the words and will kick us out.
- MT: I just wondered in her life if this is the biggest change in living since '89, this argument over the tipping and the income. Are there other big things that have happened.....
- MJ: In her life the biggest change ever since she started to practice as a doctor---- this is what I didn't translate, or it was forgotten----is that she finished practicing in 2002 because up until 2002 she was practicing in the other room, here in this home of theirs, because now it would either not be permitted by the National Health Service because we are members of the European Union and we have to follow the standards of the European Union, or, the other part, the administration work for her private practice as well as the taxation of her private practice were tremendously increasing during the period when she left the practice, and she also grew tired of the work as well as the growing administration and taxation, so she was happy to conclude that she would continue with her private life and this is why she decided to finish her private practice. And that was for them the biggest change for the family life as well as for the situation.
- ES: Now I'm going to learn good cooking. (laughter)

ES/MJ:

And I wanted to add that I am religious. I was born in a religious family, I am Roman Catholic, and my husband believes in God but does not observe any prescriptions of a religion other than the 10 Commandments which is the basis of his life. I wanted to discuss the earlier period. Because she had her basic education, 9 of the 12 years of her early education at the nuns', and her teachers were nuns, that obviously stuck, although her father was not religious but her mother was. So this affected her life, and she is visiting and she was always visiting the church. But she added that she was never strict, never radical, never exaggerating the meaning of the religion. Although when she was at the university and those study circles had to be formed, then it was smaller communities, and, what is often forgotten, there were so-called self criticisms which had to be told, and for such sessions it was very important that everybody had to be present, and everybody had to be critical. But it was told about her---it was obviously not important what the person told about himself/herself but what was the point of the leading unit, the Communist Party, and that was, as she says, there were a few of them who were there who were obviously openly speaking about being Communist and they were interested in persuading others to be members but, as Eva put it, they were never exaggerating or turning to force or making others become members. They said how nice it would be when you would join us and go with us and understand what we do, and it was sometimes more than she wished but it was never dramatic to her. Although on the sessions of the self-criticism she was told she was a good and reliable and diligent member of the unit of the society but it is obvious that she is behaving like a little countess, because she was always not only neatly, cleanly and tidily dressed but she all the time went to the hairdresser every other week which was obviously very different from the women members of the Communist party. And she was told that she should end that kind of nunnery behavior, but she never changed that kind of behavior even later at her work place. I never ever had a problem in my life because of my religion. Yes, I can admit that during Communism I was not so frequently visiting the church as I do now because now I go there every week, but partly that's because it is just opposite on the other side of the street so that is easier for me and now I have much more time than I did earlier with the children and my work. But now I do that regularly every week. And recently an old and good friend of ours passed away and his widow, who is a university degree high school teacher so she is an educated person, at the recent meeting we were talking to each other and I have mentioned that people should not bother the prime minister who became rich during the period of the privatization because he was smart to find the ways how to get rich. And now we needed all his talent which should be invested for the interests of the country and the opposition unnecessarily bothers him to take his time and effort to protect himself when he should sacrifice each second of his life for the country. And then our friend's wife calls me a betrayer because she thinks the other way than we do, and she says how do you dare to go to church and even take part in the Holy Communion when you are on the Socialist liberal side. So I asked her, have you lost your common sense? What

is my religion to do with my political understanding? So this is where the country is now, people accuse each other because they think differently about politics.

- MT: I have heard that before. People say they fight with old friends because of politics.
- ES/MJ: She adds that that happens in families too. And one more last remark: I have heard the same on television. What are the roots of all this? The person on television estimated there was about 30% of the population had some or any kind of damage during Communism, either they have lost some family values or financial or other values, so they and their children and grandchildren are on the side of today's opposition. This is sad, and you cannot convince them.
- MT: Would it be easier if there were Communism again where you don't have all this fighting? You're not allowed to have all this fighting, where everybody is.....
- ES/MJ: Oh for God's sake!
- MT: But everybody got along under Communism because everybody had a common enemy!
- ES/MJ: Although we had not suffered a bit during that period of our history. Yes, this was really true except for the Communists who were happy because they were ruling.
- MT: The Communists were happy and everybody else had a common enemy. What enemy? Communism! (laughter)
- DB/MJ: Denes Bara says that Communism is not easy, because Communism is not a single declaration. There are different kinds of Communism. We in Hungary were in "Gauleiter" Communism. And those western European Communist parties, like France, Italy, Greece, those who fought, or a substantial part of the nation fought, against the Nazis, so there the Communist parties had leading personalities of the human kind, like Nobel prize winner personalities, in many of these countries as members of the Communist party. They couldn't get power, because they were almost as big as the other parties, because the western European countries led by the United States of America realized economic prosperity by giving all of them the Marshall Plan aid. All these Communist parties flourishing in those western European countries, the first step to their end was the Revolution of 1956 in Hungary when there came to light the essence of the Communist society and the Soviet Union. There are Communist parties which liberated themselves, their own country, like Tito in Yugoslavia, and they are still in power in Serbia under another name, or Ho Shi Min in North Viet Nam who fought against French colonization and we know the continuation, or one can name Cuba, where in Cuba the

circumstances were similar with feudalistic Russia. And now it's obvious that Fidel doesn't have a future. There are so-called Communist parties, like in China where there is a Communist leadership and by the market economy a tremendous never-before-seen development. And by the beginning of the second part of the Kadar regime in Hungary, what not many concluded was that by that period private property reentered the society. There is a so-called nationalist Communism as under Milosevic in Serbia or under Ceausescu in Romania. I wanted to add something to answer the question why there was a change in the regime in '89. Because the United States had a victory above the Soviet Union on the field of economics. Gorbachev is the key figure because without him there wouldn't have been any changes. So it was during the second part of the Kadar regime, although some of the basic human rights didn't exist, many things were permitted which were condemned and not permitted in other east block countries. Every third year citizens could get a permit to travel. There was an even bigger change during the leadership of Grosz in '88 and in '89 there was already Nemeth the prime minister. It was in '88 that everybody was given a so-called "world passport" and this is when everybody was permitted to travel to the west and this was when we lost our hard currencies which everybody changed his or her savings or family savings for refrigerators and other household machinery which was purchased in Vienna, in Austria. And there was a round table conference during the Nemeth government when it was decided what the future of Hungary should be. And the Americans had a basic role in the changing of the system. The senior Bush made a visit to Hungary and made a very successful speech. There was a great ambassador, Palmer was the name. There was only one armed body which could have stopped the change of the political system, it was called the Workers Guard. Mark Palmer suggested its liquidation. As a result of the decisions of the round table the new government was formed, it was the Antall government, and that had the basic human rights in the Hungarian state law, and the plural parliamentary democracy.

MT: My final question, and we must stop, is, are the current political difficulties due to the fundamental system, the parliamentary system, or are they due to the politicians themselves who are not leaders but greedy for power and money and they make the system not work very well?

ES/DB/MJ: It is clearly certain they are due to the politicians. We say that the political culture is below standard. Although it was a very good beginning under the first two governments. And then came that young and greedy Orban who as a mini-Duce turned everything in a bad direction. I quote what he said, that he only feels well when he's prime minister, he never had a good ordinary job in his life. It is not new that he wants Gyurcsany to resign because when he first got to the parliament under the Antall government, he always stood up and wanted Antall to resign. And then under the next Horn Gyula government he wanted them to resign. In 2004 he overthrew the Medgyessy cabinet.

MT: So the difficulty stems from leadership, the question of leadership, because politicians are supposed to be leaders, so it's a question of the quality of the leadership.

ES/DB/MJ: That's true.

MT: We must stop. Thank you so much for your time and hospitality.

THE END

P.S. Because the discussed theme relates mostly to me, I would like to state that I was always quite an independent and liberal person. Because of my religious conviction, my medical profession, and my family obligations, political activity was kept at a distance, especially extreme ideologies. The historical events/the 1944 bombing of Szeged – 1956 the decision of whether to emigrate or to stay in Hungary – 1990 the return of democracy/naturally had an effect on me. Because I began my life in poverty, during the periods of communism and capitalism – with the exception of small inconveniences – my social and economic status could only improve. From 2000, I have been interested in political events, since it became obvious to me that we had an arrogant populist leader surrounded by his cronies.