

Life In Oregon Not All Rhapsody For Hungarian Escapees

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Life in Oregon for some 125 Hungarians who fled to America to find freedom after the futile revolution of 1956 was crushed by Soviet armor has not always been a rhapsody.

Some who fled the Communist terror found that life offers no guarantees against heartbreak, homesickness and disappointment, even in a free land.

But for the majority of the Hungarians, the New World has fulfilled its promises to the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free" and has brought good jobs, happiness and a better way of living.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service reported this week that only two of the 125 who came to Oregon after the Hungarian revolution of five years ago have been voluntarily returned to their homeland. None has been involuntarily deported.

Friends of the two who left say, "they were young, it was homesickness."

Malady Chronic

Homesickness is a chronic malady of all men who fight for their homeland, and many of the Hungarians who would not return to a Communist Hungary under any circumstance have suffered from it.

"Don't ever think of coming back, even if you have to stand on one leg for eight hours a day," a letter from the homeland advised an Oregon freedom fighter several years ago.

Such letters are almost nonexistent today. The regime served notice after the revolution when it executed scores of those who rebelled against communism. In the past several years it has consolidated its grip on the country, Oregon refugees say, so that to write such letters would be dangerous and even foolhardy.

"If the West would not help us when the Communist regime was beaten by its own people, who would be foolish enough to expect aid now?" one Hungarian said.

Peter Feher, a Hungarian merchant marine radio operator who along with five others on his ship escaped to freedom in Beirut after the revolution failed, had this to say about the revolution on the fifth anniversary:

"It was not a matter of saving 9½ million people from communism, but of having freed 9½ million people to stand as witnesses against communism."

Rich Get Blame

Many, but not all, of the Hungarians witnessed a recent television show in which Communist Budapest was revisited and saw the interviews with the new generation that has grown up since the revolt of 1956. Young Hungarians blamed the rich and Nazis for the revolt.

"It is not true that rich boys made the revolution, many of us barely had enough to eat," a Portland Hungarian, Joe Fejos, exclaimed after the TV interview.

But gradually the memory of the homeland dims, despite letters and even phone calls (\$4 a minute to talk to Budapest), and new friends, new interests and a new life enmesh the Fighters of '56.

Laszlo Imri, a Hungarian soccer player who once cooked in Pilvaks Caffe, famous Budapest restaurant built in 1814, now is the chef at Piluso's; George Pangroaz and Charles Wendl run an aerial photo service, one Hungarian has a window cleaning business of his own, another, Dezso Sipos



BETTER LIFE has come to Peter Feher, Hungarian radio operator who fled country after revolution failed. Later his wife got out, had son, Peter, (right), in France

and brought him a daughter, Agnes, in Portland. Feher works at Tektronix in the daytime, sells cars in the evening, has excellent command of English.

repairs watches in Beaverton; Nick Gulazci works in a rubber plant; Joe Fejos works for a chemical firm; about six Hungarians work at Tektronix, Inc. including Peter Feher and Joseph Varadi, now the assistant manager of the plastic tools division.

Feher, like many Hungarians is a "hellish hardworker," his friends say, and sells Bu-

icks at night after his shift at Tektronix is over.

About 75 per cent of the Hungarians have married, picking off eligible American girls with their old world charm and slavic romanticism.

Some have two, three, and in one case five children, or one for each anniversary of the revolution.

Paul Owsley, who has inter-

ested himself in getting the Hungarians settled since they first started to come to Portland, estimates that "90 per cent get along pretty well and that few have been in any trouble."

Feher said in discussing the problems of the refugees, uprooted and thrown down in a strange land with a difficult language and exotic customs,

that the middle-aged men had the most trouble.

"It is harder for them to find good jobs, unless they were well trained in Hungary, and more difficult for them to pick up the language," Feher explained.

The language barrier is a terrible one, Laszlo Imri said, "The first two years are awfully hard." He said he picked up English from just listening, without studying it.

Imri is still single. He knocked on wood when asked if he were married. At 27, "I am too young to get married — and there are too many girls around."

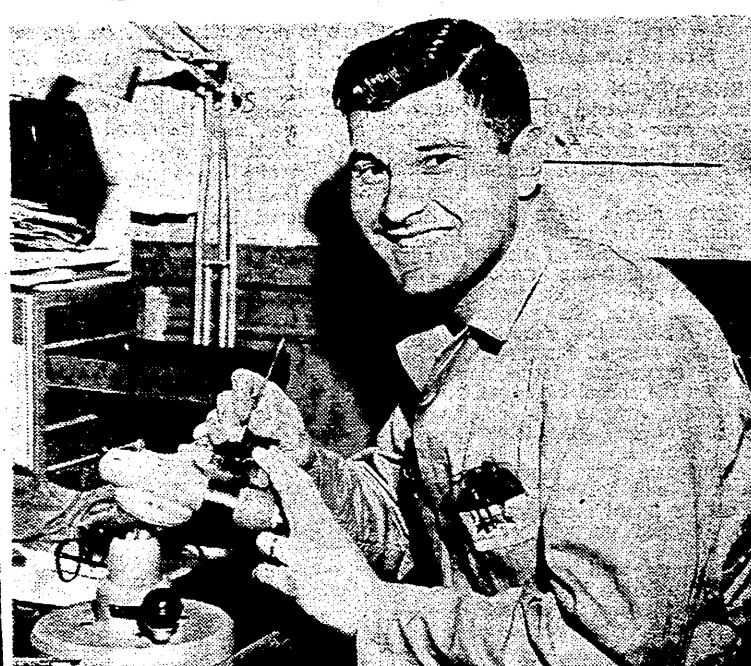
Before the revolution, he toured most of Europe with the Hungarian soccer team,

now he plays a little soccer in Portland, also works at two jobs, chef at night and cutting meat in the daytime.

The Hungarians say they like to have parties, particularly at Laszlo Kukoricza's home where there is a large game room. The talk often turns to the days of the revolution.



SOCCER PLAYER Laszlo Imri, who toured Europe with Hungarian soccer team prior to revolution, is now a chef at Piluso's, still plays soccer in Portland area.



HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION five years ago brought Joseph Varadi, skilled movie projector technician to Portland. He is now assistant manager of Tektronix, Inc., plastic and tooling department and has found an American wife. He is one of 125 who came to Oregon after revolt died.

gear. Eleven others also were picked up off another Hungarian ship that had fled to Beirut. Feher had an arrangement with his wife in Budapest, that if she did not hear from him, that this meant he had escaped. Soon as the messages stopped, she packed up and fled, reaching France where their older child, Peter, was born. They also have a 9½ month old daughter, Agnes, and a comfortable home in the suburbs near Beaverton.

Many of the Hungarians are taking courses in Americanization, looking forward to obtaining their citizenships. Most have been classified as permanent residents and are thus eligible for citizenship in five years.

Feher said he got on the phone and called Kovacs, who sent an embassy limousine to the dock to pick up the six men and a truck for their years.

who had been with the American embassy in Hungary and who had formed a Boy Scout Troop, the George Washington Scout Troop. I was a member when I was 13 years old."

The Communists blamed Feher for the escape, but he says he is not responsible, that a lieutenant in the Hungarian secret police really made the escape possible.

He came aboard our ship in Beirut after the revolution had failed and we were wondering what to do and warned us against an American Army officer, George Kovacs, who he said was a spy for the United States attached to the American Embassy in Lebanon.

The six who escaped aboard the merchant ship Seged as it slid unlighted down the Danube past a Russian check point have a unity born out of a common adventure.

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