

Attila Szakolczai

**1956
in the City of Győr**



Győr Town of County Rank Archives

Issue of Győr Town of County Rank Archives

The publishing was supported by:
Editorial of Győr Studies the
Local Government of Győr Town of County Rank

Translated by:
Dr Csilla Borostyán

Edited by:
József Bana

Reader:
Olga Szebeni

The extended introduction of the study
of documentary collection of “Győr 1956”.

www. gyor. hu

© **Attila Szakolczai**
1996, 2006

The objective nature of the city basically predestined Győr to play an important role in the revolution of 1956. The city was always meant to be a gate towards the West. That was the reason why in the Hapsburgs era Vienna also paid much attention to it and spent a lot of money on the defence of the last serious and strong fortress. It was especially true during the 1950s when it was the most important gate of the hermetic sealed western frontier zone. Although the city lying half way between the cities of Budapest and Vienna was politically (and also in reality) close to the Hungarian capital the changes happening in the centre of the country soon had a great effect on the city. After 23rd October when for a short period of time the iron curtain fell, besides the border of Hegyeshalom, Győr became the collecting and distributing station of all kinds of traffic between east and west. Information from both directions, the in-coming support, the originally small groups of the country leavers and emigrants and later the thousands of refugees had to go through Győr or at least near it. Western journalists first stopped in Győr and they often stayed here on the way back from Budapest. They brought information from the West but also reported on the events in the capital.

*

Besides the objective nature of the city the favourable unique conditions also contributed to the fact that Győr became the second capital of the revolution. Attila Szigethy had a great role in this and was in contact with the developing movement of so-called populist writers at this time. He personally became friends and was acquainted with some of their significant representatives e.g. Pál Szabó, Ferenc Erdei and later with Gyula Illyés and Áron Tamási.

In 1939, the year of formation he joined the National Peasants' Party and he participated in the conference at Szárszó in 1943 where he made friend with Péter Veres. During World War II he supported the antifascist fighters and he offered temporary shelter for many of them. From 1944 he cooperated with the so-called Peace Party which was formed on the base of the former communist party. He was even arrested by the Hungarian Nazis in November 1944 but as he himself said in 1957: **"I was set free the next day under the pressure of the public."**

He led the organizing work of the local Peasants' Party from 1945 and he joined the work of the land distributing committee. In connection with it he contacted (not a close relationship yet) with the Minister of Agriculture, Imre Nagy, the so-called land distributor for the first time who he got to know personally at the general electoral assembly at Kapuvár in 1945. He was a member of the county municipal corporation already from 1945. He became a member of the Parliament under the National Peasants' Party in 1947 and held his seat until 1957 although he did not join the Communist Party. He was the deputy chairman of the county council in 1950-1954.

In 1953 he followed Imre Nagy's banner. He became closer to the Prime Minister of the revolution in 1947, during the period when Imre Nagy was the Speaker of the House and when Attila Szigethy was parliamentary teller.

The Győr section of the Hungarian Writers' Association was aligning the reforms appointed him as an honorary president in 1954 and in October he became the vice chairman of the county organization of Hazafias Népfront (in English approximately: Patriotic People's Front – the translator) which was expected to support the new course. Szigethy's rapidly rising political career was stopped by Imre Nagy's downfall. During the council election of 1954 he was not even listed on the executive committee's nominating list (ticket) and Rákosi coming into office again atrophies even the People's Front. For a short period of time he was unemployed. Then a position of political adviser was created for him in the centre of Budapest National Peasants' Party existing only on paper. Only when he was appointed to be the director of Kistölgyfa State Farm through Ferenc Erdei's good offices could mean a comforting solution for him. It was his workplace when the revolution broke out.

So during his nearly twenty year long role in public office he personally dealt with numerous people who had important roles during the revolution. From one point of view it resulted in mutual confidence, without which the crisis over renewing false news of the formation of a counter government in Győr could not be solved. Without Szigethy Győr would not have been at all or would not have been like the second capital of the revolution. Most of the county population had great confidence in him since a lot of people had previously been to the calling hours of this member of parliament who was really serious about his work. People personally knew him, many of them, because of his responsibility during the great flood of the River Danube in 1954. But he also had a lot of acquaintances in the capital where he always could talk to Imre Nagy and Ferenc Erdei in the House of Parliament, especially during the prologue to the revolution. He also had plenty of acquaintances in the Writers' Association which had a great role in the preparation of the revolution and in

the rear-guard fights including the peasant writers as well as Gyula Háy, Tibor Tardos and Péter Kuczka. He was the only person who was accepted by the population of the city and the county and at the same time by the capital and the government. The narrow mindedness of the local leadership is shown by the fact that around 25th October they expected reactions from the group or circle of József Kéri and not from Szigethy.

After his graduation from the Piarist Secondary Grammar School in Kecskemét, József Kéri enrolled in the veterinary university and he became a member of Gyórfy Study Circle in 1943. Like Attila Szigethy in 1945 he also acted as a land distributor commissioner and for a year he worked in the centre of MADISZ. (Hungarian Democratic Youth Association) At that time he was a student of the University of Law. He got into touch with NÉKOSZ (Association of People's Study Circles) here. At the time of its nationalization he became the director of the study circle for lawyers. He taught in the department of penology of the University of Law, from 1949 then he became the research worker at the Institution of Law and at the same time party secretary (Communist Party- explanation of the translator) of it.

In January 1953 he became the personal secretary of the deputy prime minister, Károly Kiss. During the time when Imre Nagy was the Prime Minister he was the leader of the administrative group in the Prime Minister's Office and at the same time the party secretary of the party organization of the Prime Minister's Office. At that time he made a plan for Imre Nagy about democratizing the councils, several elements of which Nagy did in his speech at the third congress of the Hungarian Workers' Party (HWP). He became a follower of the new course, of democratizing therefore he was also sent away after Imre Nagy's dismissal. He was appointed to the position of county attorney to Győr in May 1955. The hard-liners in Győr and in the capital created the so-called Kéri-case already at the beginning of 1956 to be able to reveal the anti-party activity of the attorney.

There is no doubt that besides Szigethy Kéri had the closest connections with the leaders of the country, besides Imre Nagy with the former leaders of NÉKOSZ. But the number of these people was smaller – even considering those in Budapest – than that of Szigethy because by the writers Szigethy had more acquaintances.

Otherwise the new attorney was not well-known in Győr. He was rather known by the professionals of the county and the local leaders of HWP (Workers' Party) since Kéri was officially not only a member of HWP but also leading member of HWP and he kept his post during the revolution, too. Taking this post he could only become a leader of a reform movement originating from the party and not a leader of the revolution.

In the summer of 1956 the wing of Győr writers' group fighting for reforms and socialist democracy gradually got back their positions from before Imre Nagy's replacement. They had a significant part in playing the same role with their braver and braver writings in the county Hírlap (approximately: Journal in English –translator) as the Irodalmi Ujság (Literary Gazette in English) did at country level. That is: it brought people's problems, thought to be individual to the general level, it gave forms for the thoughts in people's minds and expressed what most of the society wished for. All important demands of technical students' sixteen points – that is considered the most universal programme of the revolution – can be found in the articles of Hírlap from before 23rd October.

Lajos Bertalan in his report about Gyula Háy's literary evening quoted Lajos Simon's comment: 'we are happy to see our Soviet friends in Hungary as visitors but we do not consider the troops' staying here necessary any longer.' In order not to let anybody's attention escaping from the statement he brings the following in the first lines of the article: 'Nobody had to be afraid of revenge, either he criticised Mátyás Rákosi's politics or urged the Soviet troops staying in Hungary to leave the country.' József Kéri and Attila Szigethy urged Imre Nagy's total rehabilitation at

Minister Magda Jóború's conference of Győr professionals and the later emphasized it is the desire of the whole country. It was also Lajos Bertalan who writing about the funeral of László Rajk and his followers stated in Győr: Liabilities have to be called to account for lawlessness. In the evening of Gyula Háy Mihály Lendvai in his question remonstrated upon the fact that in the case of Mihály Farkas it is intended to hold a closed trial: 'although the whole country demands an open trial.' In his answer Gyula Háy said that on the trial of Mihály Farkas light can be thrown on the responsibility of Rákosi and even of the Soviets so that's why: 'everybody who takes development and founding confidence seriously demands open trials.' The county member of Parliament, Attila Szigethy in a more radical way than the programme of the technical students made a protest against not only lawlessness but also against illegal laws. 'we have to stop the harmful duality of our legal system and we have to cancel the orders against the interests of people.' It's not surprising that the white book of Győr published in 1958 named Gyula Háy's literary evening the overture of the revolution.' It's really true that all the wishes and demands could be heard that were proved by the activities of the whole Hungarian society on the following revolutionary days. Ideas like independent Hungarian home and foreign affairs, open and fair information about the Hungarian uranium ore, the way towards socialism that takes the national nature and history into consideration, Christianity, free thoughts, the rehabilitation of Cardinal Mindszenty, new election system, the possibility of forming independent social organizations, the possibility of living with our constitutionals rights and protesting against administrative ways. All of these were symbolically unified taking back Petőfi's inheritance (banner) that was formerly expropriated and falsified by the power, that is the demand of activity together with and cooperating with the brave, revolutionary people.

So in October 1956 there were suitable people in Győr who could take the lead of a democratic movement. At the same time the population was ready for the change. Besides general intention more and more people knew what they wanted and what they did not want.

A week before the outbreak of the revolution on the 16th October the county party organization had an extended meeting. Here the head of the agitprop department, Emil Zalai suggested that a professionals' polemic group should also be formed. Doing this the leaders of the party wanted to influence the movement from the ground up. The reason of suggesting the name of Attila József was that they hoped this way they could avoid the influence of the Petőfi circle in Budapest. And that was the main reason why Gábor Földes and Mihály Lendvai, who were present at the meeting as guests, insisted on the name of Győr Petőfi circle. They wished to call the fair, reform idea into being in Győr, too that could take up Petőfi's banner for those fighting for human freedom. According to the instructions of the political committee under the organization of county DISZ (Association of Working Youth, AWY - translator) in the early afternoon of 23rd October - nearly at the same time with the beginning of the Budapest demonstration - the first sort of formation meeting was beginning in József Kéri's ,county attorney's office. Besides the leaders of AWY, several members of the local writers' group and Kéri there was also Gábor Földes at present. Due to the news arriving from the capital the topic of course, was not only starting the polemic group. They agreed that immediate changes were needed in the management of the party and the country. Upon the demands published in Szabad Ifjúság (Free Youth -translator) they edited the document about the formation, the text of which was sent to the county Hírlap (Journal) and expressing their agreement to the centre of DISZ. They planned the open statutory

meeting of the Circle to be on the 28th October. Among the delegates for the preparational committee there was József Kéri, too. The Petőfi Circle of Győr was not able to play the same role as that of Budapest. It was formed late, after the outbreak of the revolution, in fact after its local victory since there were many of the foundation members in the forefront of Győr revolution. But the Circle as an organization did not have and get any role, at best, the Media and Information Office growing partly out of it what will be mentioned later on.

The local power reacted to the events of the capital quicker than the group of reformers. On the influence of the prohibitive orders of the Ministry of Interior the whole city was proclaimed. This way the trade union meeting for people employed at the building of the railway station announced at an earlier time was also not permitted. The county committee of Workers' HWP had a meeting at night where the commanders of military services were also invited. After János Hortobágyi's, principal secretary's information about the events they worked out the plan for protecting the city.

It was the army's duty to close down the roads and defend the important public buildings and the building of the party committee from outside. Border-guards were nominated to protect the building of the party inside. At the same time reliable party members were called in and armed, about twenty people just from the Gear Factory. There was overnight inspection in the building of the party committee but there was a temporary inspection in the building of county and city councils from where reliable cadres were also sent to defend the leaders of the party. The staff of the Interior Ministry Division was also armed where they were also ordered to be ready and military defence of the building was also organized. The situation of the Interior Ministry Division was more difficult, since the commander, Major István Márfi had been appointed to the forefront not long before so he did not have the appropriate knowledge of the territory and he did not have the necessary information

generally. The alert from the military divisional headquarters at Pápa was ordered for the local rifles and although we have no documents but considering the following events it is very possible that the local Soviet commandership was involved in the preparation of defence. Anyway they also had information through their own inner channels about the events of the capital and the country.

In the evening in the cultural hall of the cement-works of Beled village Attila Szigethy participated on the debating evening. In his speech and partly answering some questions and contributions Szigethy was mainly talking about economical, especially agricultural problems. (Peace Loan, Compulsory Delivery). His speech did not expand Imre Nagy's 1953 programme. The atmosphere became more ardent after the delegation of Sopron university students had arrived who read out the programme of MEFESZ (Alliance of Hungarian University and College Students-AHUCS) (it was published in the next day issue of the county paper titled Journal) On the suggestion of the local party secretary at about 8 pm they listened to the speech of Gerő on the radio. Partly the contents of the speech, partly its quality aroused the atmosphere so much that Szigethy asked the shouting crowd not to criticise the regime on his account and not to put him in a difficult position unnecessarily. It's true that on the influence of the university students and Gerő's speech the conference at Beled was formed in a different way. The students' demands stipulated free atmosphere and Gerő's speech aroused people's mood. So the local officials couldn't carry on for a long time and they left the room one after another.

According to our knowledge in the revolutionary events of 23rd October from among the most significant participants of Győr revolution it was only Miklós Menyhárt, the employee of Gear Factory, who participated in Budapest. Menyhárt who studied at engineering technical school after work was visiting a

factory with his school in Budapest on 22nd and 23rd October, during a study trip.

Naturally he took part in the demonstration on 23rd, he was at the Bem statue and in front of the building of the Parliament but he could not wait for and listen to Imre Nagy's speech because the train left for Győr at seven pm. Anyway the next day - although within narrow bounds - it was him and his followers who could give authentic information about the events.

So while on 23rd the Győr reformers were working on forming debating circles according to the period before the revolution or they were participating the debating evening during this time the power not wasting time was preparing for the expected clash. Hearing about the first demonstrations in total conformity with other parts of the country they prepared arms. Defence orders were organized by MDP.

The city was relatively silent the next day. Although the employees went to work they were mostly discussing the events of Budapest and were talking about their expected consequences. It was like this in the wagon factory where the first engineer, József Vadas the chairman of the future workers' council, who was the leader of the factory in the absence of the director instructed the workers through the expediter centre to stop gatherings and to go on with production and he talked to Lajos Szaló the party secretary of the factory about the possibility of a peaceful solution and continuous work. Where it was possible, people listened to the radio and at other places inspections were held. People working on the renovation of Rába Bridge asked the delivery-man to listen to the radio continuously and tell them if something important was announced. The slow train from Budapest arrived with great delay, at about eleven am instead of dawn. Its staff and passengers brought new -although not very fresh - news from the capital. On hearing them the construction

manager allowed the people from Budapest to go home to see their families. A lot of them could not get home because roads and mainly bridges were closed in Budapest. E.g Zoltán Burián could only get to the dormitory of the technical university where he inquired about the events from his former fellow-students then during the night he went back to Győr.

The military forces and the party committee were constantly prepared for the defence of rifles barracks, the number of guards was duplicated and an increased alert unit was set up. But there was no demonstration or any other movement on this very day.

*

On the demand of the employees on 25th October the radio broadcast was played in many plants through the loudspeaker. People ex officio had to listen to the speech of the Prime Minister (Imre Nagy) and of the new party secretary, meanwhile gatherings were expected to stop the concourses by giving information to the employees like this.

At the same time to increase the defence preparation reliable functionaries of the plants were armed. The military forces (at this time involving the party committee, too) also continued the preparation of defence, machine-gunned soldier patrolled around the railway station and other parts of the city. The army gave over a lot of weapons to the party committee. (tommy guns, munitions and a box of hand-grenades). Major Géza Krecz ordered assault guns and soldiers to defend party buildings. Radio connection was made between the Soviet and Hungarian troops and between the party committee. Although Colonel Moór later called assault guns back due to the information of a divisional general other military tasks were under preparation and he put his soldiers apart for this reason. Or upon Major Krecz's information he did not consider the

soldiers mainly from Győr and the surroundings appropriate against a possible movement. The first secretary of the party committee, János Hortobágyi cried out against it; There was a great debate about it between him and Colonel Moór.

Of course prestige and power played a great role in the debate; both the party secretary and the divisional general could give orders about using the military station; in this situation their interests could be against each other; Hortobágyi thought the most important to defend the party still having power, Colonel Moór thought the most important to defend the army. The revolution at Győr could draw strength from their struggle; one of the afternoon demands about calling the armoured troops back was soon realized; although it did not happen on their request but on the command of the divisional general; despite it, it seemed that the protesting people have power above weapons.

The leader of the Győr radio, Pál Pális was talking to the chairman of the Hungarian Radio, Valéria Benke in the morning 25th. She gave him the information that the centre building of the radio was damaged, so they broadcast from the building of the Parliament. Pális offered her technical aid that was accepted happily by Benke so in the morning the delegates of Győr radio left for Budapest with two loaded cars. The county main department gave them a state security second-lieutenant to protect them. The company going through be-flagged villages arrived at the capital in the afternoon, where they drove to the Parliament, to Kossuth square across Margit Bridge. They drove from the fully decorated settlements to the scene of slaughter. There were dead and injured people lying all over the square, approximately eighty people. In the nearby streets and under the arcades there was a dense crowd. In the deadly silence the two taxis drove to the south gate of the Parliament watched by several thousand pairs of eyes. They identified themselves and they carried their cargo upstairs with the help of people of Kossuth radio. János Kádár was about to speak in the provisional

studio. Broadcasting was late because first the tape-recorder from Győr had to be set up in a way that the speech could be recorded at the same time. During this Kádár was talking to the people from Győr, who, on the request of the first secretary, informed him about the events in Győr and they asked for the advice of Kádár about what they should say and do when they arrive home. On one hand Kádár emphasized the necessity of clever ways of talking politics that is he was not able to do – or he did not want to – give clear advice and instruction. On the other hand – right after the slaughter on Kossuth square! – he drew up attention of Pális and his fellows to do everything against blood being shed. Kádár asked them to inform the local leaders of the council in any case.

Perhaps this message of Kádár was partly a reason for the fact that while on the 25th the Győr leaders fairly protected their posts; they gave orders to shoot the besiegers of the prison, they used weapons against the protestors in front of the building of the party committee, they distribute guns to the reliable workers of plants, the Soviet armed troops were called in the city in the evening; the next day the management of the city escaped because of the demonstration so the National Council led by Attila Szigethy could take power, the rebellious occupied the building of the Interior Ministry division unopposed, the army and the police changed sides.

At the same time as Pális' and his followers' leaving for Budapest there was already a demonstration in Győr in front of the City Hall. The first significant action grew out of it in the early afternoon. Then the employees of big Győr factories and also students were already at present (Wagon factory, Gear Factory, Melting-works and Forge-works and Textile plants). The electrician Mihály Farkas read out a demand of fourteen points which were accepted by those present and they decided to give it over to the leaders of the county party committee. Then a part of the demonstrators went over to the party building, another part

went to MÁVAUT-station (National Railways) where they started to knock down the red stars. The actors and the employees of Kisfaludy Theatre led by Gábor Földes joined the demonstration in front of the building of the party committee.

At the theatre in the morning Edit Kéri initiated an unusual party members' meeting. According to her intention she would send a telegram to Budapest, in which they would claim the exemption of Ernő Gerő who was really responsible for the peaceful demonstration turning into an armed struggle. Only Gábor Földes joined her suggestion so the idea of holding the party meeting was thrown out by the management.

The actors joined the demonstration on Gábor Földes' suggestion after Imre Nagy's and Kádár's speech. The party secretary of the theatre, Mátyás Gilicz strongly opposed participating. Despite it Földes and his followers insisted on joining the movement of the workers. Földes was driven by several aims. On one hand he wanted to avoid excessive radical people – from his point of view – who could take over control; he intended to influence the movement with the help of well-known people, he intended to lead the action towards a national communism, such as that of Imre Nagy. He thought, the party members, who vindicated the rights of discussing politics for themselves up to now should not take second place in these really important and political hours if they wanted to get back or keep people's confidence. In their slogans they cheered the party (with renewed leadership), Imre Nagy and the socialist and independent Hungary. So a very important element of the Győr revolution was national independence from the very beginning. From the other side the demands, at least a significant part of them were reform and national communist following Imre Nagy's line even before the counter of Attila Szigethy. Another side of Földes' and his followers' programme was shown in the former NÉKOSZ movement songs defining the period and era to which they want to return the Hungarian history.

At the time the actors arrived at the building of the party committee, the delegation of a thousand people being there had a negotiation about the demands in the fourteen points with the local management in the building, outside Mihály Farkas spoke to the people. Encouraged by his followers Földes held a speech from the stairs of the building in which he called to keep peace, order and (self-) discipline. The two keywords of his speech were: justice and peace; he stated that the most important exemplary aim is the struggle for justice. He emphasized that it only can be achieved peacefully, bloodshed has to be avoided it can only lead to tragedy. He took a stand for Imre Nagy and he called for withdrawing the Soviet army for national independence. By this time the answer of the party management arrived: a part of the demands could be fulfilled, but it had some details that had to be discussed further; they promised an answer by five pm for the meeting. They sang the national Anthem together and then the actors went back to the actors' club in the theatre.

Meanwhile the news spread: students were arrested. According to other sources these students were from Budapest. Some of the demonstrators left for the building of the county's main department and the others for the prison. On the way to the building of the main department the demonstrators already met a police car that shot warning shots, that's why many of them stayed behind. At last about one hundred people were near the Interior Ministry division. Here the officer on duty, Tibor Varga state security lieutenant stopped them for whom the lathe operator, István Török (during the revolution the vice-commissioner of Ferenc Éliás at the police) from the wagon factory marching at the head of the demonstrators presented their demands; to release the arrested students. Varga stated that there was no political arrest and if the crowd didn't leave an order would be given to shoot. Major Márfi and state security first lieutenant Ernő Dóczi talked to the delegation of the demonstrators who supported the information from Varga about not keeping arrested students in the custody of state security.

Furthermore Márfi warned Török and his followers kindly not to go to the prison because there was a fight there. Following it the demonstrators started back to the city centre. On the way another groups of demonstrators joined them who marched to Széchenyi square, from there they went in front of the building of the party committee after some speeches for the answer promised by five o'clock.

During it the other group led by Mihály Farkas arrived in front of the prison demanding the release of political prisoners and arrested students. Among the demonstrators there was the county attorney, József Kéri who tried to persuade people that there are no political convicts in the prison but people did not believe him; then Kéri went home and he was not present at the time of the order to shoot. Attorney István Szilasi, Kéri's deputy sensed the intention of the crowd so telephoned to the city police station but he was refused by the police major, József Baranyai saying the prison is under the authority of the Interior Ministry division, so he cannot give orders. Then Szilasi made a phone call there where the person on duty told him that the division can intervene in the events upon the orders of the party committee and because the party committee was having a meeting at that moment, they could do nothing, armed intervention was needed. Water cannons and fire brigades would be enough against the crowd and finally the person on duty (perhaps Lieutenant Varga although he doesn't talk about this call in his confession) replied that he would give instructions.

The commander of the prison would not have enough strength to protect the building against the demonstrators that's why he also called the Interior Ministry division and asked for support from there. Until the arrival of the help, perhaps hoping that the situation could be solved without violence, the commissioner let the delegate of the demonstrators into the building. As a result of the negotiations release of the prisoners did start, the words of the convicts could be heard: we are free,

some of them were already out in the streets when reinforcements arrived, a van of armed people, policemen and people from state security, who had already shot into the air on their way. The demonstrating group led by István Török going to the main department could have seen and met their car, which makes it possible that the armed people were not ordered because of the news about the prison being attacked but they had been commanded earlier, as a part of the general defensive plan and preparing for the possible attack of the prison. Arriving at the prison the armed people got off the van and they went into the building with most of their weapons. But they left one machine-gun, ammunition and hand-grenades in the van. With their arrival the release of the prisoners was stopped. The crowd indignant about the appearance of the armed men and stopping the release of the prisoners demonstrated louder and louder, many of them threw stones at the building (building material in the nearby could offer them this ancient kind of weapon). At this point Mária Máté climbed up the van of the state security (left there intentionally or as provocation) and she began to give out the weapons, hand-grenades, ammunition but she was shot at from the building. Violence gave birth to violence again. The demonstrators now already had weapons and hand-grenades and they continuously attacked the building with stones. Their attack was answered by rounds, there were three fatalities. There was no possibility for escaping from the narrow place in front of the prison. Most of the demonstrators stayed unwillingly at the scene of the event although they drew backwards and the defenders of the building interpreted it as resolution.

Gábor Földes found out about the events in front of the prison in the theatre club. He hurried to the party committee at once to stop further bloodshed but he was not allowed to enter the building although he was member of the party. Hortobágyi and his mates did not want to negotiate with him even on the phone. By this time a great number of protestors gathered

demanding extraditing responsible people of the bloodshed and also demanding their penalty. After Földes had tried to intervene at the party committee in vain, he went to the prison. Right then there was a pause in the fight. In the building there were the armed people and in front of the building and in the surrounding narrow streets there was the indignant and determined crowd. Földes went to the gate of the prison alone, without any weapon and holding up his arms. He was let in. He could agree with the commander: the armed people could leave the building unhurt, the injured jailor was taken to the hospital by ambulance and at the same time every convict who wanted to, could leave the prison. Thanks to Földes's contribution approximately ten, fifteen people reclaimed their freedom.

*

After releasing the convicts the demonstrators went back to the party committee and they joined the groups coming from the main department and with other groups. Their number was about ten thousand then. Many of the indignant and brave people threw stones at the building of the party committee and they also threw one or two hand-grenades at it. It was also answered with hand-grenades and tommy guns from the building but according to some people's memory there were gunshots at the protestors from the secondary school nearby. Here there were no fatal victims but there was an injured person. István Török, the leader of the protest in front of the main department was hurt on his leg. The crowd was dispersed but in front of the Vörös Csillag Hotel (Red Star Hotel) a rather large group remained together. By this time the first revolutionary leaflet was also issued. To break up the protest Major Géza Krecz sent officers there by van to persuade people to go home peacefully; but the army officers' action was not successful.

At about eight o'clock in the evening Soviet tanks appeared in the centre of the city, partly to save the Soviets living

there, partly – concurring with the party committee, Major Krecz and Colonel Moór – to help the protection of the city. The crowd welcomed the Soviet soldiers in a hostile manner, they spat on them, they reviled them but there was no fight. The demonstrators left the streets at dawn. By this time the building of the party committee was already empty: the leaders took up their general headquarters in the county hall which could be defended more efficiently. Those with foresight were already finishing and wrapping: the leader of the agitprop division, Emil Zalai answered Pál Pális, who gave over Kádár's telephone message from Budapest about trying to avoid blood sacrifice that he was not interested in what Kádár said, he was wrapping and leaving for Pozsony. (Bratislava)

The power showed resolve in the morning of the 26th. They strengthened the armed defence of the buildings, the first secretary, Hortobágyi sent the fellow workers of the party committee to the plants to talk people out of another protest. The idea did not bring the hoped result. E.g. Róbert Dóczi together with his follower was ordered out of Machine-tool factory and then the workers like the workers of other plants went to protest.

In the morning the leaders of the plants and institutions tried to do their best to hold back the people from another demonstration after the tragedy of the previous day. People in the wagon factory got the request of SZOT (National Council of Trade Unions – NCTU) at about noon to form a workers' council and which was also broadcast on the radio and printed in the newspaper. Vadas and Szaló tried to prevent the demonstration this way but it was not very successful. The leaders of the factory units, operating engineers, party stewards and stakhanovists were also involved in the preparation. They planned the election of workers' council for the next day. In order to support legality of preparation and election Vadas telephoned to the centre of the trade, too but he did not get much information and he was told that upon the number of workers in the wagon factory about 50-

60 members of workers' council had to be elected and he was also informed that two-thirds of the workers had to be present at the election of final workers' council. Only a temporary workers' council can be elected if the ratio is under it. Despite the preparation most of the workers joined to the demonstration.

The director and the party secretary in the Gear factory called a general assembly in order to talk out people of the protest. This plan was also not successful. The workers cried down the party secretary István Cseri and the director did not manage to achieve the original aim also. Then Miklós Menyhárt could start to speak, he asked the workers that as the people did in Budapest that they also would march in close order in a disciplined way to support the Budapest protestors and Imre Nagy. On his suggestion they started to collect the demands of the factory and set up a separate committee to compose them. This would be the base of the temporary workers' council being elected the next day. The committee started to compose the points in the director's office; these composed again the demands spread all over the country. They claimed that the Soviet troops had to be withdrawn from the country, the independence of the country, at this time already the neutrality of the country, freedom of the press, the right to strike; they stated that they trusted in Imre Nagy and his government. Perhaps the request of the independent plant can be called special among the points although it could be found in the programme of 1956 of several plants that also had been divested from their independence. While the committee were compiling the demands in the office, bicycle messengers were sent out into the centre of the city to get information about the events. But the messengers did not arrive back when the workers got fed up with waiting for the programme to be ready and began to leave the area of the plant. At this time Menyhárt read out the so far ready text standing on a car. He tried to persuade his fellow workers to wait until the whole text is ready but people had run out of patience by this time and the crowd marched out; the compiling committee

finished composing the demands and followed the workers reaching them at the end of Stalin street. Before leaving on Menyhárt's request the director telephoned to the county council asking them to meet the committee of the factory. The workers of the gear factory went in front of the county council, where they heard that the leaders of the city and the county were already in the City Hall.

The demonstrators came together in front of the City Hall early in the morning. Their delegate went over to the county council already in the morning and they called over the leaders staying there to negotiate. Gyula Markó and most of the party leaders staying there (the secretaries of the county committee János Hortobágyi, Kálmán Bodnár and András Takács, the head of agitprop department Emil Zalai and Károly Petrovics) went over to the building of the City Hall where Hortobágyi sent a message before their departure to get a microphone ready because he wanted to talk to the crowd. After their counter they began negotiations in the small council-hall. The vice commander of the police, state security captain, Lajos Tihanyi was present at the meeting. His presence at the meeting supported the fact that the board at this point did not give up the possibility of armed 'mopping up' of the movement. But as soon as they started their negotiation the delegates of Győr plants and companies arrived after one another with their demands. E.g. the workers of Wool-Spinning Factory were organized and led by the party secretary and the director of the plant. At the beginning Hortobágyi negotiated with them but as the situation became more and more tensed Gyula Markó and András Takács went on with the negotiation. Hortobágyi first remained in the background and when on behalf of the city he was torn out of the delegate leaving for Budapest by the crowd, he went away through the back door and together with other hard-liner leaders he left for Pozsony. (Bratislava)

Miklós Menyhárt read out the demands of his factory from the balcony of City Hall and then he gave it over to the leaders in the small council-hall. The plant delegations coming after one another joined this programme; the sketch of the workers of the gear factory was completed with their demands. An interesting feature of the Győr revolution is that although the usage of weapon the previous day was mentioned at the negotiation with the leaders and there was a demand to name the person ordering the threat, the person responsible for it and to penalize him the programmes and political aims overshadowed it. It is due to Attila Szigethy that there was no armed fight and popular verdict in Győr. Without the intention of decreasing Attila Szigethy's merit we have to emphasize that at this point he has not appeared yet, furthermore the occupation of the county main department without bloodshed happened before he took the control over the city. In other county cities line-firings demanding death rolls was followed by the reactions of the crowd () and the next day there were further popular verdicts. In Győr there was such an event neither on 25th nor 26th.

Meanwhile the representatives of the demonstrators demanded that the local leaders should accept and approve their headings and they also decided to send them to the government. For this reason they chose a delegate. The people from the gear factory insisted on that the county leaders have to be members of it, also partly to support their demands partly to be able to reach the capital. So at the beginning, the first secretary Hortobágyi became a member of this delegation. It supports the fact that the leaders of Győr revolution could be very sober in difficult moments even before Attila Szigethy. At last Hortobágyi did not go to Budapest – as it was mentioned before -: on the request of the crowd he was left behind, he was replaced by another party-leader, András Takács. At about eleven am eight people left for the capital in two cars of the county council: on behalf of the party committee András Takács, the chairman of the county

council, Gyula Markó five workers from factories (among them Miklós Menyhárt and Jenő Szabó from the wagon factory) and a railwayman. The delegates did not get to Pest. By this time except for Margaret Bridge the bridges were protected by Soviet tanks. The Győr delegation tried to go across at Lánchíd (Chain-bridge). After they failed, they went into the students' hostel in Bécsi road (presumably into Kandó dormitory) and they dictated their demands by phone from there. They could not talk to Imre Nagy but they were told to go home, Kossuth radio will broadcast their demands and at the same time Imre Nagy's answer. (None of them happened.)

While the representatives of the protestors were negotiating with the county leaders, the speakers handed the microphone to each other on the balcony of the City Hall. Most of their demands were similar to the ones spread all over the country, they demanded to deliver people responsible for bloodshed, to release the captured university students and they claimed that the police and the army should join the insurgents. The assistant evangelic bishop gave a speech; due to its effect and the crowd's urges the Catholic priest of the Cathedral, Lajos Horváth and the Benedictine teacher Iréneusz Galambos and the former secretary-general of the Small-holders' Party read out a demand under fourteen headings.

Meanwhile a group of the demonstrators was not satisfied with words and they left to persuade the soldiers and the policemen to join and to occupy the building of the Interior Ministry division. One fifth of the demonstrators went to the Rákóczi barracks. The officers of the regiment after warning the crowd in vain to leave the base let the five-membered delegation in (a member of it was István Török again). Török and his followers demanded from major Géza Krecz that the army should join the insurgents and go with them to disarm the Interior Ministry division. Some members of the delegation also wanted weapons. Krecz refused it determinedly but he agreed that soldiers and officers without weapons join the

demonstrators. A group of soldiers, among them the military band playing the National Anthem went to the City Hall together with the protestors where captain János Halász, the political deputy of the regiment commander announced: the army agrees on the right demands of the insurgents, it will not use weapon against them but it will take part in ensuring order and public security.

Other soldiers together with demonstrators went to Interior Ministry division and on the way a company of the Győr technical corps joined them. They arrived there at about eleven o'clock. The main department was already informed by Géza Krecz, after the demonstrators had left, but the connection was soon broken up and after it Krecz could not talk to them until the occupation of the building. On this day the Interior Ministry division was not so much determined as on Thursday as it can be seen on the re-organization of the building: the state security soldiers staying downstairs were placed upstairs and they were replaced by everyday policemen. This meant that the most reliable units were taken out from downstairs which could be attacked easily. It can be explained only by the thought that at this time they could not only imagine giving order to shoot but negotiations with the rebellious people and the result of the negotiation would be worsened without any doubt if the delegate had to go among state security soldiers. But they did not give up the possibility of armed resistance. The demonstrators were accepted by the commanders: Major Márfi and state security captain Lajos Tihanyi. They were covered by state security first lieutenant Tibor Varga with tommy gun from some steps further back. The atmosphere was stretched to breaking point. Inside the guards were ready: the barrels of guns in the windows were aiming at the crowd. In the street the crowd was encouraged by its own success and its success at the barracks and that the soldiers with them and at the same time they were a furious crowd because of the bloodshed of the previous day.

István Török read out the demands of the demonstrators again: to release the arrested university students and political prisoners. Tihanyi said that students were not arrested in the whole city (He telephoned to all police headquarters after the previous day's protest asking if they had taken anybody into custody and if yes they have to release them at once but everywhere the answer was no) but Török and his followers did not believe it. Tihanyi called Török and his followers to negotiate but they were only ready to do it if the guns were withdrawn from the windows. After it had been done Török stood up on the fence near the building and asked for the trust of the demonstrators from there and to be patient and asked them not to attack the building while he was negotiating. Of course his words were only heard by the ones standing nearby.

Inside Török repeated their requests about releasing political prisoners. Tihanyi answered that he could not take steps on his own in the case of arrested people, he had to ask for the permission of his commanders; Major Éliás agreed to find the student about whom the crowd thinks he/she is a state security captive and left the building with some representatives of the protestors. The crowd accepted it as the police joined them. Éliás was cheered especially after the red star from his cap was removed. Then or following it the crowd moved closer to the building and the negotiations were nearly stopped. On Tihanyi's request Török made another speech, this time from the window warning the people to behave peacefully warning them that with this behaviour they endanger the success of the negotiations. People shouted up to Török to search the examining rooms and rubber cellars and someone even claimed that he himself had been imprisoned there not long ago.

Continuing with the negotiation Török and his fellows demanded to name those responsible for the use of weapon on the previous day and the one who gave order to the state security first lieutenant to threaten people with shooting, he also demanded the state security to lay down their arms and the

police to side with the insurgents and to show the examining rooms and rubber cellar. Then Török together with Captain Tihanyi – who did not wait more for the higher order and approval – went to the cells to find those captured and why. Those in custodies were in prison mostly for unauthorized crossing of the frontier. Upon the agreement of Török and Tihanyi they were not considered political convicts who could be released. At this point the crowd broke into the building and all the prisoners were set free. The rebels assaulted some state security officers, one of them was taken to hospital and was allowed home after he had recovered some days later; they began to destroy the documents and to arm. The officers went back to one of the rooms upstairs. Géza Krecz who was informed about the occupation of the Interior Ministry division by his officers immediately sent reinforcement to the building and ensured the defence of the state security people and the documents, they took the guns away from the civilians and they were delivered to the barracks by vans and not using violence they drew the disarmed people out of the building by late afternoon. The soldiers were helped in performing their tasks from about half past two in the afternoon by the delegates of the National Council (e.g. Sándor Berger, technician of Richards factory). The state security officers were taken to Rákóczi barracks by van in the interest of their personal safety. Those who wanted to leave could leave. Captain Tihanyi was accompanied to a friend of his by Berger himself because the leader of the state defence did not dare to go home either or the barracks. Next day Berger was inquiring about the state security people but he could not talk to the commander. Then he personally went to Major Krecz who did not trust him and he was ordered out of the barracks without saying a single word.

This is the unique feature of the Győr revolution that the most critical situation could be solved without bloodshed except for releasing prisoners on Thursday. It was not only Attila Szigethy who was found by the revolution as the most appropriate person for guiding the city. In all the difficult situations the people who could solve the problems could be found in every institution and who were responsible for their instructions. At the prison it was Gábor Földes who could stand in the way of a bigger tragedy.

The stressful moments at the Rákóczi barracks could be solved peacefully by Major Krecz and István Török: the military band could pacify the demonstrators by playing the National Anthem. The joining soldiers and Captain Halász' notification connected the so-far opposing people. At the Interior Ministry division it was István Török's merit again that persuaded the board of the state security and police to negotiate but Major Ferenc Éliás also helped the peaceful solution to a great extent with the fact that he found the presumably arrested student by proving good will to the police. Éliás and his followers did find the student - in the mortuary of the hospital. The news was given the protestors in front of the City Hall where the situation changed a greatly after that.

In the morning when the uprisers went from the City Hall to the barracks, then to the Interior Ministry division, in the club-room of the Győr-Sopron county Printing Company Attila Szigethy was consulting with Gábor Földes, Frigyes Grábics and some journalists and the representatives of people's front and trade union. Szigethy arrived in Győr at about 9-10 o'clock in the morning. He had left for Budapest, to go to the session of the Parliament but the driver did not accept further work. Then he tried to make a phone call from the office of people's front to get information about the situation in Budapest but there was no answer at the other end. At last he managed to talk to the AWY Central Leadership secretary, János Gosztonyi who he had known personally for a long time because Szigethy was the

leader of the Peasants' Party in Sopron county after 1945 (from 1946 the chairman of the county organization officially) and at the same time Gosztonyi worked in the youth section in Vas county. Szigethy asked Gosztonyi about the situation in Budapest and what he considered correct from the centre, what would be needed in the country especially in Győr. Gosztonyi suggested to Szigethy that they should form a local power organization following the pattern of 1945 and support Imre Nagy. Kádár's instruction given to the Győr delegation the previous day is similar to Gosztonyi's report on the situation: besides avoiding bloodshed in any way the Győr HWP leaders should follow clever local politics. Szigethy who tried to get in touch with the party centre and the government in vain knew this suggestion of Gosztonyi. Not long after the telephone call Frigyes Grábics called him to the club of the printing company where a lot of people were waiting for him. Besides Frigyes Grábics there were Gábor Földes, Róbert Dóczy, Hajós the chairman of the trade union of teachers, some print workers, journalists, all together about twenty people. Szigethy told them what he heard from Gosztonyi and he was also informed about the events in Győr, about the protests, demands and the collapse of power. Földes also told him that the representatives of Győr factories and plants had called a consultation by two pm in the City Hall. It was mentioned here that Szigethy should take the lead to avoid the extremes could take the power and lead the city into disaster without due reflection; at the same time the personality of Szigethy is acceptable for taking power, he has a good relationship with the new Prime Minister, Imre Nagy and also local society relies on him, he is not listed among the followers of Rákosi. (*although later the Győr rebels would be dissatisfied with him in many cases*) Szigethy drew up a sketch about evolution and he was only willing to accept leadership if the gathered people supported him in this direction of politics. When he was ensured about it Lajos Bertalan phoned to the City Hall where he spoke to György Szabó. The former social-democrat leader, György Szabó

arrived at the City Hall on behalf of his factory at about noon and took over the leading of the city in the current power vacuum, presumably he was the one who called the representatives of the workers for the afternoon and the next day. He answered to Bertalan's question that Attila Szigethy and his followers were welcomed at the City Hall so they went over immediately. It was about noon when the Temporary National Council was formed. The list of the names was read out for the protestors and they were made legitimate. (*on the pattern of 1945*) Attila Szigethy became the chairman of the National Council. The leaders of the different sections were the following: workers' council: György Szabó, revolutionary military council: Major Géza Krecz, professionals' council: Gábor Földes, peasants' council: Sándor Szabó, administrative council: Mihály Szalai.

On the formation of the temporary National Council issued a calling immediately at noon, in which it stated that it dissolves the organization of state security, it calls upon each settlement to form its own council to guide, to lead itself and to be subordinated to the National Council. At the same time it called up the inhabitants to protect public order and peace^[56] in order to avoid bullying and the army not to use weapons against the insurgents.

At about two pm the meeting of the workers' delegations started, it was convened by György Szabó and his followers but at which Attila Szigethy presided. Szigethy's and the other leaders' appointments were approved. The subject of the meeting besides electing the leaders, discussing the political, feeding situation of the city and also the public order of the city would have been. They had just formed the Revolutionary Soldiers' Council when the news about the butchery in Mosonmagyaróvár arrived. Hearing it Árpád Tihanyi took the responsibility to go to the city to restore order. He was accompanied by several armed soldiers from Rákóczi barracks and in the van there were also civilians without guns. Szigethy also sent Földes to the city after Tihanyi so that as a member of the Győr National Council they

could disarm the state security and prevent further bloodshed. At the present point of the research it cannot be stated why two units went to Mosonmagyaróvár. Perhaps Szigethy forgot the volunteer Tihanyi, who he may not have known, but he perhaps wanted to send somebody who had more political power and was more well-known or indeed a member of HWP. Földes caught up with Tihanyi's and his followers' van-caravan in his Pobjeda on the road to Mosonmagyaróvár, he took their white flag and pulling the vans went over to the city. At the City Hall he showed his letter of credence and urged the city party secretary to the barracks to let his car in. After it had been done he drove to the barracks, where he was let in through the gate after the previous agreement. Sources contradict each other about the events following it. The most possible reconstruction of the events is the next one: After letting Földes in, the gate could be closed. Then he talked to some occasional commanders, First Lieutenant József Vági (by this time Captain Dudás has already escaped to Czechoslovakia), he convened the effective force and he acquainted the soldiers standing in line that Attila Szigethy, the chairman of the Győr National Council ordered to dissolve and disarm the organization of state security in the county; it's no worth resisting any more, they should lay down their arms. The regular soldiers, the recruited state security soldiers were happy to hear it and they hurried to the gate laying down their arms to leave the barracks. Then the crowd poured in and began to assault the officers who they thought to be responsible. Földes tried to ask for help in vain, to stop the people's verdict, the armed force in the city was not able to or did not dare to help. He could only manage to push First Lieutenant József Vági into his car and took him to the building of the council and he took two other officers to Győr on their own request and where he allowed them. During this he was also assaulted, his glasses were broken. The Győr caravan led by Tihanyi arrived after the lynching (arriving in Mosonmagyaróvár they drove to the barracks of the technical corps). From the barracks of the frontier guards Tihanyi

went to the City Hall, he talked to the demonstrators there about the events in Győr, about the necessity of forming, more precisely reforming the national council in order to ensure order and safety, then he also went back to Győr where just like Gábor Földes he reported to Attila Szigethy the happenings of the city.

After Földes and his followers had gone under the command of Zoltán Tihanyi guards were organized to the City Hall in Győr in order to ensure peace during the council meeting and at the same time they organized the duty of using the telephone. The aim of it was that the calls from all over the country wouldn't disturb the work of the council leaders and the person on telephone duty was informed about the basic cases and he could answer the questions and could give the information. In the evening of 26th Zoltán Burián was the first person on duty.

*

In the morning of 27th the National Council had a meeting. According to Gábor Földes it wasn't Szigethy again who convened it. He planned the meeting to be on Monday hoping that he could get enough information before then, build up the leadership to be able to work efficiently. The information seems to support this fact upon which Szigethy talked to Budapest on K-line (direct-line) several times that day. It can be imagined that he had some pieces of information - although not exact ones - about the changes be-notified on the 28th, about the plans so far and he wanted to wait for them before the Győr meeting. But since the delegates had arrived at the City Hall in the morning he could not do anything else but held the meeting. In his introductory speech he emphasized that he considered his most important task to defend order and peace and he was against all kinds of irresponsible policies. That was one of the reasons why he declared to organize national guards of the National Council to give the youth something to do so that he could ensure that

they stayed in Győr at the same time. He took an oath to Imre Nagy again. As he said there was no other person who was as honest and appropriate for leading as him. Then on behalf of the Catholics the priest of the Cathedral, Lajos Horváth interrupted saying he knew such a person: namely the primate-archbishop József Mindszenty. Then Dr. István Tóth sitting behind him on behalf of the workers' council formed at the county council on the very day replied angrily: stupidity.

Szigethy remembered the 27th October as a very chaotic day in 1957. People 'were coming and going, a lot of them rushed in and wanted to talk'. Dr. István Tóth had the same opinion about the meeting, he soon left the meeting. László Bóna did the same who prepared the demands of the Catholic priests together with Lajos Horváth with the aim of reading it out but realizing the real situation he decided that it was not worth reading. The guards at the City Hall was set up the previous evening and who was led by Zoltán Tihanyi was helped with a platoon of policemen led by the police lieutenant István Markó but could not perform its task yet. During the day Tihanyi had to ask for help from Major Éliás and the commander of the local replacement centre, Major Pál Mag to be able to ensure the peace in the meeting more or less.

The idea of forming a counter government came about at this meeting but not in the way that it spread in the historical writings of the Kádár era. They did not suggest a Trans-Danubian government next to the government of Imre Nagy tearing the country into two instead the leadership of Attila Szigethy opposing the Imre Nagy government. According to the speakers people did not trust in Imre Nagy who was responsible for calling the Soviet troops in, declaring summary jurisdiction making him inappropriate for leadership. The idea of giving help to the Budapest insurgents also came up. Both ideas were cheered by the people demonstrating in front of the building who listened to the meeting through the loud speakers. Szigethy refused both just like the previous day emphasizing that he would not take the

responsibility in history for forming a counter government in the city sullyng the city's name with this dishonest activity. A part of the crowd then began to demonstrate against Szigethy but most of them prevented them. In the meeting room László Bóna also supported Szigethy. Just like the chairman of the National Council he also refused the demand of a counter government and sending armed youth to Budapest referring to the horror of the struggle and the example of the state in Korea. At the same time he urged the National Council to turn to the UNO that it could ensure order in Hungary and under its supervision there could be free elections.

The meeting decided to send a delegation to the Soviet commander in order to make a kind of compromise based agreement. The National Council assured the Soviets that they would stop every armed action against them, supporting them with food if needed. From the other side Colonel Svarc assured the people in Győr that they did not wish to intervene in the events and they would not have to be afraid of the Soviets withdrawing to Győrszentiván.

In the early afternoon the remaining Győr HWP leaders, András Takács, András Kócza, Lajos Szaló, József Talabéri, József Kéri, Mihály Lendvai, Imre Turi etc gathered in the district party committee. On hearing about the leaders' escape in order to maintain the party operating ability they decided to elect a new, temporary leaders' board and they issued a declaration containing their point of view about the events. Kócza had already held a negotiation about it with Szigethy who agreed with the suggestion. It was only József Kéri who thought the initiation was too early. Despite it he took part in the meeting. By five pm the Declaration was ready and the new board of leaders was set up the secretary of which was Róbert Dóczi, the members were András Takács, József Talabér, András Kócza, Lajos Szaló and József Kéri. Later on András Takács was left out on Szigethy's suggestion and was replaced by László Tölgyesi, the political co-worker of county committee. In the declaration the

local leadership of the communist party accepted and promised to support the temporary National Council led by Attila Szigety and in order to mop up the armed fight it agreed to disarm and dissolve the state security in the whole country. It had already happened in Győr but at a country level Imre Nagy would announce only on 28th October that for the sake of peaceful evolution, the State Security Authority will be dissolved. That is the temporary Győr party leadership had already taken a stand for one of the most important and drastic step by Szigety, namely dissolving the state security on 27th before Imre Nagy's provision, furthermore they already demanded that it be carried out. They also demanded before Imre Nagy's announcement to withdraw the Soviet troops from the country. There was only one essential and general demand that was left out of the declaration: demanding free elections in which several parties participate. Its lack does not necessarily mean that they did not agree with it. On one hand it is difficult to expect from an organization being in monopolistic position to urge opponents to come into being so it was not the duty of HWP to demand a multiparty system. Several organizations, bodies (among them the Győr National Council) were definitely against forming parties in an early period of time. On the other hand since they accepted the National Council they also acknowledged cancelling monopoly of HWP because the council did not get the authority to practise the power from the party, their members were not appointed by the party. The declaration also put an end to defining the events as counter-revolution previously the central power's report and accepted them as "legal national demands of the working people", the aim of which was not restoration but to correct the mistakes of former years. The Executive Committee decided that the declaration be read out on the radio - András Takács wanted to do it but the others persuaded him not to - and it was printed in the county newspaper. József Kéri warned his followers that it can be publicized only with the permission of the National Council and he accompanied Róbert Dóczi to Szigety. They got

the permission from him (as it was mentioned before during the talk Szigethy suggested that András Takács should be left out of the leadership) so Dóczi could read the text in the Free Győr Radio and it could be printed in the next issue of Journal. The general feeling can be characterized by the fact that there was a demonstration in front of the editorial office of the newspaper in which Attila Szigethy was written as editor, some issues were burnt because they issued the statement by the HWP leadership.

Upon Attila Szigethy's appeal the previous day or the appeal of the Trade Union and Central Leadership known from the newspaper and the radio in most workplaces the workers' council was elected on 27th or revolutionary organizations were formed under other name to control their own cases.

A great number of functionaries of HWP got into these bodies so on the 29th new councils were elected or made up of new people. At the same time representatives were delegated by the Győr National Council to ensure the balance of workers. These councils controlled the plants and institutions under their authority, preserving their worth, the ability of operation, upon the demands of workers they judged the former leaders and either they supported them in their position or sent them on holiday or occasionally they made them redundant. Although during the revenge following the defeat of the revolution a lot of workers' council leaders were accused of prosecuting communists in reality the opposite is true. The workers' council with the fact that it started disciplinary proceedings against the people who the workers thought to be 'persona non grata' were prevented from being made unemployed upon unfounded accusations, to stigmatize people or assault could happen. It is proved by the fact that many of them were accused of rescuing communists during the revolution. To keep the legality of the disciplinary proceedings the workers' council in the wagon factory appointed a qualified lawyer, dr. János Körmendi next to the disciplinary committee, who was not a member of the committee, he did not have the right to decide and vote, his only

task was to insure the legality of the proceedings. Election of the workers' council usually happened in secret and the elected people had to meet different criteria. In the Gear Factory e.g. it was stipulated that a previously convicted person cannot be elected or those who were an officer of the Horthy army or gendarmerie. With the first they wished to ensure the positive vetting and clearing of the workers' council and the second is a political standpoint, protest against even the possibility of a restoration. On this day the document containing the names of the party members called in to protect the party committee with weapons after 23rd October came to light in the Gear Factory. On the suggestion of the chairman, Miklós Menyhárt they decided that they would be examined one by one in front of the full meeting of the workers' council during the following days, that is they would not apply collective punishment against them and judge them individually after clearing their cases. At the same time the workers' council chose connecting people: Rudolf Szalai's task was to keep in touch with the wagon factory, István Jakab's with the other plants and Ferenc Nagy's with the National Council.

Late in the evening the National Council called in the station master of Hungarian State Railways who was sent to Hegyeshalom accompanied by Zoltán Burián and a police officer to restore order at the frontier where the foreign aid-cargos were piled up. Burián and his followers agreed with the Austrian railwaymen in order to avoid traffic chaos – and against possible abuse – that the aids had to be delivered by rail from the border. Loading (or packing) had to be done in the area of Austria and the Hungarians sent people to help the Austrian railwaymen. The aids had to be delivered from the border to the Győr railway cultural hall or directly to Budapest.

It was also in the evening that Attila Szigethy held an improvised press conference for the western journalists (Austrian, German and English). According to the available

sources Szigethy did not want to accept the representatives of the press but because the guides let them in the building and giving them information personally seemed to be a better solution in any way than if they would send uncertain based news all over the world he held this conference. Szigethy said that the aim of the revolution was to correct the mistakes of socialism and he spoke about maintaining the results of it they want to correct the mistakes and to abolish lawlessness. He emphasized that Hungary wanted to be an independent and neutral state, if did not want to belong to either the western block nor the eastern one and did not want to 'bleed out between two pagans'.

*

The next day a newer demonstration started in front of the City Hall threatening most of the National Council and its politics. The crowd demanded to set up a counter government again, to send armed youth to Budapest and to send communists away from the National Council. The demonstration had anti-Semitic sentiments, too. A lot of the demonstrators wanted Szigethy to be replaced. (it can be understood from a knowing Hungarian nursery rhyme, the meaning is the following: *come out, Szigethy, your house is burning outside*). Szigethy who was totally determined to prevent setting up a counter government and sending the youth into fight in order to stop the demonstrators said that the National Council would consult the Prime Minister Imre Nagy in an ultimatum to abolish the armed struggle at once or 'the Trans-Danubian inhabitants will help the champions of freedom in Budapest.' Following the suggestion of László Germán and József Rokop he also called the representatives of the Trans-Danubian revolution bodies to Győr on a meeting of 30th October to give information to each other mutually and to determine certain principles together relating to further politics. (At this meeting the Trans-Danubian National

Council was formed.) At the end, on the demonstrators' demand he had to sacrifice the chairman of the professional council, Gábor Földes who resigned from his membership. (In the evening of 3rd November Szigethy met Földes in the theatre club again, he was informed as if the situation would be consolidated and asked him to take his place again in the National Council.)¹⁷⁴ Mihály Szalay left the council together with Földes who used to be the leader of the agricultural department of the City Hall before the revolution. Following this József Kéri and Zoltány Tihanyi (the current commander of the city hall guards) also withdrew from public role. At the same time Szigethy involved some representatives of the radical side in the work of the National Council like the Benedictine teacher Iréneusz Galambos.

On this day the leaders of MDP gathered in the building of the district committee again. But hearing the news of the strong demonstration against the communists the meeting was cancelled and the participants escaped from the building.

In the afternoon the victims of the line-firing in front of the prison were buried solemnly where all the revolutionary organizations and the Győr National Council participated.

During the day a message by telegraphic set came from the Borsod County Workers' Council: they inquired about two young people from Miskolc. The city of Győr said that they didn't know about them but they sent a welcome to the revolutionaries of Miskolc. From this day there was regular use of telegrams, which became one of the most important methods of receiving and giving information besides the radio. With time and building up connection with more cities more and more news arrived and left Győr; besides clarifying political standpoints information about the Soviet army's movement was given and received and Szigethy regularly sent this information to Budapest. The news arriving on the telegraphic set was the only that was considered very confidential and secret during the days of the revolution in Győr. (from where the very first day the

meeting of the National Council was broadcast through the loudspeakers) Besides the operator and the two connecting people nominated by the council nobody was allowed to enter the room where the telegraphic set was located. The professionally stored and treated material unfortunately cannot be researched, all of them were destroyed with the appearance of the Soviet tanks at dawn on 4th November.

The founders' meeting of Győr Petőfi Circle was held at six in the evening in the reading room of the library. József Rokop and the secretary of Attila Szigethy had to leave early because of the demonstration in front of the City Hall so there was no time left for discussion on the merits and debating plans besides stating the formation and acceptance of a demand under three headings. Attila Szigethy losing reliable helpers this day needed support in order not to lose his leadership.

The Press and Information Office organized after the founding meeting of Petőfi Circle especially seems to be encouraging. (further on Press Office) The people leaving from the county library, most of them writers' association members were continuing discussing the events in the streets of Győr, arguing about the formations in which they could support the leaders of the city most efficiently, the revolution, how they could ensure keeping the achieved results. They thought that forming an organization broadcasting summarized news in both directions could establish the possibility of not giving the passionate crowd feelings due to false news. Even Attila Szigethy could perform his task under more peaceful conditions, if the real pieces of information really reach him in time. According to its founding intention the Press Office took the responsibility for changing the information into news and deliver them to the ones who are in charge of them. In order to supply the news and radio with appropriate material they formed a special form of editors led by Mihály Lendvai and they decided to set up an interpreting group led by Vilmos György to keep in touch with foreign

journalists and for receiving news from abroad. The leader of the organization was said to be György Peterdy.

Next day the Press Office started its work downstairs at the City Hall. It was not a good omen that they got the room of the former collecting office. To tell the truth they could not really start work because the first day was spent setting up and furnishing. The Trans-Danubian meeting made it impossible to work and the incident of Somogyvári (which will be discussed later on) on the second and third day. The forming Trans-Danubian National Council (later TDNC) appointed an own leader, Imre Técsi as the head of the Press Office and whom the staff did not want to accept and the extreme bureaucracy stopped the spontaneous rate of progress . Anyway the tasks and legitimatizations mixed because the National Council had its own people for supervising the press and radio. In the given situation the Press Office did not find its place. It can be shown by the fact that the newspaper did not find many writings of the leader the Press Office editors, Mihály Lendvai appropriate for publishing.

From this day armed force began to be organized - presumably upon the experiences of the previous day - at different level to defend the revolution. On the suggestion of Ferenc Éliás the police captain was appointed to the commander of the people's guards; also setting up the armed guard of plants began and they got weapons from the army with the permission of Major Géza Krecz.

During the morning hours the delegation of the Workers' Council of the County Council led by Dr. István Tóth went to Attila Szigethy. They agreed that it was the task of the National Council led by Szigethy to guide the county politically, the workers' council formed in the county council is responsible for administration and real clarifying. The Workers' Council of the County Council had a meeting on this day about accepting and delivering the aid arriving from abroad. In connection with it a motion of no-confidence emerged against the leader of the health department who earlier called the Budapest demonstrators 'rats'.

The chairman of the workers' council, Dr. István Tóth joined the motion of no-confidence and the leader of the health department was made redundant immediately.

In the afternoon the workers' council decided to send a delegation to the government to force the former day's ultimatum and to sort out the problems. The initiation of the wagon factory was supported by the National Council: László Sebők and Géza Dénesfai nominated István Török to ask the questions to the Prime Minister: what he thinks about a multiparty system and freedom of the press, why he declared summary jurisdiction and if he did it on his own intention: when his government swore allegiance (*that is if it was he who called in the Soviet troops*). But Török and his fellows arrived at Parliament late, they could not reach Imre Nagy but they were made an appointment for the next day by one thirty in the afternoon.

*

The most frequently mentioned day of the Győr revolution is of the ill-reputed 30th October. This evening the TDNC was formed and this was the day when there was an experiment to form a government by Lajos Somogyvári who was said by the communist historians to be a captain in the Horthy army. (Somogyvári Lajos lived in Nagytétény and worked as a fruit-grower. He left for Budapest on 30th October and he heard about the assembly of delegates in Győr on the way there. It was then when he decided to go there) It's true that 30th October was the most problematic day of the Győr events, a lot of details of the events are still not clear. To our knowledge at present Attila Szigethy lost important helpers who stood by him from the very beginning and could hardly perform the unexpected (and not wanted) task that was to organize the Trans-Danubian meeting. Upon the nomination broadcast by the Győr radio the delegates arrived in Győr early in the morning and there were telephone

calls from people wanting to confirm the validity of the news and the aim of the meeting. At the same time many calls came from Budapest e. g. an old acquaintance of Szigethy, Ferenc Erdei asked Szigethy about why he wanted to form a counter government. During this time just as on the following days there was a crowd demonstrating in front of the City Hall and listening to the National Council meeting through loudspeakers and occasional speakers appearing on the balcony.

Furthermore there was already a great mess when a van arrived with armed people wearing white aprons with red cross or splash, saying they were from Budapest. The leader of the group began to talk to the protestors already in the street praising the heroism of those in the apprising who reviled the Imre Nagy's government betrayals and demanded that he would talk to the people. He was led up to the balcony where getting to and taking the microphone he introduced himself: Lajos Somogyvári, agricultural worker, who was already imprisoned, he was a delegate of the Budapest revolutionary youth who came to call the people of the country into crusade against the Soviets, to wake them up from their laziness and to lead the armed population of Győr to the capital. Somogyvári could not be successful if he had not said the same thing and not in the same way as some radical groups wanted to hear it for some days. Somogyvári's group bigger as more people from Győr joined it. The dangerous situation was saved when somebody cut the wire of the microphone.

At this time Somogyvári and his armed people went to the radio to make statement about fighting a public bigger than that of Győr. It was especially dangerous because from this day, upon the decision of the workers' council at Balatonszabadi radio station the radio, the transmitter there also broadcast the programme of Győr radio so it could be heard not only all over the country but abroad, too. So Somogyvári's speech could reach

many people through the air. (The interesting thing is that Somogyvári accompanied by his armed people behaved as a dictator since did not fail to ask for written permission from the terrorized György Szabó to be able to speak on the radio.) But Pál Pális and his followers were informed about Somogyvári's counter and called them to stop broadcasting his speech because it could have incalculable effects and it could endanger everything that was achieved nearly without bloodshed. The radiomen saying that there was a live broadcast suggested Somogyvári's speech should be recorded having the advantage that it could be played many times later on. At last Somogyvári agreed to it and recorded his much talked-of speech that was never broadcast on Győr radio. After finishing recording Somogyvári and his followers were waiting for the broadcast in the studio for a while then they went back to the City Hall but many of the demonstrators joining them in Győr stayed at the radio station and they demanded that Somogyvári's speech be broadcast.

People at the radio station asked for Attila Szigethy's advice and help on the phone. He turned to the workers' council of the wagon factory asking them to help in eliminating the counter-revolution attempted putsch in order to form a counter-government. Pális and his circle said: they did not want to broadcast the speech and they requested that somebody on behalf of the National Council should listen to it and should stop the protest in front of the building. The council sent Miklós Petőcz and Zoltán Burián to the radio who listening to some parts of the speech supported the judge of the radio: it cannot be broadcast.

Burián tried to persuade people demonstrating in front of the building regarding this but he wasn't very successful. Then he let the delegate of the crowd into the studio: they should also listen to the recording and they should decide together. After listening to the '*voice*', a great debate started. Some members of

the delegate thought that they could not censor the radio and yes, everybody has the right to listen to Somogyvári. In the long argument the rational ones won and the chosen delegates managed to persuade the crowd outside about the danger of broadcasting the speech. It's true that after this the crowd decreased but several people remained in front of the building until dusk when two Hungarian assault guns arrived and they left.

At this point Somogyvári had already left the city. He and his followers went back to the City Hall from the radio where he had a speech for the people arriving for the Trans-Danubian meeting. The uninformed delegates thought that Somogyvári's speech was a part of the official programme and numerous furious people wanted to leave the room. Only the organizers and Somogyi's armed followers could hold them back.

During this time Szigethy tried to persuade the workers' council of the wagon factory to do something against Somogyvári. The leaders of the workers' council agreed on refusing the counter government and ensured Szigethy that a leaflet be issued on his request which would support the present Győr leadership and its politics the next day. Szigethy argued with the fact that the case was urgent because a general meeting was held in the afternoon for the revolutionary organizations in Trans-Danubia and the consequence would be unpredictable if Somogyvári could draw it under his influence. Perhaps it was not Szigethy who could persuade the crowd but the crowd joined Somogyvári which broke into the wagon factory, occupied its studio and call the workers to go on strike and protest. On hearing this József Vadas suspended the meeting of the workers' council; first he gave order to the dispatcher centre of the factory to stop the workers' leaving in any case, then he hurried to the studio where Somogyvári's followers did not let him in and the crowd swept him away from the door. Then he instructed the energy centre of the factory through the internal telephone line to turn the current off in the whole area of the factory. So this way

the rebel of the wagon factory workers was stopped and the crowd pouring in left the factory because of the failure. After clearing away the direct danger the workers' council composed an appeal immediately in which they condemned any steps to form a counter government threatening with foreign intervention. Vadas and other members of the workers' council hurried to the City Hall with the prepared issues, partly to distribute the leaflet as soon as possible and partly to get information personally. The situation there was still critical. The employees of the Press Office tried to shout over Somogyvári, who was speaking either from the balcony or from the top of a table and they asked for help from the army and the police.

At this time István Török arrived back from Budapest and gave information to Szigethy about the discussion with Imre Nagy. The delegates could share their thoughts with Imre Nagy and Zoltán Tildy together with other delegates. The question of multiparty system became unnecessary because the Prime Minister has just declared on the radio the resetting of the multiparty system but they received comforting answers to other questions, too. Even more after the official discussion Nagy and Tildy spared some time for informal talking. Török also said that Budapest is quite peaceful. Since Somogyvári was just talking from the balcony about the heavy fights in Budapest, on Szigethy's request Török also went out and told the people that he had just arrived from Budapest and what he had seen there. Just to make sure of the situation Szigethy sent Török to Budapest again. (who arrived back again late at night and reported again that the fights in Budapest essentially stopped and there were no shot heard.)

Meanwhile many of the TDNC delegates left the City Hall and they went over to the building of the former National Organization of Artisans, the chamber theatre where they began their meeting under the regulation of a delegate from Veszprém. Nearly at the same time the aid from the wagon factory workers'

council and the army arrived at the City Hall. József Vadas took over speaking from a young man from Győr, who protested furiously against the anarchic conditions supported by Somogyvári and his followers but he could not finish his speech because he was pushed away. At this point Vadas referred to the local patriotism of people from Győr; he told them not to let their own revolution be taken away; he declared if it is needed he will make order with the help of thousands of wagon factory workers. At the same time the soldiers entering the room started to evacuate the room and tried to arrest Somogyvári and his followers. Somogyvári himself slipped away, only one of his followers was caught but he did not know anything about his leader, the only reason why he joined him was because Somogyvári offered him a leading position.

Meanwhile the delegates going over to the chamber theatre started their meeting. After clearing the organizational questions the delegates of the countries reported one by one about their results, talked about their demands and problems. When the news arrived that Attila Szigethy and his followers managed to restore order in the City Hall a debate started over that they should continue the meeting returning to the City Hall or if the people remaining in the City Hall should join the ones in the Chamber Theatre. At last the latter ones went back into the City Hall. After the late opening speech of György Szabó and Attila Szigethy, the meeting started (continued) with about six hundred participants. The substantial argument started at about eight in the evening. First the delegates of the counties reported (again) about the local events and explained their plans, suggestions and demands. The reports harmonize since most of the pleas agree with the general demands and slogans. The aim was to establish a unified standpoint in connection with the resolutions of the government. Since there were still too many people at present, the endless and useless comments endangered the passive outcome of the meeting, so they formed a smaller committee that had a discussion separately. The chairman was a

delegate from Tatabánya, the chairman by seniority. The delegates talked about their tasks again in front of this organization, they talked about their suggestions and contributions and Mihály Apai from Székesfehérvár recorded them. The separate committee elected a separate presidency for its own guidance and Attila Szigethy became the leader of it. The separate committee composed and accepted a suggestion for a decision, it was accepted by the great assembly unanimously. They elected a presidency of ten members that was nominated to start immediate negotiations with the government.

*

The country delegates elected into the leadership of TDNC stayed in Győr, the council held its first meeting with their participation on 31st October when they elected their presidency and secretariat. The chairman of the Hungarian National Independent Committee, József Dudás sent a message to the meeting in which he also called Szigethy to form a counter government and of course Szigethy refused him, too. After a long political debate, the following news arrived: Imre Nagy declared the neutrality of the country, withdrawal from the Warsaw Treaty and appointed Pál Maléter the first deputy Minister of Ministry of Defence. Pál Maléter was known as one of the leaders of the Budapest fights. The effect of it was that confidence was given to Imre Nagy's government. Already on this day a delegation on behalf of TDNC went to Budapest to the government. In the delegation there was the total leadership of Győr and Trans-Danubia: Attila Szigethy, Major Géza Krecz, József Rokop, György Szabó and others. During the discussion they managed to clear the former misunderstandings in connection with the counter government, they informed Imre Nagy about the aims and organization of TDNC and Szigethy insured the Prime Minister about their support. Imre Nagy asked

the delegates to influence the workers to start to work since the demands were fulfilled and there is no use of further strike and it endangers the achieved results of the revolution. György Szabó took the advantage of the trip to go to the centre of the social democrats to discuss the most important questions of organizing the local cell of the party with Anna Kéthly. The delegation came back to Győr on the same day.

The former coalition parties reorganized in the city. The ones who asked the media to issue their appeal through the press office, according to the rule they were refused by the press upon the opposing decision of the National Council about forming parties. But the appeals that were taken to the editorial's office directly were issued. So the city got information about the formation of the Small-holders' Party and the Social Democrat Party. This day the Workers' Council of the County Council was re-elected according to the parties, the chairman of which remained Dr. István Tóth.

*

Under the leadership of Colonel Béla Kemendi the revolutionary committee of the Trans-Danubian army had a meeting on 31st October. Next day Colonel Kemendi travelled to Budapest to negotiate with the Minister of Defence. Károly Janza opposed the events occurring in Trans-Danubia, talking to him Kemendi did not return to Győr.

TDNC moved into the former building of the party committee on 2nd November. The day and most of Saturday was spent with moving and distributing the rooms. From this day – mainly on telex more and more news and more precious ones came about the Soviet army's great invasion. Even people from Győr themselves could see the troop actions and the Soviets who moved across the city closed down the road leading to Mosonmagyaróvár to the border. Despite the ill omens the city was full of trust. Everybody did his own work and the workers'

councils were talking about continuing work on Monday. Szigethy offered Imre Nagy if he thought it necessary he could move with the government to Sopron which could be defended more effectively but the Prime Minister did not accept the invitation.

*

On behalf of the Revolutionary Youth Committee of Vas county László Ávár went to see Szigethy on 3rd November and gave him the information that disarming the state security had not happened in Szombathely so far and the city was still led by the old leaders. At this point Szigethy asked the armed fighters of Széna square from Budapest, who arrived the previous day to accompany Ávár back and disarm the state security in Szombathely and ensure order in the city. Originally more than forty people led by Róbert Bán left Budapest for Austria to obtain weapons but Szigethy – because of being armed – refused to issue frontier-pass for them. Agreeing with the Győr army council he gave Bán and his fellows a letter of commission so they could get into the Szombathely barracks of the frontier guards in the afternoon; they were captured by the Soviet troops occupying the city next day.

In the evening Szigethy gave an interview to the BBC then he had a discussion with demonstrators from Békés County so midnight had already passed when he left his office in TDNC.

On the 4th November the Soviets occupied the city without any resistance. The revolutionary bodies except for the workers' councils dissolved, most of the documents were destroyed to avoid that they could be proof against participants if they were captured by the occupiers. Many of the leaders escaped to the western countries (Iréneusz Galambos, László Germán, József Rokop etc.) or they escaped into illegality like Attila Szigethy.

There were no armed fights later on either, although some groups planned to attack the Soviets. Even at the meeting of the workers' council of the wagon factory on 15th November Major Ferenc Éliás had to warn: 'problems cannot be solved with killing the Soviet soldiers... Kéri warned the members of the council and through them the workers not to even think about it because it would be useless and the situation would only be worse.' But an armed fight still happened although not in Győr but near the city: the members of the national guard escaping to Austria led by Mihály Aba from Tatabánya attacked a Soviet unit at the railway station of Écs. In the fight a Soviet major was injured. The people from Tatabánya were hiding in the woods near Tényő and got into touch with István Török and his followers hiding in the nearby Sokorópátka but there wasn't another fight and the two groups did not join either. Soon Török and his followers escaped to western countries and Mihály Aba's group dissolved, some of them went over to Austria and most of them returned home.

But the Győr revolution did not fall with the appearance of the Soviet tanks. The fight was continued by the workers' councils and the editors of the journal Our Home Country, the police captain Ferenc Éliás, the county attorney, József Kéri, Gábor Földes and Attila Szigethy, who came back from illegality on 13 November and many others also joined them. The workers' council of the wagon factory playing a determinative role already on the days of October ordered on 3rd November to continue work on Monday and called each plant and peasants of the county to do the same. Because of the Soviet aggression it did not happen on the 5th. Instead of it negotiations were started with the county leaders of Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) about continuing work and the demands of the workers. The worker's council denied setting up party organizations within the plant and insisted on electing trade union leaders up to county levels by the members and it also insisted on preserving the

rights of the plant workers' council and setting up regional workers' council. Sárosi from HSWP acknowledged and accepted everything emphasizing only on his own, he had only one request: the wagon factory should start working since it is followed by the county industrial workers and problems can be solved only with starting work.

In the next few days the workers' council of the wagon factory took sides on continuing work but they could not realize it, e.g. first engineer Vadas resigned from his membership as a way of crying out. The workers' council held a negotiation with the Soviet army headquarters of the city about continuing work. They demanded first partial, later total withdrawal of the heavy armament from the city and that the maintenance of public order would be taken over by mixed force of arms (besides the Soviet soldiers Hungarian soldiers, too) and that the Soviets did not interfere with the organizational setting up neither of factories nor city leadership.

The workers' council of the wagon factory composed its most important political aims at the meeting of 7th November. They demanded a determinative role in local guidance, they wanted to raise the level of keeping touch with other workers' councils to country level and they stood by the most essential demands of the revolution: equal relationship with the socialist and all the other countries, the revision of the Warsaw Treaty, withdrawal of the Soviet army, secret and democratic election, secret election of the leaders of the trade unions from below and total amnesty for the ones taking part in the fights. The Győr plants joined this appeal of the wagon factory and so it became the programme and demands of the workers of the city.

The local demands were fulfilled temporarily. The communiqués of the of the workers' council were issued by the press and broadcast by the radio without being censored. On the 13th November those in power could only experiment and

without success again when it tried to supervise the loud news of the factory. On 9th November workers sent delegates into the executive committee of the city and county council furthermore the workers' council of the wagon factory named a chairman, Árpád Kofrán at the head of the city executive committee. From the 11th November Sándor Berger and Kálmán Jobbágy represented the workers in the executive committee of the county with the agreement of Gyula Markó; they participated very actively at the meetings until the end of December. They sent a representative to the police, whose task was to supervise if the members of the state security dissolved by Imre Nagy and the party functionaries expelled from the plants infiltrated in the police or not and at the same time they controlled its work and supervised who they arrested and they proceeded in releasing the political prisoners as soon as possible. Their work was helped by Major Éliás to a great extent who was not willing to investigate political cases and his people followed him in this. Attorney József Kéri also helped those who were not willing to sign orders of arrest. They also proceeded in the case of people who were arrested without József Kéri's knowledge. Kéri, who was officially a member of the county party leadership often played an intermediate part between the party and the workers' council of the wagon factory in order to help the agreement to start organizing the plant party. They formed a delegacy from the workers' council of Győr plants which had to keep in touch with other workers' council of the country. Also a delegacy went to the government to tell them under what conditions the Győr workers were ready to continue work.

The first issue of the journal Our Home Country on 4th November was sent to press of course before the Soviet attack and even some issues got out into the streets. The leading article titled 'Don't insult the Hungarian!' by Lajos Bertalan citing Zrínyi (a poet and soldier from the 17th century) and through him King Kroiszosz^{1[102]} and the quotation from Szózat (second Hungarian National Anthem written by Vörösmarty) became full of meaning

with the appearance of the Soviet tanks. Except for this the other writings were composed under the symbol of peaceful development (by this time in its illusion). The writings could not have any influence or effect any more and they are documents only for historians that the Soviet's aggression attacked a consolidating country that had already gone through the pains of childbirth. The newspaper stood by the government of Imre Nagy and refused again the irresponsible demand of setting up a counter government and gave information about continuing work on Monday again and hopefully on its example in the other plants of the city and the county, too. Perhaps this article could have been the only sensation in the newspaper at the time without the Soviet aggression. The interview with the Győr diocese and the writings titled 'Being on the market with housewives' could have been issued in a peaceful democratic country. The editorial by Lajos Bertalan became a great hit unwillingly. A week later after the Soviet aggression the position of the Győr revolution became stronger. Attila Szigethy returning to Győr was appointed the commissioner of the county upon Kádár's intention, to other version the chairman of the county council but he refused the function. After a week interval – with the permission of the Soviet headquarters- newspaper Our Home Country was publicized again on 10th November. It is difficult to value the issue on 4th November because of the great historical change but the issue on the 10th was a great hit, a masterpiece composed perfectly politically, too. Next to the title a quotation by Attila József instead of Vörösmarty can be read from this day. By the poet who talks in the name of the workers and the whole population, who declares himself communist and Hungarian at the same time without any eliminative thought and who was raised – although censored – by the power and accepted as their own. Also the whole society appreciated him. Besides Attila József's two other names are emphasized on the front page: Imre Nagy's and Attila Szigethy's. The names of the local and country leaders of the revolution who were able to listen to and

understand the thoughts of the society and lead the community accordingly and for whom they felt responsibility. Further messages of the front page summarize the greatest results of the revolution, attaining independence and establishing democracy and self-guidance through workers' councils and the great question: What will happen after this? And the newspaper was authentic because it also washed the dirty linen of the revolution in public. It publicized an article with the title of Fascist torture in the refuge of the wagon factory. In this issue the arbitrariness of the policing was described. Up to its last issue on 9th December the journal reported authentically, without any prejudice about the most important events of the country, the struggles of the workers' councils, Imre Nagy's group, the most important home and foreign affairs although with time moving on the malice of the article decreases. More and more neutral political articles were publicized and of course articles about the Olympic Games in Melbourne.

It's true that hopes did not come true but it is a fact that the workers' councils especially that of the wagon factory had a great role in leading Győr and the workers' council led by Dr. István Tóth which remained an organization with great influence in the county council.

The real representatives of the workers could be found in the executive committees of the district, city and county councils, where they could really participate in making decisions and their preparations. The newspaper Our Home Country edited by Attila Szigethy was regularly issued and gave information about the events of Győr and the country. After 22nd November it demanded real information about Imre Nagy and his group.^{1[11]} Although they could not stop arrests they were successful in the struggle for releasing kidnapped people. A member of the wagon factory workers' council, József Fekete was taken to Budapest to start a procedure against him there but he was brought back to Győr on the action of the workers' council also supported by the

attorney. So he could avoid being involved in summary jurisdiction.

Giving up his illegality Attila Szigethy played an increasingly greater role. On one hand he did everything in Győr and Budapest against the attacks and suppressing of the newspaper *Hazánk* and on the other hand he desperately tried to form and realize a kind of popular front mass organization following the pattern of Imre Nagy politics in 1954 and he wanted Imre Nagy as for its chair, who stayed at the Embassy of Yugoslavia and later Zoltán Kodály. According to his idea the communist party should take part in the organization that would be parliament but the party wouldn't have a leading part. Its standing order was prepared by Pál Lőcsei and all the Győr left-wing people and communists were involved in the organizing work who he thought had stood by the revolution and who took an oath on their democracy, people like József Kéri, Gábor Földes, Ernő Dóczy, workers' council members, some representatives of the Győr writers' group and others. According to their plan the organization would be called the National Unity Association. It has to be emphasized that they wished to form a non-political organization that stayed above parties emphasizing national unity instead of differences. The abbreviation is also proper (the abbreviation in Hungarian): NESZ (means: sound). He had negotiations in connection with it with Colonel András Márton, Antal Gyenes, Péter Veres and a member of the Provisional Executive Committee of MSZMP, Lajos Fehér.

The Győr plants sent their representatives to Budapest on the formation of the National Workers' Council on 21st November. The wagon factory itself sent eighteen representatives and eventually two buses took the workers to the capital. It is well known that on Kádár's request Soviet tanks stopped the meeting in the Stadium but together with other delegates the Győr people also reached the meeting held in Akácfa street, the centre of the Capital Tramway Company (and the Great-Budapest Central Workers' Council). Here József Vadas talked

about the situation in Győr, the achieved and maintained results and that power is still in the hands of workers in Győr, nothing can be done in the city without them; at the same time he declared that they join the be-formed National Workers' Council and if it cannot happen they accept the guidance of the Great-Budapest Central Workers' Council. László Sebők, Ferenc Tímár and Ferenc Dold became connecting people and stayed in Budapest. Among them it was mainly Sebők who authentically gave information to the workers' council of wagon factory and through it to the population of Győr about the events in the capital and about the negotiations with the Great-Budapest Central Workers' Council, the Kádár government and the Soviets. Coming back to Győr Vadas reported about the happenings in Budapest and gave information about the fact that the meeting of the workers' council delegacies called out a twenty-four hour strike, replying to the action of the government, but it's not true for Győr. But the workers of the city decided to join the national protest so work that had just started was stopped again.

It was also on 22nd November at the meeting of the workers' council in the wagon factory that Ferenc Borsos reported about the discussion with police major, József Baranyai. From Baranyai he got the list of the policemen who had served at state security previously and with Baranyai's agreement he presented it to the workers' council either to approve or reject. Major Baranyai also told Borsos that the resistance against the former state security people is so big that it is nearly impossible to employ former state security investigators. At the same time the police asked volunteers from the wagon factory to strengthen the force.

At the end of November the final workers' councils of the plants were elected and supported the previously elected workers' councils. Jenő Polócz became the chairman of the workers' council of the wagon factory and his deputy was Sándor Rác.

They also kept connection with other workers' councils of big plants besides the Great-Budapest Central Workers' Council. They agreed their standpoints with Miskolc and they got information about Kádár's speech at Tatabánya about starting coal mining. The latest asked for workers from Győr to be able to supply households with fuel.

On the 5th December the workers' council at the wagon factory agreed, more precisely approved, that HSWP do an organizing work inside the factory but it did not give it a room and stated that the organizing can be done only after work.^{1[117]}

On the 10th December a Vice-Colonel of the Soviet City Headquarters participated at the meeting of the wagon factory workers' council meeting, and he asked for information about the aim of the planned two-day strike. In his reply, Sándor Rácz said that the workers wanted to force the chairman of the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government, János Kádár to negotiate with them, who according to the events up to then, was not willing to listen to and consider the demands of the workers and that there cannot be economical development without agreeing with the employees and it would be impossible to lead the bankrupt country to peaceful production.

Besides solving the political problems the workers' councils were also successful in distributing the vacant flats, dealing with the problem of squatters, the opening hours of shops and other public problems. They participated in certifying people's moral reliability, they gave their opinion about the employment of the former state security members or those who worked there but they did not belong to ÁVH. They helped the ones who deserved aid.

As in the last days of October during the rear-guard fights Győr seemed to be the second capital of the revolution where together with the Budapest fighters they could hold very important positions till the end of the year. Furthermore, the press in Győr was more independent than in Budapest, the Győr revolutionists like Sándor Berger, József Kéri and the others remaining in positions of responsibility could do more for the aims of October and the October comrades.