

## '56 REVOLT IN RETROSPECT

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# Guns and Pain in Budapest

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Above the tinkle of sparkling glassware and laughing chit-chat Mihaly Bartalos hears the rumble of tanks.

He sits at the head table in the bright ballroom of the Sheraton-Park, quietly slicing his roast chicken. But his mind is 10 years away, and a patriot is bleeding to death.

It is warm here Saturday night among the 500 sipping red wine. Dr. Bartalos, 31, now a professor at Howard University and national co-chairman of the Hungarian Freedom Fighters Federation, is in an honored place.

He listens patiently to speeches by other free Hungarian leaders, and Ezra Taft Benson, and the recipients of numerous awards, as the federation observes the 10th anniversary of the Hungarian revolt. Everybody talks about freedom.



MIHALY BARTALOS



But Mihaly Bartalos smells gunsmoke, and hears cries of pain, and he is helping a wounded fellow-student across the cobbled streets of Budapest toward their university hospital.

It is Oct. 23, 1956, and a protest march that had begun as a demonstration of sympathy for Poles fighting for their own independence from Russian overlords has turned into a night-time brawl with Communist secret policemen.

The demonstration had begun earlier in the day at Szeged University, 80 miles south. Word had spread fast, and Bartalos had spent most of the day arousing his fellow medical students at Budapest University.

By dusk, several hundred students are marching to the statue of Sandor Petoefi overlooking the Danube, where an actor recalls the poet's call during the Polish revolution of a century ago: "Stand up, Hungarians . . . !"

"We knew we could be executed for what we were doing," Bartalos recalls. "But these words and these memories aroused us."

The demonstrators move on to

a statue of Joseph Bem, a Polish patriot, and factory workers suddenly join the students.

"They were shouting, 'We are slaves now, but we are with you,'" Bartalos remembers. "We never expected their help."

Now the march moves to the Parliament building, amid songs and the waving of flags. Off-duty soldiers, without arms, join the crowd crying for an appearance by Imre Nagy, the man they want to head an independent government.

Nagy appears finally. "Comrades . . ." he begins, and there are shouts of derision. "Dear fellow Hungarians," he begins again, and there are cheers.

But he says nothing very encouraging. "I think the secret police were right behind him," says Bartalos.

Meanwhile, another group had moved on the government radio station, and by the time the crowd from the parliament has reached there, heaving shooting flares.

As dawn approaches, and Bartalos wearily wraps bandage after bandage, Russian tanks thunder over the Danube into the city. The end has begun, although the rebels will not admit it then.

On Saturday, Bartalos is sent to the northeast, near his home-

town of Miskolc, to organize the mine workers. They blow up train tracks, delaying the deportation of many Hungarians.

But it is too late. Word comes that the Russians have crushed the revolt with their armor.

Bartalos slips back into Budapest.

"I can still see the tanks moving slowly over our wounded," he says.

He feels to Austria, with thousands of others, and then to France. The free world opens its gates to the refugees, and by the following spring the United States alone has admitted more than 33,000.

Bartalos yearns to join them but decides to finish his medical education first. He works on a construction project for several months in France, finally wins a scholarship to Heidelberg University, and wins his M.D.

In 1960, with a German wife, Bartalos gets the sponsorship of the Hamilton Presbyterian Church in Baltimore for admission to this country.

He works in Baltimore as a biochemist, then wins a fellowship for graduate work at Johns Hopkins in human genetics. He publishes several papers, and his research is hailed.

In 1965, he is asked to organize a genetics unit at Howard University Medical School. He sets up a heredity clinic. Soon he will publish a book on medical cytogenetics.

Mihaly Bartalos has come far in 10 years. He has a good professional, a home in Chevy Chase for his wife and their two children, and the respect of his new compatriots. He is an American success.

And so, of course, are many of the others who attended the anniversary banquet. Some 50,000 have found their way to America since the revolt. Among the 500 or so here are prosperous engineers, merchants, architects and surgeons.

But some, like Mihaly Bartalos, still cannot shut their minds to the sounds and smells of 10 years ago, and to the faces of those who did not make it.

