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The two books in this review are the memoirs of two Hungarians, father and daughter, who emigrated to the United States, the daughter in 1956 during the Hungarian Uprising and the father over a decade later. Both books are based on their writers' diaries in real time and both were translated from Hungarian and prepared for print by Esther Kando Odescalchi, the daughter, who also added to both volumes a short survey of the history of Hungary in the twentieth century. *An Anti-Nazi at Hitler's Table: Political Memoirs of a Hungarian Nobleman Who Dared to Oppose Both Hitler and the Communists* is the memoir of Ferenc Kandó-Melocco (1908-1991), a diplomat who served in Hungary's Ministry of the Interior in the interwar period and under Nazi occupation. During the communist era, in opposition to the regime, he resigned his public-service position and undertook manual labor work. *My Escape: Memoirs of a Hungarian Teenage Freedom Fighter* is Esther Kando Odescalchi's revised and translated diary depicting her dangerous 1956 escape at age eighteen from Hungary to the West together with seven other young Hungarians.

Ferenc Kandó-Melocco was born in Fiume, at that time a Hungarian harbor and later part of Italy, Yugoslavia, and today's Croatia. A member of the Venetian nobility of Italy through his father James Melocco (1872-1917) and the Hungarian nobility of landowners and politicians through his mother Mária Kandó (1887-1965), he adopted his mother's maiden name for lack of male heirs in her side of the family. During most of the time of World War I the family stayed in the village of Ivánca, fifty kilometers south of Budapest. In 1917, after his father's death, he moved with his mother and brother to Budapest, where the mother's family lived, and it was there that Kandó-Melocco became acquainted with Miklós Kozma (1884-1941), his mother's first cousin, who would become Hungary's Minister of the Interior in 1935-1937 and Kandó-Melocco's political mentor. The author goes on to describe the devastating post-WWI

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Trianon Treaty of 1920, his 1927-1931 law studies at the Budapest Péter Pázmány University, culminating in his Doctor of Law degree, and his marriage with Mária Versenyi in late 1931.

In late 1935, Kandó-Melocco was asked by Kozma to accompany the Hungarian contingent of secret police, the Minister of Health and other functionaries, for a visit to Berlin. Unexpectedly, Kandó-Melocco found himself in meetings with Goebbels, Goering, and other Nazi leaders, as well as attending receptions, wreath-laying ceremonies, and galas, while all members of the Hungarian delegation were kept under close German surveillance. On December 22, 1935 the Hungarian delegation had an hour and fifteen minutes meeting with Hitler at a round table. Kandó-Melocco reveals in his diary that he was far from impressed by Hitler, thinking he looked like a gardener in his ill-fitting brown coat. In the meeting Hitler kept harping on the problems of German minority schools in Hungary and Kandó-Melocco found it necessary to leave the meeting room three times to call the Hungarian Ministry of Cultural Affairs on the phone in order to clarify points regarding education under their control to the German side.

Kandó-Melocco's memoir includes a discussion of the resignation of Kozma from the Interior Ministry in 1937, the Jewish Laws, the suicide of Prime Minister Pál Teleki in 1941, and the October 29, 1944 dismissal and house arrest of several members of the Ministry of the Interior. In 1981, after he has been living in the U.S. for almost a quarter of a century, Kandó-Melocco received a request from a George Horvath of Washington D.C., the son of former Hungarian Undersecretary of State Béla Horváth, who was seeking information about Hungary's treatment of its Jews in the Hitler era. In his lengthy reply to Horvath the son, Kandó-Melocco wrote about the numerous visits of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg to his office at the Interior Ministry attempting to save as many Hungarian Jews as he could from being shot at the banks of the Danube or deportation.

On December 5, 1944 Russian troops entered Ivánca on their way northward to Budapest. The liberation was disastrous: the Soviets plundered, manhandled and burned goods, abused valuables, and destroyed property. Kandó-Melocco, imprisoned by the Russians in the infamous 60 Andrásy Street prison, finally regained his freedom on June 4, 1945. With his new freedom, he found the ideas of the Social Democrats in concert with his own, so he joined their party and was elected to a leadership position. Later, under the communist regime, Kandó-Melocco endured conflicts with the country's leaders and soon realized he should leave the Ministry before the communists pulled him out of the post. He resigned and became a manual laborer for the next ten years, sometimes carrying eighty-kilogram buckets of coal and other heating supplies on his back. For another ten years after that, he worked as an x-ray technician, a position he held until he left Hungary for the U.S. Until then, his mother and mother-in-law were living with his family of three children, since in their elderly years the two women had been deprived of their pensions by the communist authorities.

Kandó-Melocco's account of his part in the 1956 Hungarian Uprising begins with a description of himself shoveling coal in Kispest on October 23, 1956, at which time he learned from his manager about the protest in Budapest. With great difficulty he finally reached home to his family that knew nothing of the events of that first day of the uprising. During the following days, Kandó-Melocco's twenty-year-old son Pál, a seminarian, drew up plans in the former Hungarian Scout office, and his eighteen-year-old daughter Eszter (Esther Kando Odescalchi,

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later the translator and editor of the two books in this review) donated blood for the injured at the local hospital. Fourteen-year-old Laci (László) built barricades and covered cobblestones with oil so the Soviet tanks would slide about as they attempted to move forward. In the morning of November 4, 1956, when Russian troops attacked Budapest, Pál was in the old Hungarian Boy Scout office, and upon hearing the news burned all documents and headed home. Eszter made her plans to escape to the west and departed with seven friends two weeks later, a flight about which she enlarges in her own memoir. Pál departed a few weeks later, but thanks to his clerical and scout connections he arrived in the U.S. before Eszter. Laci remained at home with his parents, who could not leave because of Kandó-Melocco's aged mother and his wife Mária's ill mother. When Laci was issued a passport, he rode his bike directly to Vienna never even returning home. In 1962, when Eszter/Esther became a U.S. citizen, she obtained immigration papers for her father and mother to come to the U.S.

By 1967 the communists finally allowed Kandó-Melocco and his wife to emigrate to the U.S., where their three children have been living for over a decade; the couple was given the permits with the provision that they renounce their Hungarian citizenship, relinquish all possessions, and carry only one suitcase with them. Once settled in New York, Mária found work at a men's tailor shop, whereas Ferenc, then aged sixty, found a job at the Fargo Manufacturing Company, an electronics firm, and continued in his position until he became seventy-four. He also took up wood carving, fashioned many types of items, and sold his pieces in the community. He died in 1991 at the age of eighty-three. Mária Versenyi-Kandó-Melocco died in 2011 at the age of ninety-nine.

Esther Kando Odescalchi's memoir *My Escape: Memoirs of a Hungarian Teenage Freedom Fighter* is partly based on the diary she wrote in real time and it is dedicated to her sons Daniel and Dominic, who encouraged her to publish it in English. The first major part of the memoir, following shorter preliminary parts, has nine sections, the first of which is entitled "My Story Begins." This section depicts the beginning of Eszter/Esther's escape from Hungary, when, on November 24, 1956 she meets up in Kelenföld railroad station with the other seven members of her escape group. These are: her Uncle Géza's two sons Miklós and György (George), the uncle's nephew Gábor, Miklós's fiancée Sára, Andreas Soós ("Bandi") and his pregnant wife Mária, and Eszter's grammar-school classmate Anikó Csák. In "Riding the 'Escapee' Train" the group travels by train to Győr, then takes the Győr-Bősárkány bus and continues onward to Hanság puszta. In "Hiding from the Russian Guards" the group spends the night in a stable since no local guide is available to lead them to the Hungarian-Austrian border, as at that time Radio Free Europe kept reporting on the increasingly dangerous border crossings. The fleeing group spends the next night at the home of the Gombkötő family, where they enjoy the full measure of warm Hungarian hospitality. "The Boys are detained by the Guards" describes how, while working on Uncle Géza's communal farm, Bandi, Miklós, Gábor, and György were pulled off the truck they were riding, presumably because their clothes did not look like those of village residents, but were let go after their vehement protests, after which they all proceed to their meeting point with a driver who is to take them abroad. However, the driver fails to appear so the group prepares to launch the journey on foot using a local-area map and the advice of local

people to help them keep out of the bridge at Hanságfalva and some agricultural spots where Russian guards often hide.

The section titled "The Night of the Escape" describes the various hardships and dangers the group encounters, like going through corn fields or in thick mud, searchlights, flares, sudden drops to the ground during close calls, and other horrific experiences. "We Are Lost" details how the group ventures further into the unknown, barely avoiding being noticed by Russian guards. They seek refuge in a Hanság puszta stable to warm themselves, dry their soaked clothing, and find sustenance. One of Uncle Géza's friends offers them assistance through the dangerous territory towards the border but would not lead them onward to the border. "The Guards Try to Break Down the Door" recounts how Russian guards attempt to penetrate the stable where the group hides but then leave the place convinced there is nobody in. The group then meets with Uncle Géza and with a guide who leads them for part of the way ahead and then instructs them how to continue on their own just before the Austrian border, where they would be picked up, right on the highway, by the International Red Cross scouts for refugees. The next section "The Cruel Weeds" is the story of thick stalks impeding the group's progress, with the sharp edges cutting their shins. "Miracle! We Made It" relates how, eventually, a chopped section of reeds in the midst of a field proves to be the way to freedom. After a few hours these damaging plants disappear and an icy, muddy field emerges, but once the eight go through it they find themselves on a well-maintained road, knowing that they are now on Austrian land and free, and that soon the bitter cold, rain, dangerous weeds, Russian guards, and search parties would be a miserable memory. After a long embrace together, the group looks back for the last time, with tears in their eyes, on their beloved captive Hungarian homeland.

The second major part of Odescalchi's book, entitled "Epilogue," describes the group's reunion in Hungary fifty-six years after their escape. On September 12, 2012 some but not all of the original eight members of the escape group assemble in Hungary to walk their escape route and to thank the Gombkötő family for their kindness during the group's escape. Another section of the epilogue, "It was 'Revolution' All Over Again - An Eyewitness Account," goes back to Odescalchi's earlier visit to Hungary, in October 2006, for the fiftieth anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. "Actors in the Drama" provides information about the eight escapees and Uncle Géza, with details of their backgrounds, roles in the Hungarian Uprising, and lives after the escape. This section is followed by "The Silent Actors," which credits Odescalchi's parents and others who permitted the eight to make crucial decisions at a young age and implanted in them qualities that facilitated their success in their new places. Esther Kando Odescalchi is to be commended for making these two books available to English-reading audiences and for providing additional, informative texts, as well as photographs and maps that all facilitate non-Hungarians wishing to learn about the first-hand experiences of former Hungarians who left their country in the tumultuous times of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising or thereafter.