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AFS NEWS & INFORMATION SERVICE - EVALUATION & RESEARCH SECTIONBackground Report

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PROBABLE RASZ TRIAL TO HAVE BROAD-WIDE SIGNIFICANCE

The question whether or not the former revolutionary Premier of Hungary, Imre RASZ, would be called to account for his alleged "counter-revolutionary" activities during the tragic Hungarian national upheaval in October and November 1956 was partially answered last week by the new Hungarian Envoy to the Court of St. James, Pal FOLDES. The Hungarian diplomat announced December 19 at his first news conference that an investigation into the activities of Imre RASZ during this period is now underway in BUDAPEST.

The official confirmation given to the speculation rife in the West that such an investigation was taking place would seem to fit in well with the new, sharp tone which the KADAR regime propagandists and ideological spokesmen are using in connection with the "counter-revolution" of last year. It is sufficient to cite the "hard" tone of an important article in the Hungarian Socialist Workers (Communist) Party's ideological journal, "Társadalmi Szemle" (December) which reviews the "treacherous" activities of the Imre RASZ group as regards the preparation of the October events and their subsequent actions during the revolution. The author, Jozsef SZENSI, the chief editor of the Party's daily "Nepszabadsag", also adds one new element to the long list of "counter-revolutionary" activities of RASZ. He claimed that RASZ in his "dissertation" which was published abroad under the title "Imre RASZ on Communism", "slandered the USSR by maintaining that the Soviet Union's policy of coexistence is nothing but a tactical maneuver to fool the West -- an interim period between two wars."

Hardening of Regime Policy

As regards the above, an annual report given by the Supreme Prosecutor, Geza SZENESI before the Hungarian National Assembly (December 21) and an attack over Radio BUDAPEST on Georgy LUKACS and Hungarian writers (December 21) by the pro-revolutionary editor-in-chief of "Társadalmi Szemle", Imre KOMOR, are recent cases in point.

SZENESI informed the National Assembly that "every deed violating or endangering the order, independence and sovereignty of the Hungarian People's Republic must be consistently prosecuted."

In this connection SZENASI made caustic references to the activity of "hostile class elements" during the "counter-revolution", the "hostile activity" of certain writers which help prepare the "counter-revolution" and included the "traitorous Imre NAGY group" among other "representatives of Party factories". According to the Supreme Prosecutor, "the destructive activity of this (NAGY's - Ed. Note) hostile nationalist group, organized on an anti-popular basis, cleared the way to the attack launched by the most reactionary forces, and then putting itself, by open treason, at the lead of the counter-revolution, launched an attack -- to overthrow the people's democratic order of the State."

SZENASI stressed that the struggle against "counter-revolutionary" elements in all spheres of Hungarian life (especially the economic; presents not excluded) would be energetically pursued by the organs of prosecution in co-operation with the State security organs.

(For further evidence of regime rigidity, Cf. General Deak, News Background No.4), "Control Bill Passed; NAGY Attacked Again." According to this report a system of "Popular Control" is to be used against persons in every sector of Hungarian life suspected of opposing the KADAR regime. First Deputy Premier Ferenc MURCICH, speaking on behalf of the bill before the Hungarian National Assembly also attacked the "counter-revolutionary yapping in Communist disguise who had worked their way into our literature, our intellectual life and indulged in incitement." In a vein similar to SZENASI, MURCICH contended that these "vampires" appointed themselves the nation's leaders and gathered in a clique around Imre NAGY... [and] proceeded to mislead a "section of the partisans of socialism" by turning into "accomplices of MINORSKY, that pirate leader of capitalist restoration".

Georgy LUKACS Attacked

EDMON's commentary over Radio BUDAPEST claims to be a beginning of a "critique" over the activity of Georgy LUKACS which contributed to the "counter-revolution in Hungary. (Significantly, the attacks on LUKACS have increased as the case of Imre NAGY assumes time-wide importance as a classical example of how "revisionism" "inevitably" leads to counter-revolution.) Two other articles within the last two months have appeared in Party ideological and political journals. The first full-scale attack on LUKACS' views and alleged pernicious influence to appear in Hungary was curiously enough a reprint of an article by the East German writer Hans EDON which originally appeared in the July issue of the DEB theoretical journal "Kritik". The latter article appeared in the Hungarian radio review "Szemleltel Szemle" (November 1957). The most recent article concerning the "revisionist" tendencies of LUKACS is a long review of his past writings and attitude toward the international Communist movement appearing in "Tudomanyi Szemle" (December 1957). The article in question was prepared by Josef NEIGETI, one of the foremost ideological spokesmen for the KADAR regime.

Wide-Side Significance

The timing of the attacks on IMRIGI and the marked increase in intensity of the attacks on Imre NAGY would seem to parallel the evolution of the concept of "revisionism" to its present stature of the "main danger" currently facing Communist Parties of the socialist camp as well as other Communist Parties of the world. Indeed, it would appear from the events immediately preceding the meeting of the world Communist Parties in MOSCOW to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia and the subsequent communique at the end of the celebrations that the case of Imre NAGY may no longer be considered an internal affair of the Hungarian Party and government, but a case which must be conclusively settled in the light of the necessity for re-establishing the ideological unity of the socialist camp.

KADAR and Imre NAGY

Hungarian domestic treatment of NAGY has to a large extent been dictated by the forces of circumstance occurring in the wake of the "counter-revolution". First Secretary of the newly established Hungarian Socialist Workers' (Communist) Party, Jozsef KADAR, found himself in a particularly precarious position vis-a-vis his relations with NAGY following the second Soviet intervention in Hungary. Publicly associated in the nation's mind with the revolutionary NAGY Government, KADAR was forced to ideological somersaults in an effort to disassociate himself from the man he was later to denounce as "traitors".

The Yugoslavs were one of the first to point out KADAR's ambiguity. Smarting under the sharp Soviet and Hungarian attacks in connection with their attitude toward the October events in Hungary and feeling themselves betrayed by KADAR and the Soviets after the kidnapping of NAGY on his departure from the Yugoslav Embassy where he had sought political asylum, "Morba" (3 December 1956) scathingly reviewed KADAR's attitude toward the national uprising and Imre NAGY. (Cf. News Background, General Desk, "Yugo Paper on KADAR's Erratic Mind", December 5 1956).

During November 1956 KADAR made one of his most personally damaging statements concerning his faith in Imre NAGY as a "good Communist." In a radio address (November 12) KADAR sharply rebuked NAGY for a number of mistakes but added later in the broadcast: "Having been a minister in the government of Imre NAGY, I must express quite openly my personal conviction that neither I nor my political group were consciously prepared to help the counter-revolution."

But as NAGY was swept along by the elementary force of a popular national uprising, so KADAR - confronted by a walled and hostile nation; saddled with a Communist Party ideologically bent on order by strife and contention concerning the interpretation of the Party's role in the life of the nation since 1948; able to rule only by the grace of Soviet bayonets and haunted by his own actions during the uprising - was forced by the cold facts of post-October Soviet reality to relinquish his relatively benevolent

view of "NAGY and his group" and openly label them as "traitors". (CF, General Desk, Background Report, "Political and Policy Statements of the KPTP, January-February 1957, 6 March 1957, and General Desk, News Background, "BUDAPEST, KISAK on Hungarian Revolution, Imre NAGY", 28 March 1957).

MOSCOW Assesses Control...

The increased emphasis on the "treasonable activities" of NAGY and his group paralleled also the decrease of the domestic stress on the "errors" of the "KADOSI and GERO clique". This change of emphasis was classically illustrated by two events, one at the end of February and the other at the beginning of March 1957. In February, the regime withdrew from Hungarian bookshops an officially sponsored "history" of the October events; "What Happened in Hungary Between October 23 and November" by Martin LOVAS. The book was commissioned when it was orthodox policy to acknowledge past mistakes, but when it was published in February 1957, the line was changing. Shortly afterwards, a strong attack on the "history" appeared in "Nepesztseveg" (March 9).

If the suppression of LOVAS' book was an indication that a major policy change in connection with the Hungarian regime's interpretation of the revolution and its leading figure - Imre NAGY was in the offing, the reappearance of Josef NEVAI, KADOSI's former ideological spokesman, in the columns of the Party organ confirmed the trend.

In one of the clearest formulations of ideological Stalinism since the 20th Party Congress, NEVAI discussed the mistakes of KADOSI and GERO as mere "errors" and boldly defined the actions of "Imre NAGY and his group" during the national uprising as "counter-revolution". (CF, General Desk, News Background, "analysis of NEVAI article", 18 March 1957). Although a rather sympathetic debate in the Hungarian press followed the publishing of the NEVAI article (republished in "Pravda"), subsequent Hungarian statements concerning NAGY never seriously deviated from NEVAI's (which is identical with the official Soviet interpretation) analysis of the October revolution.

... and Shows the Way...

The most recent signal for an intensification of the attacks on NAGY may be traced to Soviet agit-prop discussions on the "40th Anniversary Thesis". In a Radio MOSCOW discussion of "revisionism", an agit-prop lecturer, I.E. SVOSHCHIN, sharply attacked contemporary "revisionism" in the socialist camp and in other Communist Parties, specifically citing the October events in Hungary as an example where "revisionism" leads. He stated that "it was precisely under the banner of revisionism that the traitor group of NAGY-LOSONCEY emerged... the slogans of the national Communist and the revisionists which demanded a liberalization of the dictatorship of the proletariat... quickly landed in the mire of bourgeois counter-revolution."

DWORKIN also established an ideological and historical continuity between the present-day revisionists and the revisionists of 50 years ago - Bernstein in Germany and the Mensheviks in Russia among others. (The latter formulation and analogy was later to be used by the Polish regime in its polemic with alleged ideological and economic revisionists following the MOSCOW anniversary meeting of Communist leaders.)

The DWORKIN lecture on the dangers inherent in revisionism was followed in Hungary by an increase in intensity of the attacks on NAGY. During the month of October, at least two prominent Party officials and members of the FADAB government launched detailed attacks on NAGY's role in the October events. (CF. THURGOOD'S Monitoring, Antal APFO 21 October and F. HUNWICH, 25 October). Antal APFO's speech before the People's Patriotic Front accused NAGY for almost every possible ideological issue which could be attributed to him both before and during the revolution.

The main thesis of the agit-prop lecture over Radio MOSCOW (CF. General Debk, News Backgrounds, "Attack on Revisionism", September 21 1957) was fully confirmed at the November 40th Anniversary celebrations and in the final communique of the "12 Ruling Parties" of 22 November. Although the communique paid pale lip-service to the evils of "sectarianism" and "conservatism", the document flatly stated that "revisionism" in all its forms was the "main danger" confronting Communist Parties at the present time.

... for the Hungarian Communist Party

There are many other indications pointing to the probability of a trial of "Lars NAGY and his group". The official confirmation of the trial and sentencing of three prominent writers (DENY, KAT and SZEK) plus similar announcements of action taken against lesser revolutionary figures and persistent rumors that major military leaders of the revolution are going to be tried are cases in point. In this context, the statement of the Hungarian Supreme Prosecutor before the National Assembly takes on additional significance: "... Every deed ... endangering the order... must be consistently prosecuted."

Thus, there will be no exceptions to the "law" (sic)...

(P.C.)

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