

Lead-up

REACTION IN ASIA
TO THE HUNGARIAN EXECUTIONS

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ASIAN REACTION TO EAST-EASTERN EXECUTIONS

Introduction

The following paper presents typical -- and by no means exhaustive -- quotations on the subject from speeches and press articles in several Asian countries. Owing to the form in which the material reaches us exact dates can in many cases not be given.

In determining the suitability of epithets like "uncommitted" to any particular country it will be useful to recall the following affiliations:

Members of the BROADWAY Defense Pact (1955) are:

Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Persia, Great Britain.

Members of the South-East Asia Collective Defense Treaty (SEATO) (1954) are:

Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Great Britain, USA, Australia, New Zealand, France.

Communist in India

With a membership that has risen since 1958 from some 30,000 to 125,000, India has the fourth largest CP in the free world (the first three being Italy, Indonesia, France in that order). It also has a Communist government in the State of Kerala (pop. over nine million), where it took office -- with the participation of some independents -- on 5 April 1957.

The position of the Kerala Communists, who receive much attention and praise in Soviet-orient literature, is nevertheless somewhat anomalous (as in Iceland, a member of NATO, where the CP however also shares in the government). Communist success in Kerala has been attributed to the large number of unemployed literates and to the failure there of the Congress Party -- still dominant in most State governments -- to bring adequate relief to the peasantry. Not conscious of the universal respect for Premier NEHRU, anxious not to embarrass his quite friendly relations with the USSR and Communist China, and above all desirous of creating an unrevolutionary and efficient impression on the rest of India with a view to the chance of subsequent Communist victories there, the Kerala government has proceeded with great caution. The Indian Communist leader GHOSH stated indeed when it stepped office that it would function within the country's democratic constitution and "would not look to, or receive, directions from Russia". (LONDON "Times", 5 April 1957.)

The prospects of the Kerala Communists, however, despite the reported popularity won by several leaders through their unassuming way of life, have recently dimmed again. Their attempt to communalize education has antagonized more people than the large Catholic minority it was aimed at; and the government has been embarrassed by the continuance of strikes and violent

demonstrations by hungry plantation workers. Nationalization, as elsewhere in the world, has failed to prove a panacea.

The ANHIMAN Congress of the Indian CP earlier this year confirmed the "moderate" (i.e. opportunist) policy of supporting NERU's five-year plan (though quarreling with its execution) and his foreign policy (though demanding secession from the British Commonwealth).

INDIA

Despite its usual caution in criticizing Communist countries India has been perhaps the most articulate of the "uncommitted nations" in condemning the trial and execution of Hungarian ex-Premier Imre Nagy, General Pal Maléter and associates. The "Christian Science Monitor" of July 7 devoted an article to the Indian reaction alone, pointing out that this time there was "no equivocation in India about the news from Hungary". The article stresses that the Indian press, public opinion and the political parties did not wait for Prime Minister NERU to set the tone, but reacted sharply before NERU's first comment ("the most distressing news") was published.

Most striking is the impact the Hungarian execution has had on the Communist Party of India. The divergence of opinion that arose among the Indian CP leaders and the rank and file soon after June 18 has evidently widened into a major rift. In the words of P.C. JOSH, member of the Central Executive of the Indian Communist Party, there is "a healthy difference of opinion in the Party on the recent Nagy execution". The crisis was brought about by the firm stand taken by the Communists of the Kerala State against the Hungarian judicial murders.

Yugoslavia and the Indian State of Kerala are thus the only two places (if one is to disregard Poland) where ruling Communist Parties have openly expressed disapproval of the Hungarian "epitaphs".

In an article analyzing the motives underlying this protest movement, the "Indian Express" of July 7 writes: "Among all the State branches Kerala Communists seem to be particularly agitated over this issue, firstly because they are the first beneficiaries of the new tactical line of peaceful transition to socialism and, secondly, because their continuance in power depends on the support of independents who may be repelled from the Party if such crude retribution as typified by the Hungarian Government's action are tolerated by the Communist Party."

According to the same source, this feared reaction has already set in. V. S. KRISHNA IYER, independent minister of the Kerala government, publicly denounced the "gloomy drama" that took

class in Hungary. IYER, speaking at TRIVANDRUM before leaving for DELHI on July 6, said that the Hungarian execution "haunted me as a harsh and poignant event which must have made many like me, with a constitutional aversion to execution, unhappy. I do not know if all my Communist friends share this reaction". According to the "Indian Express", this must be taken as indicative of the reaction of the independent members of the Kerala Assembly, who have been extending their support to the Communist government in the State. The paper adds: "It would be wrong, however, to imagine that the pressure on the Communist high command to give a clear and bold lead in this regard is exerted only from Kerala. Indications are that similar trends exist in Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Andhra."

Reuter reported on June 29 that Mr. S.A. BANER, veteran leader of the Indian Communist Party in the House of the People (Lower House), has stated that "it would have been better if the execution of Inam Bagg and his three associates had been avoided". Making it clear that this was his personal opinion on the Hungarian executions, BANER said in an exclusive interview with the independent "Times of India" published on June 29 that "there can also be an opinion that the executions were not absolutely necessary at this stage". According to Reuter, Mr. BANER, a member of the Party's eight-man secretariat, was the first leading Communist in India to express views on the executions.

Other Communist comments were slow in coming. At the time the Bagg trial was announced Mr. P.C. JOSHI, member of the central executive of the CP and chief editor of the Communist organ "New Age", was the only leading Communist present in NEW DELHI. While at first reluctant to take a decision one way or another ("NEW DELHI" Statesman, June 28), he finally joined the chorus of Communist Parties from PUNE to BOMBAY.

Disassociating himself sharply from Mr. BHATT's views, JOSHI likened the case of Bagg to that of Sheikh ABDULLAH, the popular Muslim leader of Kashmir who was released last January by the central India Government after four-and-a-half years of imprisonment but arrested again in May. JOSHI expressed the hope that the "present differences of opinion in the ICP will be shortly overcome".

The non-Communist press of India was unanimous in condemning the executions and saw them as a reversion to Stalinism. (CP, "New York Times", June 27.)

The "Deccan Herald of Bangalore" says: "Those who believed the Communist State machine and judicial system had been purged of the excesses of the Stalinist era will have to confess themselves grossly deceived. The apparatus of terror, still there behind the facade of liberalization, has now been hideously and gratuitously demonstrated." (NY Daily Guidance, June 26)

The "Times of India" says: "Nagy and his companions were liquidated in the full knowledge that opinion both inside and outside Hungary would be shocked. Therefore, the execution of the Hungarian leaders is apparently a warning to Yugoslav President TITO and all other Communists who advocate independence from the Kremlin that all opposition to MOSCOW will be stamped out ruthlessly." And again: "In retrospect, it looks as if the 10th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party was an aberration, and the liberalization of Communist regimes a momentary and doubtful lapse into sanity." (Quoted in "New York Times", June 25)

The widely-read BOMBAY paper "Sharat Jyoti" said on June 24: "The execution of IMRE NAGY HAS PUT A FULL STOP TO ALL speculation about a change of heart in the Kremlin." It said that what it called the "political murder" of Nagy had followed a familiar pattern, and the situation now was as if NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV had never made any of his get-friendly speeches or tours. KHRUSHCHEV, "Sharat Jyoti" said, had found his talks an accommodation, liberalization and coexistence was too dangerous a gamble, and it appeared he had now stopped that gamble once and for all. "He has realized, and wants others to realize that if one is to stay in power in a Communist hierarchy one must go the whole hog." "Sharat Jyoti" said. (Quoted in NYE Special NY, June 26.)

"The question nations should now ask themselves is: how reliable as an economic and political ally is a Russia that has chosen to go back to Stalinism in its worst form?"

In CALCUTTA, "Anand Jyoti" calls the executions "unjustified, tyrannical and outrageous", and it says they were perpetrated by the same Soviet leaders who wax eloquent about peace and the principle of non-interference, and the same Soviet leaders who claim to use the veto in the United Nations Security Council to establish peace.

And recently again (NYE Special NY, July 10) the BOMBAY "Sunday Standard" has written:

"The horror and indignation reaped all over the democratic world by the cold-blooded execution of Imre Nagy, General Pal Malotk and their two colleagues shows no sign of abating. On the contrary, even people who normally consider themselves non-political are joining the flood of protest against the treacherous murder. This sudden reversion to the Stalinist system of terror has not only smashed the facade of liberalism which the 10th Congress of the CPSU raised but has also exposed the hollowness of the hypocritical professions with which Khrushchev sought to beguile the world since then. Nagy's execution is a notice served on the Communist satellites that they must forever reconcile themselves to the Yoke of the Big Brother and that any move toward what is called "counter-revolution" will be fiercely crushed.

It is also a warning to the world that in HUSCOW's view there is only one road to socialism -- the one way road that leads to the Kremlin. Communism thus stands stripped of all its ideological pretenses and dialectical ambiguities. It has revealed itself as a naked denial of human dignity and freedom!

Finally, on July 16 Mr. Jayaprakash NARAYAN, founder of the Indian Socialist Party and an Honorary Chairman of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, issued the following statement:

"The cold-blooded murder of Mr. Láslo Nagy, General Malster and their two associates has sent a wave of disgust and revulsion throughout the East. I have no doubt that the reaction has been the same in the East and Africa.

"The situation in the Russian empire must be desperate indeed to require recourse to such desperate measures. The Russians have deliberately taken the risk of stirring the conscience of mankind against them. There must be something much more precious at stake; I think it is the very future of the Russian empire."

JAPAN

Certain Japanese papers condemned the Hungarian events in unambiguous terms. Most of the comment saw the action as another phase in the attack on Yugoslav revisionism and a tragic reminder that Stalinism remained the bogy of Soviet policy. The press carried a denunciation of the executions issued by the governing Liberal Democratic Party, which called them "barbaric, inhuman and cruel".

It is noteworthy, however, that Japanese youth did not quickly respond to the latest Hungarian events. One Eastern News agency reports that some 50 Japanese students demonstrated outside the Russian Embassy in TOKYO, waving placards and shouting "Explain the execution of Nagy!" and "Kill KHRUSHCHEV!" Conspicuously absent from the scene were any delegates from Japan's biggest student organization, the 100,000-member Federation of Student Selfgoverning Associations, noted for staging noisy demonstrations outside TOKYO's British and American Embassies in protest against nuclear tests.

The following are excerpts of press comment:

The "Yokohai-Jiji" says: "Not only ^{the} free world but also neutral and Communist nations are seriously shocked at the announcement of Nagy's execution and three other former Hungarian leaders. There has been an event that has made us recognize the real substance of Communism more clearly than the execution of Nagy and his associates.... It also proves that Yugoslav President TITO is right in striving to protect independence of his country by carrying through a middle-of-the-road policy..."

In an editorial entitled "More Outrageous than Crime", the "Asahi Evening News" said: "The shock and wave of indignation which spread throughout the world as a result of the announcement of the execution of former Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy and others have become more widespread and have brought about serious repercussions..."

"Yomiuri Shinbun" of June 30 wrote: "Under any circumstances, it is impossible to justify the execution of Nagy and other leaders in the October revolt... The Soviet Union succeeded in retaining Hungary on her side, but her success was barely achieved by such a way of doing. In this way she has trampled the Hungarian people's wish under foot. This is too tragic an event to be forgotten."

"Tokyo Shinbun": "The way of suppressing the revolt was cruel and the result was miserable. Nagy took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy in BUDAPEST, but finally, he was arrested by Soviet troops and was taken away to the Rumanian border. Since then he has been missing. Of course, there was no chance that he would return alive. Yet we were shocked at the report that he had been executed on the charge of 'betrayal of the fatherland'. The Communist camp's ironclad rule that freedom must not be sought beyond the bounds of thinking is still cold and stern."

The "Nissei Shimbun" of July 7 sums up Japanese reaction under the title:

"Japan and the Judicial Terror in Hungary -- Failure of Public Opinion."

"The blood sentence of BUDAPEST, which has deeply shaken the free world and which has stirred revulsion even among the neutralist countries of Asia, was received by Japan with an almost immovable face. In front of the Soviet Embassy some 50 'independent' students 'demonstrated' by carrying a few posters demanding the release of Hungarian students. The leftist Federation of Japanese Students' Associations called a special meeting which turned out to be a miserable failure....

"The Trade Union Federation SOMYO repeated the spectacle of the students and refrained equally from taking a stand. Not much was to be expected from these circles anyway which are infiltrated with Communist leaders....

"The secretary general of the Liberal Democrats, KANEKIDA, issued a statement several days after the murder saying that the Party dissociates itself with astonishment from the events in Hungary. Foreign Minister FURUYAMA also disapproved of the BUDAPEST crimes but was surprisingly tight-lipped when questioned about it at a press conference.

The argumentation of the press was largely marked by an alarming naivete. Yesterday (July 7), Japan's most widely-read daily, "Asahi", finally published an editorial which castigated the failure of the Japanese people in this important question. "Asahi" writes: 'It is a shame that the Japanese, who like to take a stand on international questions in 1956, are so weak and irresponsible as individuals. The way Japan reacted to the crime of BUDAPEST will cause the free world -- of which Japan claims to be a member -- to look down on us.'

The NII concludes by saying that -- while individual Japanese could not be expected to protest forcefully anyway -- government and parties have spoken so mildly in order not to increase the tension between PEKING and TOKYO.

The Swiss paper's gloom was perhaps premature. For on July 9 UNIA reported from TOKYO that about 1,000 persons, the majority of them students, held a rally in TOKYO on July 8 to mourn the execution of former Hungarian Premier Imre Nagy and three of his associates. The gathering was sponsored by the Japan Society for the Relief of Hungary -- a private organization formed after the Hungarian revolt of October 1956. It is backed by the million-member Japan Trade Union Congress and the National Federation of Private University self-government associations.

Seven speakers, including former Prime Minister Hitoshi ASHIDA, condemned the executions and the gathering adopted a declaration protesting the executions and calling on the United Nations to take measures to halt the terror in Hungary.

According to the same source, 37 Japanese lawyers have sent a message to the International Commission of Jurists in THE HAGUE backing the Commission's recent statement condemning the executions.

INDONESIA

The Indonesian Government has maintained its customary neutralist silence on the execution of Mr. Nagy and recent related events inside the Communist bloc. The pro-government sections of opinion generally observed a similar restraint, although there were some comments providing evidence that non-Communist nationalists in this category were shaken by Mr. Nagy's death. The nationalist pro-government English-language daily "Observer" published in JAKARTA, for example, said that the execution of Mr. Nagy and his colleagues "has shocked the Asian-African world", and added that "whatever little sympathy there was for the Hungarian Government has now vanished in the eyes of many Asians."

Said the "New York Times" of June 29:

"Oppressive government measures have reduced the ranks of the liberal Democratic press in Indonesia, but journals in this

category that still exist bitterly denounced the Hungarian executions. In a typical comment from these quarters, the socialist daily "Deutscher" warned that the executions were another action by the puppets of MOSCOW to 'blindly carry out MOSCOW's orders.'

CAMBODIA

In the capital PHNOM PENH, the French-language paper "Le Berneux de Cambodge" declared that the barbarian Gauls who crossed some 2,000 years ago were more civilized than the "judges -- or rather the hangmen -- of HUPHENT who assassinated SART". The Cambodian paper deplores the secret trial of the Hungarian leaders; "this pantomime of a judgment... this attempt to take away from them [Sart and his colleagues] what they still possessed and what their conquerors did not have -- honor..." (RFE Special, July 7)

The circumstances of the death of the Hungarian leaders, the paper continues, make it impossible to regard the event as "a kind of injustice which does not concern us directly". Rather, the paper says, the executions must be regarded as a "diabolical warning flung in the faces of all free men".

SOUTH VIETNAM

The "South News Week Six" of SAIGON comments: "The executions are testimonies to the Pitiless techniques of the Soviet Communist regime. It is said that Nikita KHRUSHCHEV is the man who must stand before the world as responsible for the murders. To remember that KHRUSHCHEV, the man who rose to supreme power in the Soviet Union through his condemnations and exposure of his predecessor, is now the first man since Stalin to hold such power... There have been those for whom hope has created the belief in Mr. KHRUSHCHEV's pose as the humanizer of Communism. Even if it were KHRUSHCHEV's genuine desire to liberalize, to humanize, to dignify Soviet Communism (and we, remembering his deeds rather than his words, do not believe that such is the case) -- he could not do so. For Communism cannot, by its very nature, permit a less harsh control over the people. To do so would mean its very downfall, as we have seen so clearly in Hungary and to some extent in Poland.

HUNGARY

"Szomszedeink", a paper published in MANDALAY, says: "All democratic countries denounce Russia for the execution of Nagy. The Hungarian case concerns not only Hungary, but the whole world... The Soviet Union has already been condemned by the UN General Assembly (for suppressing the 1956 Hungarian freedom uprising). For to execute the Hungarian leaders shows how the Soviets brazenly ignore world opinion."

An editorial in the Burmese language daily "Kwaik-Kwaik" (Candid) of YANGON says: "In non-Communist countries communist tactics are to foment workers' dissatisfaction and disaffection, encourage political upheavals and exploit any troubles already besetting a country. But in a Communist country the least sign of disloyalty to the Party or any attempt to oppose its authority is punished swiftly and ruthlessly. No criticism is allowed. How much people detest Communist rule is borne out by the 1956 uprisings in Hungary... Among those joining the revolt was Premier Nagy and he incurred Soviet wrath. By deception he was kidnapped by the Soviets and now he and three colleagues have been executed... We are not surprised at such Communist duplicity and are only the more wary of the Communists."

THAILAND (SIAM)

"Prachathitai" of BANGKOK writes that Imre Nagy was accused of rebellion. But, the paper asks, against whom did he rebel? He rebelled against the Soviet rulers. The paper adds that the Soviet Union not only acted against all moral principles and justice, but it went so far as to execute the head of government of another country.

The Thai newspapers "Thai Sakon", "Siam Nikorn", "Fain Thai", "Uttar Thai", "Thai Rath", and "Siam Rath" join "Prachathitai" in condemning the execution of the four Hungarians. However, two left-wing papers approve the executions. They say that Nagy plotted with the United States to -- as they put it -- "oppress and terrorize the Hungarian people".

Ceylon

In COLOMBO, the "Time of Ceylon" comments: "The present Hungarian regime of KADAR and HUNYIAD needed no unmasking. It has ever been the pitifully abject tool of its Soviet creators and masters. But the treacherous murder of Nagy and his fellow prisoners has

finally stripped the disguise of Soviet Premier KHRUSHCHEV. The Soviet Premier pretended to be shocked by the judicial murder of countless of honest Communists by Stalin. It is this pretense that has now been conclusively uncovered, for Nagy was an honest Communist, and so were his companions."

by

End