

Hungary

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MALENKOV AND IMRE NAGY

The relationship between G. M. Malenkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers from March 1953 until February 1955, and Imre Nagy, Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers from June 1953 to April 1955, cannot be determined from any Soviet or Hungarian sources. The evidence of their association is, at best, only circumstantial.

Not only do the periods of their incumbency as governmental heads coincide chronologically, but the policies of the "new course" in both countries—correction of the previous disproportion between the rates of development of heavy and light industry and concessions in agriculture—are popularly associated with their persons. In the case of Nagy, the shifts effected were extremely far-reaching in scope, particularly the dissolution of the cooperative; Malenkov's objectives and implementation had more limited aims. Nevertheless both were subsequently accused of ~~errors~~ of "rightist deviation", Nagy directly, and Malenkov indirectly in the Shepilov article (*Pravda*, 25 January 1955) and by Khrushchev in his speech at the plenum which preceded the announcement of the removal of Malenkov (see Background Information, 28 February 1955). As the result of the Hungarian October Nagy's ideological errors regarding the peasantry have been retroactively labelled the "roots of his treason" (See Background Information 1 February 1958); Malenkov, on the other hand, has merely been deprived of the credit for the 1953 tax concession to the peasantry and, in addition, has been censured, on unspecified charges, for "incorrect guidance of agriculture" and, more specifically, for disregard of "material incentives" in the post war period when the present First Secretary was the Kremlin's spokesman on agriculture. To justify the inclusion of Malenkov in the anti-party group along with Molotov and Kaganovich, Khrushchev has also been compelled to reverse the original charges against his more youthful opponent and blame him, not for favoring light industry, but for opposing the program of simultaneously overtaking the U.S. in per capita output in agriculture and heavy industry—"rightist opportunism" in the eyes of the anti-Party dogmatists (A. Remyatsev, *Kommunist*, #10, 1957).

This amorphous amalgam of economic errors has now hardened into a more readily identifiable political compound through the gradual addition of the grave accusations of Malenkov's co-responsibility in Stalin's and Beria's political crises and cultural terror. (Khrushchev's speeches on literature, *Pravda*, 28 August 1957; C. C. Resolution annulling the decrees on the operas—1949-51, *Pravda*, 8 June 1958).

To the circumstantial connection between Malenkov and Nagy and to the officially documented charges can be added the information provided by the former functionary of the Polish Central Committee, S. Bialer,<sup>1</sup> who

<sup>1</sup> For the accuracy of Bialer's information on the July 1955 plenum see Background Information 18 June 1958.

states that the Soviet Politburo letter (February 1955) on the reasons for the dismissal of Malenkov contains the following unpublicized charge:

"The policy of Malenkov, aside from the harm which it threatened in Soviet domestic matters, concealed serious dangers for the countries of the Peoples Democracies and for the relations of the Soviet Union with these countries, an example of which is the situation in Hungary". (S. Bialer: The Three Sources of Kremlin Policy, New Leader, 29 July 1957; see below p. 2)

Between February 1955—resignation as Chairman of the Council of Ministers—and July 1957—expulsion from the Presidium and Central Committee—G. M. Malenkov made only a single public appearance beyond the borders of the Soviet Union. This unique emergence from nearly total obscurity took place in Budapest when Malenkov, together with Khrushchev, attended the five governmental-Party meeting—Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union—which incorporated the charge of "treason" against Imre Nagy in its final communique (Pravda, 6 January 1957). From that date until the announcement of Nagy's execution on 17 June 1958 Moscow's position with respect to the former Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers never changed (See Background Information, 1 February 1958); after that time Malenkov never again was a member of a Soviet delegation. His role in these talks must remain a matter of conjecture to be clarified only in the future as unexpectedly in timing as in the case of I. Nagy. From the latter's own statements it is clear that Malenkov's attitude towards Hungary in no way differed basically from that of Khrushchev, Mikoyan, or Kaganovich (see below pp. 3-5). This, however, will protect him as little from a future arraignment by Khrushchev on charges of having encouraged "splitting" and "disruptive" tendencies within the "socialist camp" as Soviet i.e. Khrushchev's, promises to Yugoslavia guaranteed the person of Imre Nagy against a similar indictment. To mask the collapse of his own policies inside the bloc, to demonstrate the unbroken continuity from the Belgrade Declaration to the Sofia speech, to erase the cause and effect relationship between his secret speech and the Polish and Hungarian Octobers, Khrushchev must as inevitably resurrect the unpublicized denunciation of Malenkov made in February 1955 as he has already been compelled to revive the condemnation of Tito contained in the 1948 Cominform resolution. The "ties" between the executed Nagy and the living Malenkov, tenuous and short as they may have been, are strong enough to condemn the latter forever.

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