

N - BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND 1958

NEWS & INFORMATION  
EVALUATION & RESEARCH  
HUNGARIAN EVALUATION ~~PROGRAM~~

News Background

F-64

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND TO IMRE NAGY AND HIS ASSOCIATES

BRNO, June 17 (Hungarian Evaluation and Research) — Radio Kossuth broadcast on June 18 at 2:00 hours an official communique on the trial of Imre Nagy and his associates. The communique did not say where and when the trial took place and did not even mention the composition of the court. Nor was mention made of the date of execution of the principal defendants.

The communique, however, mentioned that Imre Nagy, Jozsef Szilagyi and Pal Malater denied the accusations while Ferenc DOBOSI, Miklos GIBES, Soltan TILTY, Sandor KOPACSI, Ferenc JAROSI and Miklos VARASHELYI pleaded guilty and showed repentance.

The communique emphasized that Gera Lacsanyi died from illness during detention. He had already been jailed in connection with the Baljk trial and spent several years in prison without having been tried. During this time he contracted tuberculosis of the lung, which is assumed to have caused his death. During his first term of imprisonment Lacsanyi was also severely tortured.

Biographical information on the personalities who have been tried and sentenced follows:

Imre Nagy

Born in 1896 of a farmer's family in KAPOVÁK, County Somogy, he took part as a prisoner-of-war in the Russian October revolution and returned to Hungary in 1921. Later, because of his Party activities he had to flee to the Soviet Union where he remained until the end of 1944.

Early in 1945 he became Minister of Agriculture and as such he carried out the 1945 land reform. Subsequently he was Minister of the Interior and for some time Speaker of the National Assembly. He returned to the government around 1949 as Minister of Food. In the RAKOSI government (1953-55) Nagy was Deputy Minister.

On 4 July 1953 he became Prime Minister and initiated the so-called New Course. His political star began to fade at the beginning of 1955. On 19 February 1955 an official communique labeled him sick and incapable of carrying out his duties as Premier, while on 18 April 1955 he was relieved of the premier-

ship and excluded from the Politburo and Central Committee. Later he was even excluded from the Party.

Nagy's exclusion from the Party was equal to a complete political ban which lasted until the fall of 1956 when the pre-revolutionary political fermentation brought him back to the political scene.

His first public appearance, as reported by the press, was at the funeral of László Rajk (1) October 1956) and the subsequent days completed his entire rehabilitation, as well as his re-admittance to the ranks of the Communist Party.

After the beginning of the 1956 uprising, on 24 October 1956, Nagy was made a member of the Central Committee of the NPP. On 27 October 1956 he became Premier and on 29 October 1956 a member of the Party Executive.

On 1 November 1956 he took over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and initiated the negotiations with Soviet Ambassador ANTONOV about the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.

On the morning of 4 November 1956, when the Soviet attacks started, Imre Nagy sought refuge at the Yugoslav Embassy. He left the Embassy under known circumstances on November 12 and on the same day was kidnapped with his friends by the Russians.

Already on 26 November 1956 János KADAR launched the first attack against Imre Nagy, by saying that "he committed an unpardonable error against the Hungarian people". Since then leaders of the Communist Party and press articles have made innumerable attacks on Nagy and his friends. The regime surrounded the whereabouts of Nagy with the utmost secrecy and from the time that he was kidnapped nothing was officially disclosed about his place of detention. Speculation said that he was held in BUDA, BUDAPEST, and in summer 1957 other rumors reported him to be back in the ill-famed prison of the political police in Po Street, BUDAPEST.

Spokesmen of the regime always avoided giving exact answers to the inquiries of Western newspapermen about an eventual trial of Nagy.

The sharpness of the attacks on Nagy increased particularly after the fall of 1957. In this context the 21 May 1958 issue of "Hepentésnap" deserves special mention because, in a long ideological article dealing with the Hungarian attitude toward Imre Nagy Nagy was mentioned in the most sinister terms. Nagy was alleged to have committed "open and complete treason during the counter-revolution". He was also labeled "revisionist".

It is beyond doubt that during his role during the revolution Imre Nagy achieved sincere popularity among the Hungarian people and his execution will further increase, if that is possible, the immense gap between the Party and the population.

Pal Malster

Born in September 1917, for four and a half years he studied at

FRANZ Medical University and in 1939 entered military service. He graduated at the Ludovika Military Academy in 1940. In spring 1944, as a lieutenant, he went over to the Hungarians. In the USSR he applied for admission to the KIMF Partisan School and was put into action against the Germans as a paratrooper first lieutenant in September 1944.

F-66  
Malater joined the Communist Party in 1944. In 1945 he became a member of the bodyguard of the President of the Republic as a lieutenant-colonel. In 1946 he was commended to serve on the general staff. Shortly before the revolution he became commander of the technical auxiliary troops and as such approached the revolutionaries barricaded in the Kildes Barracks, from where he directed the military actions of the insurgents. Malater became the military leader of the revolution. On 1 November 1946 he was promoted major-general and on November 2 he was appointed Minister of Defense.

At the same time the Nagy government appointed him a member of the mixed commission preparing the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary.

On 3 November 1946 Malater went to a meeting with the Soviet command from which he never returned. He was arrested by the Soviet authorities and nothing was disclosed later about his whereabouts.

Malater's position seemed to be difficult from the beginning of the retaliatory actions against the insurgents. In May 1947 Istvan KONTI denounced Malater's contacts with the British military attaché. An article in "Nepszabadsag" in April 1947 labeled him a traitor. In his case the regime made no secret about the fact that he would be tried, as it was announced by "Nepszabadsag" on 19 January 1948.

The growing popularity around Malater's person raised him to the rank of national hero.

#### Miklos Gimes

A journalist, he was a former staff member of "United Day" until summer 1955 when he was dismissed because at a meeting he demanded the publication of the confidential documents of the Nagy trial. At the same time he was excluded from the Party as a "rightist deviationist".

On 17 October 1954 Gimes was re-admitted to the Party. During the revolutionary events he was among the closest collaborators of Imre Nagy. His main job was to maintain liaison with the workers' councils and with the factory delegations. After November 3 he did not join Nagy at the Yugoslav Embassy but continued to maintain this liaison and to organize the workers' strike movement. (It seems that the KADAR regime did not pardon him for these activities.) He was arrested in December 1956 and held in the BUDAPEST Pn Street prison.

(H) - ② - BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND  
HUNGARIAN NEWS BACKGROUND, June 17, page 4

In May 1958 Gyula KALLAI attacked Gimes, saying that he was the "ideological" preparer of the counter-revolution and that in the fall of 1956 he openly sided with the enemy.

Joseph Szilagy

F-67

He is the least known personality in the trial. According to reliable private information, Szilagy was an economic expert and the economic adviser to Imre Nagy. It was believed he would have become a deputy minister in the Nagy government if the revolution had been successful.

Sándor KUPACSI

A police officer, in 1953 he became deputy police commander of BUDAPEST. In the 1953 election he was elected to the National Assembly and in 1954 he also became a member of the BUDAPEST Town Council. In April 1955 he was promoted police commander of BUDAPEST.

During the revolution KUPACSI became a member of the revolutionary military committee and deputy commander of the National Guard.

He always took an active part in Party work and after the dissolution of the Hungarian Workers' Party he was a member of the preparatory committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

After the crushing of the revolution he was imprisoned and his revolutionary role was widely publicized in the third volume of the White Book on the uprising published by the regime. He was held responsible for the undermining of the police and for the attitude of the police during the revolution.

Dr. Ferenc DORATH

He appeared on the political scene in 1945 as one of the favorites of BAKOSI. His first major job was that of Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture. Around 1948 he was appointed to the head of the secretariat of BAKOSI. After the Malik trial, however, DORATH was arrested along with János KADAR and Gyula KALLAI.

During his detention his wife was held in an internment camp. Both were released in 1951 but official rehabilitation of DORATH only took place in July 1956 after the denunciation of BAKOSI. Prior to the revolution he was Deputy director of the Institute of Economic Sciences.

It is probable that his friendship with Gera Lozsoncy brought him into the friendly circle of Imre Nagy with whom he maintained close connections throughout the revolution.

Dr. Ferenc JANCSI

He is a former military chaplain of the Reformed Church who was

taken prisoner-of-war in 1941. There he established contacts with the Hungarian emigrants, studied at an anti-fascist school and returned to Hungary in 1945 as a Communist Party member. He was immediately admitted with the rank of colonel to the Hungarian army and was charged with the direction of the education section of the Ministry of Defense.

F-68

After his return from the USSR he married Etelke BATT, daughter of Imre Nagy. When Nagy formed his government in 1953 JASOSI was appointed first Deputy to the Minister of People's Culture. In October 1954 JASOSI became secretary-general of the Patriotic People's Front. He occupied this position until May 1957 when he resigned and became director of the Petöfi Literary Museum.

LITTLE is known about his particular activities during the revolution but it is obvious that he was among the advisors of his father-in-law, Imre Nagy.

Soltész TILNY

Born in 1896, he studied at the PAPA Theological Academy of the Reformed Church and in the Assembly College of HELSINKI. In 1930 TILNY was one of the founders of the Independent Smallholders' Party. He was elected Member of Parliament for the first time in 1938.

During the war TILNY was one of the leaders of the anti-Nazi resistance movement. He became Premier in November 1944 and on 1 February 1945 first President of the Hungarian Republic. In August 1945 he had to resign from the Presidency because of trumped-up charges against his son-in-law, Viktor Csorvosi, who was executed.

After his resignation TILNY spent several years under house arrest. He emerged only in September 1955 to take an active part in public life. On 27 October 1956 TILNY was appointed Minister of State in the first Nagy government and was one of the political leaders of the revolutionary period.

After the crushing of the revolution he was left free for a time and was arrested in May 1957.

Szilves VASARHELYI

In 1941 he became a staff member of "Szabó Nap". At the beginning of 1951 he gradually moved over from the NEMESI group to the Nagy group. In the summer of 1953 Imre Nagy appointed him Deputy Head of the State Information Office. After the ousting of Nagy, VASARHELYI was ousted from this position and was also excluded from the Communist Party as a rightist revisionist.

On 12 October 1956 VASARHELYI was readmitted to the Party. He was on very friendly terms with Genn Loschny and during the revolution, as disclosed by Communist sources, he was head of the State Information Office.

X  
① - ⑤ - BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND  
HUNGARIAN NEWS BACKGROUND, June 17, page 6

A number of press attacks against VASARHELYI in 1957 made it probable that he would have to stand trial.

X X X

7-69

It should be pointed out that the communique on the Nagy trial does not mention some others who also sought asylum in the Yugoslav Embassy along with Nagy. They were:

X  
Solten SZANTO;  
Gyorgy LUKACS;  
Gabor TARCOS;  
Sandor HARASZTI;  
Gyorgy FAISZAS;  
Peter ERDOS;  
Ester VAS;  
Julia BAK;  
Ferenc BAKOS;  
Sallard UJHELYI; as well as 15 wives and 17 children.

SZANTO, LUKACS, ERDOS, VAS and BAKOS left the Embassy on 14 November 1956 -- four days before the rest of the group which was subsequently kidnapped by the Soviets.

Only the whereabouts of Gyorgy LUKACS of these people is known; on 19 April 1957 Radio Moscow broadcast that his return had been authorized by the government.

On the fate of the others nothing was officially disclosed. However it was believed that they were held along with the whole Nagy group in Budapest. After this "liquidation" of the Nagy case it seems unlikely that these other persons should be kept outside Hungary.

End

1586