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EMERGING PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY HUNGARY

NOVEMBER 1956 - AUGUST 1957

Audience Analysis Section
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November 1956 - August 1957

I. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

1. According to the material on hand, police terror and a resultant existential insecurity appear to be the factors most strongly affecting Hungarian attitudes.
2. There appears to be no difference in the assessment of the effects of widespread terror by the various social strata (workers, peasants, etc). Terror weighs with equal force on each; its psychological effects have been emphasized by respondents as irritability and lack of comradeship on the one hand, and groundless hopes or near-suicidal wishes on the other.
3. The more consumption-minded economic policy of the regime which complements the brutal police methods is recognized by the public but appears to be regarded with mistrust.
4. Workers' resistance which continues unabated appears to have been successfully denied expression except in connection with poor workshop discipline. Workers Councils have been all but destroyed by the regime by perverting their purpose; labor unions have been to a large extent, though perhaps not completely, "gleichgeschaltet."
5. Despite the continued "mild" agricultural policy, the peasantry remained disaffected. Repeated regime assurances notwithstanding, the threat of new collectivization drives apparently is acutely felt in the countryside. However, it should be borne in mind that the financial situation of the peasantry might improve in the coming months; this might have its repercussions on attitudes. Moreover, findings concerning this class have to be further qualified by reason of the very limited first-hand information available. The overwhelming majority of references to peasant attitudes were second hand, made by city-dwellers.
6. The resistance of Hungarian intellectuals, exemplified by the silence of the writers, has not diminished to date. Even among the journalists working for the government press and radio, there are a number of "potential rebels" according to sources. The cultural policy of the regime continues to be "liberal": better newspapers and radio programs, more readable books (reprints and translations of Western authors), better films are available.
7. Though regime efforts to win over the young have not proved successful, there are strong indications that the bellicose attitude of university and high school students to the regime has slackened in the past



months. The near monopoly of government sponsored youth organizations on sports and holiday facilities is a factor in this development. At the same time, regime sources continued to indicate that the young people were joining the mass organizations purely for the sake of amusement and that political education is being neglected in the different youth leagues.

8. Sources indicated that the intellectual standards of the present party leadership are held in very low repute in Hungary. People are considered to be joining the party for opportunistic reasons or out of fear. The only respondent who mentioned Chinese and Polish developments indicated that little hope is entertained for changes along such lines.

9. In connection with the People's Patriotic Front, the regime is facing a dilemma: The PPF cannot plan its government-allotted role without being considerably broadened and made more acceptable to the people. Yet, hitherto only fellow-travellers were willing to join it with the result that the People's Patriotic Front has remained the same discredited "front" it had been in the past. Kadar announced that the PPF daily, Magyar Nemzet will reappear in September. The composition of its editorial board will shed some light on how successful regime efforts have been to recruit new supporters.

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II. INTRODUCTION

Source Material and Method

This memorandum, presenting salient aspects of the attitude of the Hungarian people toward the regime and the events between November 1956 and July 1957 is based on interviews and relevant official regime media. Western newspaper reports were also taken into consideration.

Concerning the 127 interview items on which this paper has drawn, it should be pointed out that owing to technical difficulties, questioning could not be done on a uniform basis. 111 of the 127 interview items touched only upon one or two details of daily life in post-revolutionary Hungary. Only 16 of the 127 interview items contained data of a more general nature. In consequence, no attempt had been made to deal with the material quantitatively.

Another reason for adopting a descriptive rather than a statistical approach to the source material is the result of rapidly changing conditions in Hungary during the period under review: even had the data been comparable to begin with, the flux of events would have strongly vitiated the findings since both the objective and subjective factors of popular attitudes were undergoing a constant change as a result of the ever-hardening line taken by the Kadar government.

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Evidence on hand indicates that terror with all its ramifications extending from daily death sentences to the ineluctable fear of being spied upon was the one factor which overwhelmingly shaped the attitudes of respondents to the regime. It cut through social and occupational groups, bearing down with equal weight on peasants and intellectuals, young and old. For this reason, Part III of this memorandum will deal with the police, judiciary and psychological terror as it appears to affect the mood and attitudes of the Hungarian population as a whole. Part IV will deal with the emerging attitudes towards the events of the post-revolutionary period. Part V will be devoted to the "new" CP, its composition and the differences as well as similarities between it and the party under Rakosi-Gero.

The Antecedents and Methods of the Kadar Regime

No discussion of the period under review can dispense with constant references to the historical situation immediately preceding it: the "thaw" of the summer 1956 and the October revolution.

The "thaw", as is well known, was almost entirely dependent on reformist elements either within the party and state apparatus or close to them. Gathering under the banner of "liberalization," the reformists brought forces into play which were completely beyond their control: the upsurge of overt revulsion in the country at large not only against certain shortcomings of the governing clique, but against communism in whatever shape and form.

The exact relations between the two forces, the communist reformers and the anti-communist majority is for the historian to assess. However, the obvious lack of cohesion in the "new" party seems to indicate that the rifts within the leadership itself has only been papered over. If the surviving reformists and the rest of the praesidium both talking the language of Marxism-Leninism, had hitherto been unable to come to terms, the chasm dividing the system from the majority of the Hungarian people for whom Marxism-Leninism is synonymous with Soviet bayonets and the AVO must be considered unbridgeable.

Faced with popular attitudes ranging from non-cooperation to passive resistance, the regime took recourse to terror on the one hand and to "panem et circenses" on the other -- irrespective of the international repercussions of the first, and the ideological concessions necessitated by the latter. The two were, of course, complementary: terror and the resultant sense of helplessness prevented the opposition from breaking to the surface while the bread-and-circus aspect of regime policies helped to sooth the bitterness created by fear and was meant to prove that the Kadar regime was not repeating the mistakes of the past at least as far as living standards are concerned.



III. THE TERROR

Almost all sources discussing the present Hungarian situation made references to the reign of terror and/or its effects on the attitudes of the population. The salient facts emerging from their assessment of the oppressive rule of force in post-revolutionary Hungary may be exemplified by two interview items, one dealing with the physical impossibility to maintain resistance, the other with the widely held opinion that the degree, diversity and effectiveness of terror in Hungary are not fully appreciated abroad:

"Are there no men left (in Hungary) or do we lack courage? In the face of the incredibly barbaric Soviet methods, who would have the necessary courage?"; and

"Western countries are simply unable to grasp the cunning tyranny characteristic of our regime."

Anticipation of Constantly Growing Terror

The expectation that oppression will become worse according to the extent to which the government will have created the psychological and technical prerequisites for its implementation was one of the features of the period under review, and one of the main causes for defection from Hungary.

"The laws which are now being prepared are so terrible that the people will wish for the worst days of the Rakosi era. Russian experts are at work. They will see to it that terror should return only gradually and in small doses...only when general despair precludes any new outbreak will they release its full force," a respondent stated in the middle of February.

The Police and the Courts

"Being mostly former AVO members," sources stated, "the policemen are thirsting for revenge." Merciless beatings, without distinction of the age and sex of the detained have been reported by numerous sources (viz. Audience Analysis Section Special Report #13). Two sources reported that according to rumors circulating in Hungary, people under arrest amounted to between 50 and 100,000. The newly reopened internment camps at Recsk and Kistarcsa as well as the prisons all over the country were said to be "atrociously overcrowded."

Another 20 sources spoke of the strict police supervision, the constant identification checks, the searches, unwarranted beatings in public places, etc.

Hate for the police and the regime militia (AVO) is growing to the extreme. "Security police go in pairs or more usually in threes and fours because of nightly attacks on them," sources reported early in the spring.



This hatred is welcomed by the regime and the Russian experts in the secret police for psychological reasons: it isolates the militia from the population and the AVO man who does not dare to return to his native village becomes the most faithful defender of the communist system. Even if he is favorably disposed toward the population at the beginning - and some sources pointed to the fact that part of the militia was "unreliable" - in the end he has nowhere to go.

Parallel to the excesses of the police, the law courts in Hungary have been coerced to become, in the words of the Hungarian Minister of Justice Nezval, "a class-war inspired judiciary," to judge by the extremely severe sentences passed.

Nevertheless, both complaints in the press on this subject and statements by refugees indicated a certain opposition from the judges. "Several prosecutors resigned in protest"; "judges refused to administer justice in political cases --cf: Audience Analysis Special Report #13

According to a number of sources, most death sentences are passed secretly, by laymen, either because "there were no judges to pass the sentence" or because "this caused less trouble."

In this connection, it should be mentioned that according to Hungarian law, offences endangering the security of the state are to be tried secretly - practically all political cases are of this nature - and are to be made public only for special reasons. For instance, wherever a common crime could be linked with revolutionary actions, the case received publicity in order to discredit the revolution.

Deportation and Cadre Files

Apart from the prison and the gallows, deportation of the citizen from his place of residence and the cadre (personal) files at his place of employment were strong weapons in the hands of the regime against any opposition.

The decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior contains the following provision:

"To expell from their permanent or temporary domicile or from a stated part of the territory of the country persons harmful and dangerous to the state and to public security, or to Socialist social coexistence (sic), or who could be harmful from the point of view of either important state interests or of national economy."

Since "being harmful" to "Socialist social coexistence" has never been further defined, no citizen can consider himself safe. There is every reason to believe that this ambiguity was not accidental; the sense of being at all times completely at the mercy of the powers that be was at least as valuable from the regime point of view as were the actual deportations in keeping the population cowed.



Concerning the cadre files, it should be borne in mind that every company maintains a personnel section where each employee has a file annotated with remarks like: "he baptised his son," or "has a sister living in the U.S.," or "said thus and so on March 3." The section is confidential and in close touch with the secret police.

At every application for a new job, the personnel section requires information from the applicant's former firm on his political reliability. In case the information is negative, it is entirely impossible to secure a white-collar position and often difficult even to get a job as an unskilled laborer.

To quote one of the sources: "The most effective weapon of the regime in breaking workers' resistance is economic terror. An atmosphere of constant uncertainty has been created; anyone can be dismissed at any time and everybody is afraid of losing his job since, once dismissed, it is impossible to find new employment."

The return to the system of cadre files was announced in Nepszabadsag on April 3. Since that time, a number of articles appeared in defense of "cadre work" and the discussion in favor of it is still going on, indicating the hard resistance to be overcome. It should be noted that the tyrannical "cadre policy" had ranked first on the list of the mistakes reform communists of the thaw period were striving to rectify.

Socialist Legality

The oft-repeated claim that the Kadar regime eschews the "illegal practices" of the past in the Hungarian media is not given credence by the population, according to the material on hand. While a certain difference of form was acknowledged, respondents hastened to add that essentially the present terror is in no way different from that of the Rakosi era: "Another difference between the present and Rakosi's days is the superficial attempt now made from time to time to demonstrate "socialist legality"; "Unlike the Rakosi, the Kadar regime is putting up a camouflage of legality -- the limitations of the rights of accused persons is now based on decrees (instead of on sheer force, Ed.)" according to another source.

The Psychological Effects of Terror

According to numerous sources: "the situation is terrible, everybody is exasperated"; "the population is lethargic and disenchanting"; "nervous tension, lack of hope will lead to increasing mental stress and to suicide. The mood of the population is one of almost unbelievable tension. Tempers flare up suddenly at normal jostling in the trams"; "there is no trace of unity as had been the case during the revolution. Everybody is nervous and suspicious of the other;" "people are callous" and "alcoholism is everywhere



apparent" (Munchener Merkur). Alcoholism is a constant complaint of the Hungarian press, too. "Pessimism reigns"; "people are terribly bad-tempered, uncouth and troubled"; "unrest and despair reign".

"At present," according to the Munchener Illustrierte, "there are three narcotics which help the people of Budapest to forget: dreams, movies, and alcohol -- and all three are there in ample supply."

Daydreams of a political nature were described in the following: "we are still spinning dreams of redemption and are phrasing romantic appeals."

Refuge in groundless political hopes has been a typical feature of pre-thaw Hungary, especially in that part of the population which rejected communism in toto. This "Internal Emigration" seems to have grown as a result of November 4 and after and, judging by the material on hand, now comprises a very significant segment of the population.

Their total rejection of existing conditions is manifest in such remarks: "Many people can still not believe that no help is forthcoming from the West. They constantly listen to RFE and VOA in the hope that they will say something -- and they are furious when they hear platitudes. Or in such self-destructive statements as the following: "The more badly things are going, the better for us because it would sooner or later bring about the inevitable downfall of communism." Other respondents stated: "The people feel now that their only weapon against Kadar is starvation and penury. If they live in squalor and poverty long enough, perhaps the West will be forced to help -- or the Russians will just wash their hands of the whole thing. Thus, people are violently opposed to a Western loan to the Kadar government. They say it will only improve conditions in the country and will give the Russians a way out;" or "People think that the West should rather distribute the gifts among the refugees than strengthen the regime and the Soviet Union."

As for the prospect of war, which has always played a large role in speculations in Hungary, the words of one respondent are typical of many others: "...the mood at home is still very dispirited but gradually people begin to hope for war: they think only a war can save them"; and similarly,

Even when war is rejected, this is done in the following terms: "only another war may bring freedom for Hungary, but people do not wish for another war."

A sense of isolation, both objectively, as a result of the reerection of the Iron Curtain and subjectively, springing from the conviction that the old spy network of the police has been reestablished, stifled that relative freedom of expression which survived the defeat of the revolution.

"People speak very little, and only about uninteresting matters," according to one source. Others stated: "We are living with all the means of passive resistance as long as it does not endanger our livelihood. 'I do not discuss politics' is said by all who want to evade the aggressive pressure



of the party; to be apolitical is for the time being, still permitted. At the moment, the Communists are happy that nobody thinks, argues and talks politics. Even the address "comrade" is being shunned". "I do not talk about politics" say those of us who are not in prison; but this indifference is leading us, unawares, to a mean and empty cynicism. Yet, what else can we do?"

Thus, the silence of fear and mistrust, "the calm of the graveyard" to use the phrase of the Hungarian writers of the thaw to describe Hungary under Rakosi, has been reimposed on the country. The considerable number of jokes of a "Galgenhumor" variety show that bleak humor has remained the only safety valve through which pent up pressure can escape.

Attitudinal Reflections of Isolation

The isolation of the individual appears to make him project this feeling into the objective world with the result that a number of sources, though evidently opposed to the regime, advocated a so-called "realistic" approach:

"There is no other possible solution than to negotiate with the Russians. The sooner they start to negotiate, the less people will be dislodged and forced into labor camps. The West which could watch the subjugation of Hungary without raising a little finger should make a proposition for compromise now. There is no point in sulking any longer...the empty threats of America and her promises to crush communism are not regarded as serious by anybody." "Only if and when the Soviet Union disintegrates can Hungary be freed." "Among Western politicians only those have credit who endeavour a compromise with the Russians because what else is there to hope for? No one would believe that the West would help Hungary," another source stated.

More specific charges of "weakness" and of "greed" (Suez) were leveled against the West by other sources though both audience and regime sources indicated that individual statesmen and not Western political conceptions were criticized. "The worship of the West is one of the difficulties that must be overcome by communist teachers," a respondent stated.

More dangerous in the long run is the doubt which is apparently being raised in Hungary now as to the wisdom of trying to "belong with the West." One source stated: "The young women are inclined to say: 'Why bring up our children to sympathize with and respect the West if they will perhaps never partake of Western culture?' For the first time, young people are losing faith and this is a very sad phenomenon."

Similarly, a source stated that the population is becoming increasingly conscious of the implications of Hungary's geographic position. That the regime was aware of the propaganda possibilities of this realization was apparent



in an editorial in Nepszabadsag:

"Whether you like or detest communism does not matter at all. The issue is not one of principles but of geography. The globe is cut in two halves, the American and the Soviet half. We are in the Soviet half...The question as to what the Hungarian people would prefer will never arise, it need never trouble us in our lifetime. Let us therefore pretend to ourselves that we actually love Big Brother for he will clasp us to his bosom in any case. Better times will be had...if we do cheerfully and willingly what has to be done anyhow."

This article was published early in the winter and since then, no doubt owing to the dangers inherent in such a line, was ~~never~~ mentioned again. Yet, in the word-of-mouth propaganda of Party activists, it might be still playing a not inconsiderable role.

Several sources mentioned that general lassitude, the element of time, and other factors might favor regime efforts to disarm or neutralize specific social groups now opposing it: "I couldn't say...that the ideological (formerly communist or close to the Party) intelligentsia have not changed. Thinking of their mood of some months ago, it is striking how quickly they accepted the new situation." "Perhaps they will convince some Jewish students that there was a pogrom in October; perhaps they will convince some people about the dangers of reactionaries."

More generally: "It can be noticed that slowly regime propaganda is gaining ground. People want to enjoy themselves, live gaily and avoid getting into trouble, therefore, they are knuckling under and accepting things as they are."

At the same time, other sources indicated that regime propaganda, especially that concerning the revolution and which is the alpha and omega of the regime propaganda undertakings, are not making much headway: people generally speak only of the "revolution"; Communists adopt the non-committal formula of "October events." The one term which despite endless pounding of official drums has not found common parlance among the people is "counter-revolution."

Regime Economic Bribes

According to one source: "The economic well-being - a rise in living standard with Soviet 'aid' - is coupled with the unrestrained ideological political terror. They (the regime) have learned their lesson in this respect. Although they are not able to win over the population in spite of this economic policy, they can at least neutralize the petty bourgeoisie and part of the peasantry."

The significance of the present economic policy, the opposite of the earlier drive for forced industrialization, cannot be over-rated. Official regime spokesmen have repeatedly indicated that consumption amounted to 95% of the national income and was made possible by Soviet and satellite assist-



ance. This, together with certain cuts in the take-home pay of industrial workers shows that the end of this "consumer honeymoon" is in sight. Lately, the regime began to hint at the imperative need to raise the rate of investment, though disclaiming any wish to revert to the economic megalomania of the Rakosi regime.

Even at present, material rewards do not appear to be evenly distributed. Official data claimed a 35% wage increase for miners and one of 12% for workers in the heavy industry - as compared to the prerevolutionary wage scales - but were silent on the other sectors of the economy. Respondents did not speak of higher wages having been received by them personally but stated that the miners and the police had been the beneficiaries of the raises.

Nonetheless, a part of the peasantry, merchants, artisans and some liberal professions are also expected to gain by the increased circulation of money.

Concerning the peasantry, the regime appears to be wooing this group, at least for tactical reasons. On the face of it, the present agricultural policy of the Hungarian government is favoring the country against the city - the agricultural workers against the industrial workers.

With regard to merchants and artisans, the regime appears to be controlling both groups by fear: charges of "speculation" and of "profiteering" have already been raised in the press. Such accusations serve not only to intimidate the merchant and artisan class but also to explain -and excuse- breakdowns in the supply of commodities.

III. GROUP ATTITUDES

A. WORKERS

Collapse of the General Strike

After the defeat of the uprising, workers' resistance continued unbroken through the country-wide general protest strike of almost three weeks. The government waited, knowing that the policy of economic suicide cannot continue for ever. At the end, necessity forced workers if not to resume work - the sit-down strike went on - then at least to appear at the workshops. Once inside the factory walls, the workers could not hold out for long: they needed their wages and they were subject to mass regulations. The necessities of life and the element of time inexorably assured the regime's victory.

The main political resistance of the workers was broken by the forced dissolution of the Central Budapest Workers Council on December 8. After that date, workers' resistance followed two lines: politically it acted through the individual workers' councils; economically through a slow-down in production.



Decreasing Importance of the Workers' Councils

Though political resistance of workers' councils decreased rapidly with the passage of time, it nevertheless worried the regime as late as March and April. Nepszabadsag reported March 3 that at the Belofianiss Factory the Workers' Council forbade the use of the Communist address of "comrade." The Ganz Wharf Workers' Council refused premises for the Communist party cell in the factory as late as the middle of March. In protest to regime policies, the Workers' Council of the Clement Gottwald Factory resigned. TU President Sandor Gaspar called the workers' councils a "nuisance" and Gyula Kallai in his speech of April 30 referred to them as the "tools of counter-revolution." Since then attacks against workers' councils have continued with varying intensity.

The Growing Unpopularity of Workers' Councils

To neutralize the political power of the workers' councils, the government first endeavored not unsuccessfully to render them unpopular in the eyes of their followers.

The first cause of their growing unpopularity was the replacement of certain members. The most popular members were arrested. "The decent reliable members are branded Fascists. They are accused of abusing their authority, and their place is taken by men loyal to the government...Some have to face an impossible situation which later makes them resign of their own free will. Their posts are then handed over to ambitious communist careerists."

The second cause of the growing unpopularity of workers' councils was their decreasing influence as a result of the curtailment of their powers by the regime. Step by step, the workers' councils were reduced to an advisory body on purely economic questions.

The third cause of their growing unpopularity was the disagreeable tasks given to them in accordance with customary communist tactics. "The role of the factory workers' councils is not popular, anyway. They are in charge of dismissals and of salaries. Neither of the two functions is prone to make anyone popular with the workers. Slowly, the workers' councils are changing into slave drivers, since they receive money from the National Bank only in the measure in which the factory workers are producing."

How far the government has succeeded to discredit the concept of the workers' councils by making the activities of the individual councils unpopular has not been dealt with by the respondents. Since the continued attacks against them indicate that this government aim has not yet been attained.

Poor Workshop Discipline

Although "it seems that it is no longer possible to organize either a go-slow movement or a strike," the workshop discipline is far from the pre-



revolutionary standards in the factories. Low productivity, a result of defective discipline, is one of the most frequent complaints of the official press. In June, productivity was 11 per cent lower than in the corresponding period of 1956.

In April, a refugee stated "The morale of the Budapest workers has hardly improved in recent months. Intensive work is only carried out here and there, when the workers militia stand armed behind the workers. These armed workers see to it orders are actually carried out. When they are not present the zeal to work slackens and the workers stroll about or even play cards;" similarly: "Silent sabotage of workers may be one of the causes of high costs and the low productivity. The regime is making strenuous efforts to replace time work (offering great chances for quiet sabotage) by piecework as a means of bringing about an improvement in production." Owing to the continued embitterment of the workers, there is a considerable passive resistance manifested in reduced output.

Low production and the unwillingness of the labor force to work harder presents an extremely dangerous threat to the future of the regime. In case of a persistent lag in production, the whole structure of the present "lenient" policy toward the peasants would be imperiled. Should the peasant not be able to buy the necessary industrial goods in the shops, he would refuse to sell his produce. Hence, not only political but economical necessity impell the regime to attempt to crack the resistance of factory workers, at whatever price.

Opposition Against Work-Competition and Piece Work System

The piece-work system and the work competition were among the most hated communist methods in the economic field before the revolution and their reintroduction encountered bitter opposition on the part of the workers.

The reintroduction of piece-work was preceded by a press-campaign in favor of it, from the middle of January onward. Nepszabadsag remarked on February 12, that "in many places piece-work had been abolished as a result of false catchwords and slogans."

The press campaign for work competition began in March. Nepszabadsag (March 10) declared that "the disruption of workers competitions was the work of the counter-revolution."

By May 1st, the piece work was largely restored and work competition was in full swing. It should be noted, that data at our disposal indicate that in implementing piece work and "socialist" competition, the authorities are endeavoring to avoid "certain faults" and "excesses" of the former regime. Nevertheless, a source stated that "norms are being revised and the exploitation of the working capacity of workers is being constantly stepped up."



Unpopularity of the Trade Unions

During the revolution, Nepakarat admitted: "In its essence, the Trade Union was a state organ for the direction of work competition, for the one-sided representation of the interests of the state as a taskmaster, against the interests of the workers."

On November 21, Sandor Gaspar, the president of the Trade Union, promised "to take the freedom of the Trade Unions very seriously to assure their independence from parties and governments, and to nip in the bud any manifestation which might harm these principles."

However, on March 1st, the former duties of the Trade Unions were restated by Nepszabadsag in the demand to supplement the by-laws of the Trade Unions by: "the strengthening of the labor discipline," and the "better organization of production."

Finally, after some discussion about the proper role, and the freedom of the Unions, and about the prorogation of TU elections - which discussions again allowed a faint hope that some of the Union leaders would make a stand - both Sandor Gaspar and Miller Somogy accepted the leading role of the party and permitted the TU to slip back into its former role of the taskmaster in the building of socialism, i.e., in work competition and the piece-work system.

Mood of Workers

With their vertical organizations (workers' councils) disrupted or emasculated and their Unions taken over by the regime, the industrial workers in Hungary appear to be sullen and distrustful toward the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as embodied by the Kadar government.

"The workers cannot be bluffed any longer and they want take any more of this eye-wash...Before the revolution promises of a better life could still be made (by the regime), but they can't continue with empty promises." "The workers became desperate when they saw how the evil activities of the Kadar government are leading to the total abolition of revolutionary achievements," and "are always prepared to take up arms again in the event of help coming from the West." "Some 90% of the workers appear to adopt a negative attitude toward the regime, but generally they are cowed and afraid to speak.

B. THE PEASANTRY

The Role of the Peasantry in the Revolution

After the collapse of the uprising, the Kadar regime had to cope with a countryside where Socialism had practically disappeared and with a population which for the past eight years had passively resisted the forced Socialization



methods.

The stubborn attitude of the Hungarian peasantry was one of the main causes of the failure of communism in that country. Being geographically scattered, the peasants could not be organized for socialism for the same reason they could not be organized for open resistance either. While the workers fought with weapons and then through the general strike against the system, the government according to communist tactics sought, if not support, then at least "non-belligerence" from the countryside. All the revolutionary achievements, the dissolution of kolkhozes, the redistribution of commasated lands, and the abolishment of compulsory deliveries, were therefore confirmed.

Indeed, the Kadar regime undertook ever since to impress upon its audience that the peasantry had remained passive toward the revolution or had even fought against it.

The truth was that the peasants, since communism was far the weakest in the countryside, attained their aims more or less peacefully, without any spectacular upheavals. "Almost on the first day of the revolution, the communists disappeared or went over to the revolutionary forces, compulsory delivery was abolished, kolkhozes disbanded and the land distributed." There was nothing more for them to gain. From then on, "the peasants supplied a lot of food free of charge to the fighting Hungarian capital."

New Collectivization Tendencies

Already on the 30th of December, through its spokesmen Istvan Dobi and Imre Dogei, Minister of Agriculture, the regime newly reaffirmed that its ultimate agricultural goal was collectivization.

"After the crushing of the revolution, the peasants knew that the achievements were not final and that the government would try to return to the situation prior to October. The reorganization of cooperatives is already under way (early February). No forceful means are used, yet everything points to the fact that the government will eventually resort to violence. The following statement can be frequently heard from the peasants: 'If the communists want to take away something from me again, I would rather set fire to all I have than to give anything to the government' ... it would come to a peasant revolution should the government again try to impose restrictions on the peasantry."

Though in consequence of their geographical dispersal a peasant revolution appears impossible, nevertheless, judging by past experiences, defiance of the authorities committed individually or in groups might become very frequent again.



As a result of the terror and the abuses of the police against revolutionaries, recalcitrant ex-kolkhoz members and "class enemies" in some rural areas, the attitude of the villagers has already stiffened in spite of the temporary gains from the regime.

Sensitivity of Peasantry to Rumors

On April 8 Radio Kossuth made the following announcement: "A few weeks ago there was anxiety among the peasants that following the abolition of compulsory deliveries, some new burdens would be imposed on the agricultural producers. Wild rumors circulated particularly in connection with the payment of taxes. Whispers went around among other things to the effect that the payment of taxes in cash by the peasantry would be doubled. Moreover, our enemies have undermined the mood of villagers, by spreading the rumor that the land tax to be paid in wheat would be increased three-fold... the new decree was reassuring." Such reassurances are since then a common phenomenon.

"Wild rumors," and "whispers," are commonplace symptoms of dictatorial regimes where the communication of news is hampered and the government is not trusted. Every sign indicates that this rumor-mongering is now much more the fashion than it was ever before in Hungary, nor is it limited to the peasantry.

The main causes of the rumor-mongering are the mistrust engendered by the following circumstances: In the last years the peasants had ample opportunity to become acquainted with the "two steps forward and one backward" methods of communism. Many of them are familiar with Lenin's quotation "that the peasantry must be eliminated because it constantly recreates the bases of capitalism" and fear its implementation. They also know that the abolition of compulsory deliveries deprived the state of one of its main revenues and of the financial basis of industrialization and fear that the government would be compelled to replace these losses one way or another. Last but not least, they know that the regime's final aim is collectivization and believe its implementation to be only a question of time.

Fears of a New Collectivization Drive

Although the government pledged peaceful collectivization and the "avoidance of the mistakes of the past," available information indicates that considerable pressure is being used to break the opposition of the peasants to collectivization. This again caused a considerable feeling of uncertainty among the peasantry.



"At the end of February, the recollectivization began with old methods: promises and threats. The regime took, at the end of February, a very stiff attitude towards farmers who endeavored to rectify the abuses suffered in consequence of the forcible commassation of land." "Kadar uses the same coercion as did Rakosi." "In villages where kolhkozoes were not reconstituted, the militia rounded up the youth and beat them with truncheons." "Financial pressure to collect tax arrears and kolkhoz livestock is used." "The administrative measures differ in some respect from the previously applied forced collectivization methods but are very effective."

The contradiction between the government pledges and the acts of the local authorities is striking. Perhaps it is not entirely the intention of the government to let loose again the administrative measures but for the official on the spot the intentions of the government are secondary: he has to produce the results required from him, by whatever means. Collectivization targets are set for a certain geographical area. It depends on the local authority whether he uses peaceful methods or force - but if he fails, he jeopardizes his relatively well paid job. The actual pressure depends therefore from the size of the target figures set by the government and from the local authorities and varies accordingly, considerably from village to village.

"Spring was never the season for collectivization. In Rakosi's time generally they waited till the crops had been harvested, so as not to disturb production. Fundamental changes of agricultural policy are not expected by the peasantry before autumn," concluded one of our sources.

Mostly Poor Peasants Adhering to the Reformed Kolkhozes

At the end of April, the numbers of kolkhozes was 2540 or 50% of the pre-revolutionary peak period. Collectivized land represented of 1,160,000 acres or 30%, the membership 125,000 about 25% of the prerevolutionary peak period. These figures show that rather the poorer peasants are beginning to adhere again to the kolkhozes and therefore they are the weakest link in the opposition of the regime, mostly not for political but for economic reasons.

In connection with the newly reconstituted kolkhozes, it is interesting to note that they were very often reprimanded by the official press of using methods which are contrary to genuine socialism. A considerable part of the kolkhozes accepted statutes which are "not in accordance with Socialist requirements" as the newspapers stated. Further, their striving for independence from the state-managed tractor stations by buying their own machinery were blamed.



They were also reprimanded by the regime for using "capitalist methods" in the hiring of share-croppers.

Tax Sabotage of Peasants

During the spring, the press complained of considerable tax sabotage on the part of the peasantry: the forceful collection of arrears indicated by our sources also showed the existence of such tendencies.

Mood of the Peasantry

It is understandable, therefore, that farmers are almost in their totality according to a source who had opportunity to travel over a big part of the land "absolutely pessimistic about their future." The communists fail to see that all the peasant is interested in is his plow, his chapter and his own machinery and wants to hear nothing about politics." "Work has no sense, it doesn't bring fruits." "The peasantry began sluggishly to work."

C. INTELLECTUALS

The Surviving "Thaw" in the Intellectual Field

The bulk of criticism in the pre-revolutionary times aimed at the cultural policy of the regime. The narrowing of all cultural life to the aping of Soviet models was a heavy burden on writers and public alike. From this point of view, the Kadar regime has not yet attempted to set the clock back to the Rakosi era.

To comply with the wishes and tastes of the public, the publishing enterprises are issuing large numbers of novels by such Western writers who would never have been published even during the "thaw." However, one source complained about the "scarcity of good books."

The theaters have plays by Western authors on their repertoires (e.g., Pirandello) or by Hungarian "bourgeois" authors like Ferenc Molnar and Gabor Vaszary. The movies are not only playing a considerable number of Western films but also Hungarian light comedies from the prewar period, the latter which were hitherto strictly forbidden to avoid a possibility of comparison between the "old" and the "new" Hungary.

The newspapers are much more readable than they were in the Rakosi era. They are more amply reporting on the West, about fashion shows, beauty contests, film festivals, technical novelties, scenes of daily life and even on Western political events although the latter subject is covered in a biased manner. More is written about China, and less about the Soviet Union than before. New periodicals such as Magveto and Nagyvilag are expected to publish works by Western writers and offer a more ample review of Western literature. Generally, there is less "dead talk" in the press and periodicals.



The same can be said about the radio program. Not only has jazz been admitted to the programs of Radio Budapest but a definite trend from "conservative" to "progressive" jazz has been noted in the past few months. Literary features of the Hungarian radio include stories by non-communist writers, or even works by such authors who are known to be in prison. The share of politics in program content is smaller than in years past.

In the economic field considerable criticism is allowed provided such criticism does not touch upon policy but only on its practical implementation and on problems of economic technique.

In the field of fine arts, abstract painters were permitted to display their work at the big Budapest spring exhibition of this year.

This relative freedom of intellectual life, though more or less tolerated by the regime, is far from secure. As early as March, the party organ complained that "the majority of our theaters have renounced the most important task of the socialist theater, i.e., introducing the ideals of Socialism to the audience." Further, the paper stated "that since November we were able to drive back revisionism to a considerable extent; in the cultural field, however, it is a threat even now." The article made references to the "bourgeois plays at the theaters" and the "bad programming policy of the movies," and added: "This policy of liberalism in the cultural field was called into existence by revisionism and by an opportunist shrinking from our tasks."

Such attacks have since multiplied, though usually coupled with protestations that no attempt to a return to the cultural policies of the Rakosi era was being contemplated. As in other fields, regime cultural policies appear to be chaotic and undecided to the extreme. Whether the present eclecticism will be tolerated in the long run is questionable. The suppression of an historical play by L. Nemeth, one of the Kossuth prize winners of this year, might indicate a retreat toward rigidity. A source pointed out that what the regime was indulging in in the arts is a sort of "neo-salami tactics."

The 1956 Thaw and the Cultural "Liberalism" of Kadar

There is in any case a striking difference between the "liberalism" of the period under review and the 1956 thaw. While the 1956 thaw permitted a very ample criticism of the "Communist way of life," the present "cultural liberalism" may only skim the surface and provide "color." As one respondent put it: "It serves as a bait," indicating the mistrust of the public at large.

Political criticism which characterized Irodalmi Ujsag is gone and those who represented this spirit of criticism are either refugees in the West, or prisoners.



In the Soviet orbit, where political discussion is suppressed, literature takes on an added meaning. The whole purpose of the Kadar cultural policy appears to be to prevent literature from assuming a political dimension. Although the present "liberalism" is not in line with official doctrine, the value of a liberalized intellectual life which only entertains and does not offer the nucleus of an opposition is of great use to the regime. Thus, as a Hungarian intellectual wrote in June from Budapest: "English and American films and comedies are imported. People have to be kept merry. I too could laugh at the simple American jokes if I did not realize that all this is only a sedative - opium and sleeping drugs. Everything but a second October! This is their bible now. They are afraid and due to their anxiety everything is permitted."

The Silent Writers

One of the most often heard regime complaints about the Hungarian writers is their silence. Apart from a few opportunists and the hard core of "Muscovites," Hungarian men of letters are not collaborating.

"In general, it can be said about the Hungarian writers and journalists that not one of any importance has adhered to the regime." This is perhaps one of the causes that Eletes Irodalom the new literary weekly "sells very poorly and is wanted by no one."

Not only political but psychological factors, too, are responsible for this silence of the writers: "A terrible intellectual indolence which you cannot conceive of is taking hold of us. Nothing matters. The whole country is in a total mental lethargy." "I feel as though I had been stunned," to quote from letter of Hungarian writers to friends abroad. Those who write are reported to do so "for themselves and for their desk drawers."

Interest seems to be of a detached kind, to judge from the following remark: "Apart from sorrow, despair and rage, there is curiosity in us about what will happen and how it will happen."

An interesting glimpse is given by one item on how the government had broken some of the resistance in the journalistic field:

"As a great majority of Hungarian newspapermen had taken an active part in the psychological preparation of the Hungarian revolution and had worked for the revolutionary newspapers, the Kadar regime found it difficult to reorganize the press. Therefore, it had to apply sly tactics. Only a few newspapers were allowed to publish at first with the result that an artificial unemployment of newspapermen was created. These papers were granted a certain degree of freedom, thus misleading readers as well as the newspapermen employed. Later, pressure on the press increased and step-by-step the government made newspapers conform with the old communist routine. The regime achieved its aim in a very short time: By the middle of February the apparent independence of the press had come to an end." The risks of such a method of "recruitment"



were pointed up by a respondent who stated: "All journalists are of an oppositionary sentiment." Even if this sweeping generalization is untrue, newspapermen in present day Hungary are bound to include a considerable number of potential "rebels."

Concerning writers who have broken their silence, one source offered the following view:

"What happened? Did everybody sacrifice his principles? Nonsense! Though there are some unprincipled people, some scoundrels, there are others who say it is necessary to do something. Again others think that what they are doing is "realpolitik..." Another respondent stated: "There is a certain literary life in Hungary. Some 50 or 60 writers are at work. Surely among them there are such who think that they are doing the right thing..."

At the same time, open collaboration is treated with contempt. A Marxist writer who is not adhering to the regime remarked about Jozsef Fodor, one of this year's Kossuth prize winners, "You see, here is this dull-witted Fodor who doesn't know what he's doing." Other items also seem to indicate disapproval of those who had "given in."

The tendency to explain the "cultural concessions" of the regime as utilitarian devices is again strikingly reflected in a remark of an intellectual about George Lukacs in his letter from Budapest: "Lukacs is considered a "national asset," a show-piece for Western reporters and correspondents."

Soviet Books and the Works of Hungarian Authors in Jail

A letter from Budapest indicated that "three months ago nobody asked for Soviet works in the libraries. Today, there are two or three persons daily expressly asking for Soviet novels. People are like this; when they see others doing something they immediately think that it should be tried by them too, because something good might come out of it."

At the same time, "A large run for the books of the arrested writers has also been reported." This paradoxical situation should cause no surprise as "life in present day Hungary is full of paradoxes" as one respondent remarked.



School Children

As late as April one young refugee stated: "The revolutionary mood of youth is not yet totally gone. Even the youngest are demonstrating against the regime". For subsequent periods: "It has proved impossible to restore discipline in schools; the children have gone completely 'wild' during the few days of freedom. The teachers to day are tired, very irritable and entirely fed up with the situation... Adults can be intimidated but nobody can scare the young". "Indiscipline is still general in middle schools. Since October teachers have had a hard time owing to the anti-Communist feelings of the pupils and their unwillingness to conform to the disciplinary rules of the Communist controlled schools."

Repeated anti-regime demonstrations in various schools were described by several respondents. The constant regime complaint that "the bad news about the schools are not without foundation" are corroborating the above reports.

University Students

In consequence of the resistance of students the opening of the universities could not take place before the first week of February. The anti-Communist mood of the university students and regime distrust toward them was indicated by several sources. At the same time the words "nihilism" "nihilistic" or "apathetic" cropped up in interview items as well as regime newspaper articles with reference to students.

"A terrible nihilism flourishes with the young. But what should they believe in? From where could they receive a "Weltanschauung" or moral ideals?"

Nepakarat on April 11 wrote: "The majority of students are passively disillusioned...The cynical nihilistic mood is almost general among the students of universities."

According to Szegedi Hirnap "A few among them fight with teeth and nail for the Party, the others are completely apathetic, they drink a lot... There is complete chaos in political and economic questions. There are ... false political day-dreams."

Specific student attitudes

The resolution of the newly established Party organization of the Pech High School Teachers allows a valuable glimpse into specific student attitudes which Communist teachers must overcome:

"a. Hostility toward the Soviet-Union; b. Aversion to the Communist Party; c. Worship of the West; d. The underestimation of the achievements of popular democracy and exaggeration of its faults; e. The idea of National Communism; f. Disparagement and ignorance of Marxism-Leninism; g. Unscientific views of religion."



Unpopularity of the newly Established Communist Youth Organization

Search for arms at schools, universities and colleges did not help the regime to win over the young to its side. Nor did the deportations in November, or the mass arrests and expulsions from the universities which followed.

The regime hoped to undo this harm through a new, and better, Communist Youth Organization (KISZ) which would offer "education" as well as amusement to the young. Although it had attained the figure of 120,000 by the end of June, "membership grew slowly". This information was corroborated by critical voices in the press on the slow progress Kisz was making, and on the unwillingness of young villagers, especially girls, "under the influence of RFE" to join.

One of our sources pointed out that the possibilities of sports and entertainment was a great lure to youth, and that politics were at first underplayed in the organization. Lately, KISZ spokesman Komocsin emphasized the necessity of more political education for the young, though without any reduction in the sports and recreational activities of the organization. Continued regime complaints about too much dancing and not enough Marxism in Kisz might be an indication that the local KISZ leaders do not expect to hold the membership without catering, almost exclusively, to its desire for amusement.

Considering that sources indicated that the young people of Hungary are aware of the futility of revolutionary acts in the present circumstances, the present approach of KISZ to the problem, i.e. stressing balls and summers holidays against indoctrination might be successful. With its monopoly on sports and other facilities, the Communist Youth Organization might bring a great many recalcitrant young persons back to the "fold" and if not convince, it might neutralize and silence them.

V. THE "NEW" PARTY.

"Cadre Party" or "Mass Party"

In December and January the controversy arose, and lengthy discussion ensued, whether the future Communist Party should be a "cadre-party", i.e. the "vanguard of Socialist construction" or a party of the masses. No firm conclusions were reached then and time overtook this discussion by producing a medium-sized party of roughly 350,000 members.

From the beginning, the party encountered the most serious difficulties in every respect. These difficulties had not yet been overcome. Complaints about "persecution" of Party members by the workers, the difficulties of organization, the resistance of the population to the Party are a daily phenomenon in the Communist press.



According to sources: "Communism has run out of arguments, no one believes in it anymore", "The Communist party has totally lost its ground in Hungary".

In this connection the statement of a former party member is very revealing: "I decided that my duty was to wait for a purification of the Party, in which process I trust, although not for the near future. For this reason I could not pledge for the party at this time. I could do this only when it would not come into conflict with my moral convictions".

Fear, opportunism and some other causes of adherence ^{reference}

"Economic pressure is now used to make miners join the new party. When somebody refuses to do so, he is transferred to another job at inferior pay or is fired". "One can scarcely find Communist in Hungary except in governmental offices. Many took out their party booklets only to assure good jobs." Or, as a young student said: "We have to assure our future positions and jobs".

Another cause for adhering to the party was mentioned in a somewhat unclear statement which said: "Considerable numbers join in order to push Kadar toward sectarianism and thus create a favorable atmosphere for a new "revisionist" revolt." Others were said to adhere in order to "change the Party from within". How far this latter attitude was genuine and how far it was merely the rationalization of an opportunistic step could not be ascertained from the material at our disposal.

Sources pointed out that mainly white-collar workers and state functionaries joined the party "whereas the majority of the working class do not wish to hear anything about Communism" similarly: "This attitude of intellectuals might be attributed to their special position. It is a well known fact that in a People's Democracy, the intellectuals are those most at the mercy of the regime".

During the period under review, there were numerous complaints in the press that "even party members don't dare to stand up for Communism."

The statement of recent refugees confirmed this: "The members try to keep their membership secret; they are afraid of the non-Communist workers". "A big section even of Communist Party members disapproves of the regime."

In this connection one source pointed out that the Party leadership was aware of this but did not care "because it reckons with the likelihood that sooner or later the Party member will act in conformity with Party instructions, which would bring him into opposition with his colleagues; this in turn would make him side with the Party".

Heterogeneity of party and leadership

The above statements as well as other available data indicate that the Party membership is very heterogeneous. The core seems to be the old



Rakosy party apparatus, the personnel of the former AVO now serving as militia, loyal army officers and bureaucrats of the state apparatus. The rank and file, on the other hand, appear to be composed of careerists or of persons who by the pressure of circumstances, or in order to secure better positions, joined the Party. Finally it must be noted that there are no indications of Rakosi or Nagy elements adhering in considerable numbers, although recently there were some complaints in the regime press about this.

Intrigue within the Party

A large scale campaign has been conducted by the Hungarian press since April to stem the intrigues and denunciations rife within the CP.

The provincial daily Hajdu Bihari Naplo wrote on May 5: "Some people are of the opinion that those who are without talent should make up for this lack by intrigue..... Accusations which often cause headaches to Party organization do not convince or educate -- they discourage, offend and alienate people from the ideals of Socialism".

"The cause of the intrigues which presently endanger the unity of the party is subjectivism" the same papers stated recently.

These and similar press voices indicate the disunity of the party, caused partly by its heterogenous composition. The discord seems to be not of an ideological nature but must rather be the result of rivalries as the word "subjectivism" suggests and reflects a struggle for positions and for more power within the party.

Factions and Cliques

Western newspapers and political commentators have been propounding numerous theories in the past few months on factions and cliques within the Hungarian CP leadership. By and large, these hypotheses presented the Hungarian political set up as a spectrum with Kadar and his handfull of followers in the middle flanked by a strong Rakosi-ite faction (probably a majority of the Praesidium) on one side and some Nagy followers on the other. The conspicuously temporizing nature of the final communique issued at the end of the June Party conference was likely to confirm the impression of divergent pressure groups being active within the highest Party and state leadership.

What little has transpired about the Party conference (held cautiously behind closed doors) indicated that the debate was concentrated around the "assessment of past mistakes" and not around present or future policy.

"Past mistakes" is of course a tenuous term: it might include questions of principle, it might exclude them and refer only to methods, or, indeed, it might be restricted to "certain excesses" only.

In a hermetic ideological system (Stalinism or Rakosi-ism) "past mistakes" even in their most restricted sense would be a delicate and explosive subject; the very admission by the party leadership of any mistakes



having been committed at all would presuppose the existence of a strong faction insisting on this subject being discussed.

Although this may be true for the present Hungarian Party leadership, too, it must not necessarily be so. Indeed, the utter ideological poverty of the Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party platform might be indicative of the contrary. Since the resolutions of the Party conference aimed at apparently nothing more ambitious than "to muddle through", the discussion about "past mistakes" instead of being an explosive charge in a closed vessel might simply be a convenient means to settle personal scores, or might serve as a sop for "the masses", or both.

Furthermore, the following should be borne in mind:

1. The presence of the Soviet army in Hungary is supplemented by the presence of Soviet advisors who would quickly stop any schismatic tendencies developing within the Party -- the October revolution was too costly for the Soviet Union, in every respect, to allow any dangerous stirrings within the Party.

2. Almost all Party leaders participated in what amounted to a process of "re-Stalinization" since the revolution using terror and the massive presence of Soviet military power to this end. This made them de-facto disciples of Stalinist methods -- whether they like this or not might be regarded as immaterial: they are discredited in the eyes of the population.

3. The "reform movement" within the Communist Party during the spring and summer of 1956 was in the position of offering a choice between Rakosi on the one hand and Nagy on the other. Such differences cannot be found in the present Communist spectrum in Hungary.

4. Last but not least, the events of last October might have considerably sobered "reformist" elements within the party: "Although a considerable segment of the 'ruling class' has an aversion for the actual quislings, they - having to fear their future - may never permit such a process of liberalization which might give rise to an other revolutionary movement," a source said.

Naturally, all the above refers to the momentary situation in Hungary. Though singularly poor in plans of even a medium range, the Kadar apparatus still is compelled to carry out its policies according to certain hypotheses according to which: 1. terror will prove efficient to break all resistance; 2. the industrial output will rise in spite of the cuts in the workers' wages; 3. the purchase of agricultural produce instead of its compulsory delivery will succeed. Points 2. and 3. are closely linked since peasants will undoubtedly refuse to sell unless they can exchange their money for industrial goods.

Set-backs on any one of the three fronts might precipitate the present lack of unity (caused in no small measure by the 'hand-to-mouth' manner in which affairs are being conducted) into the emergence of an organized opposi-



tion within the Party.

The appraisal of Kadar and of some other Party Leaders

Kadar was to a certain extent a popular Communist before the revolution due mainly to the fact that he had been imprisoned and tortured under Rakosi. This fact must have been considered by the Kominform in making him Soviet caretaker for Hungary. Even after November 4, he was considered a "pathetic victim in the hands of the Russians rather than a despicable scoundrel." (Audience Analysis Special Report # 13, 571/57).

Some are excusing his acts with Soviet pressure: some with "the Leftist pressure under which he has to work". Furthermore it is conceived with difficulty "how a man who has once been tortured himself could now mistreat others even more severely". One source summarized these views in the following; "Kadar is regarded either as a poor prisoner or as a blackguard. In November he was rather believed to be a prisoner. Today he is hated for the things which were accomplished in his name and, therefore, people are more than willing to consider him a scoundrel". But the notion that he is a stupid man and a coward is also widely held.

At the beginning of Kadar's rule it was emphasized that people hated Rakosi so much they preferred Kadar, and believed "Kadar makes concessions to the Soviets in order to prevent the return of Rakosi".

However, with the increase of police and judicial excesses, the phrase "worse than under Rakosi" has often been pronounced. Indeed the more cunning terror of Rakosi impressed perhaps people less than the nakedness of Kadar's brute violence.

The servility of the new leadership was stressed by one source who described the difference between the old and the new party heads as "the new ones are much more stupid". Another source stated his preference for Rakosi because: "No matter how I despise both of them, I have the impression that Rakosi is more aware of the role of intellectuals as all these stupid illiterates. (With Rakosi back) this campaign against the intelligentsia would perhaps cease."

Concerning other more prominent figures of the Party, three sources spoke of Marosán as being "the most sinister member of the government"; "the most stupid and primitive"; "the most feared". The last respondent also stated that "Munich is the most despised."

"Different roads to Socialism"

According to the only source who touched upon the subject "when we are referring to the Poles and Chinese the Stalinists hit back at us with our own arms claiming that 'these are Polish and Chinese peculiarities'; under the present conditions, after a defeated counter-revolution, this spirit is unapplicable in Hungary".



The "People's Patriotic Front"

The isolation of the Hungarian CP, and other tactical considerations as well, brought about the revival of the idea of a "People's Patriotic Front".

During the brief Parliamentary session in May Kadar stressed the necessity of mass organizations embracing "all men of good-will" (i.e., anyone who is willing to cooperate with the regime). He especially singled out the People's Front and the Trade Unions as offering the broad framework of what he termed "national unity".

Yet, in organizing the People's Patriotic Front, Kadar is faced with an almost insurmountable problem: he may either resuscitate the old, utterly discredited Front of the past in which case the movement though "reliable" will serve no purpose; or else he may attempt to launch a new movement with a modicum of freedom which may become an irritant to the regime.

Some evidence, although it is far from conclusive, indicates that Kadar might have spent the better part of last spring in trying to put together a People's Patriotic Front which would not be the exact replica of its pre-revolutionary namesake.

For one thing, there appears to be internal evidence to the effect that Kadar has no trusted followers in the sense in which Rakosi or even Revai have. Lacking personal following, he might be tempted to bank more heavily on a Patriotic Front than Rakosi ever had the need to. Also, such a movement, provided that it is less of a mere window dressing than its predecessor had been, might reinforce his position not only vis-a-vis the country but also strengthen him in the Party Praesidium.

Secondly, Magyar Nemzet, formerly the paper of the People's Patriotic Front has not re-appeared since the revolution. In his August 20th speech Kadar announced that Magyar Nemzet will resume publication in September. He did not specify what the political role of the paper would be, nor gave any details on the composition of the editorial board. Parragi, a discredited opportunist of no mean journalistic abilities who had been editor of Magyar Nemzet before the revolution was given the editorship of a weekly newspaper Hetfoi Hitek some months ago. Thus, the "faithful" Paragi had been satisfied and, at the same time, the editorship of a once highly-regarded liberal newspaper remains free to be used as a bait.

Thirdly, it might be more than a coincidence that the People's Patriotic Front is being propagated informally as it were while the "strike of the Hungarian intellectuals" continues. Considering that under the power monopoly of the CP the Front, at its best, could be not much more than a more or less limited debating society, the role of the writers might be preponderant in the movement as had been the case in the past. Certain press articles



wooing the writers of the "third road", the former "village explorers" as well as statements like that of Kallai about "cooperation with allies in the building of Socialism" point in the same direction: if a rapprochement between the regime and the "silent ones" can be effected the People's Patriotic Front will play a very useful role indeed for the regime -- that of a golden bridge for the "prodigal sons".

Up to now, neither these nor any other regime expectations show any sign of materializing: as yet the writers are holding out with the result that the People's Patriotic Front is as meaningless as it had been before the revolution. As one respondent stated: "Efforts to recruit fellow-travellers and crypto-Communists no doubt because they do not bear the official label and can therefore be used as a facade to some sort of Popular Front - are continuing".

Prospects for the People's Patriotic Front

Although the "surrender" of many writers will have to come sooner or later, when their material situation and isolation become intolerable, their rallying -if this takes place via the Patriotic People's Front- will only have a temporarily revivifying effect on that movement. The very nature of Communist dictatorship excludes any serious participation in the government of others than the monolithic Party itself with the result that the Patriotic Front will either be riveted to the Communist Party again through men of the type of Parragi and the "non-party Bolshevik" Erdei, or it will be broken as the Petofi Circle and the Writers' Union have been.

Heavy propaganda emphasis of late on the different "peace" organizations even such of a denominational nature like the newly formed Catholic "Opus Pacis" and its Protestant counterpart may also be taken as a sign that the regime is, perhaps, preparing to use these movements either as "parallel organizations" if the Patriotic Front does succeed or, if it fails, as a substitute for it.

