

SPECIAL ATTENTION: Political Advisor
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RUMORS CONCERNING POSTPONEMENT OF THE DERY TRIAL

SOURCE MUNICH: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Mid-October 1957.

ENGLISH SUMMARY: A few days before the trial, scheduled for the beginning of October before Judge Dr. Lajos VIDA, the arrested writers DERY, HAY, ZELK and TARDOS were brought to the BUDAPEST prison at Marko street.

The day before the trial the Government Information Office told the press that correspondents would be permitted to attend the trial -- for their own information; but only the official MTI (Hungarian News Agency) Bulletin would appear in the press.

The trial was then unexpectedly postponed with the explanation of the Information Office that the presiding judge had fallen ill with Asiatic Flu. Other reports linking the postponement of the trial with the death of the poet Szabó seem to be based on incorrect information, source thinks.

Toward the middle of October rumors spread that DERY and his friends were re-transferred to the Secret Police prison on Foe utca. It was then conjectured that the trial would be postponed.

EVALUATION COMMENT: On 2 October 1957 a Western news agency reported from BUDAPEST that a Hungarian Supreme Court official had denied that Tibor DERY would go on trial on October 3. The official added that a report in a British newspaper to this effect was "false" as "no date has yet been fixed for the trial".

Harrison SALISBURY reported from BUDAPEST in the "New York Times" of October 3 that First Deputy Premier Ferenc MUNNICH specifically denied to him that any of the Hungarian writers held for investigation of their roles in the (October 1956) revolt had either been tried or executed. DERY, HAY, TARDOS and ZELK would be put on trial when the nature of the charges to be brought against them had been decided. MUNNICH's statement was obviously meant to dispel the grave concern felt in the Western world about the fate of the Hungarian writers. On September 26 a spokesman of the Hungarian Legation in LONDON had to deny that DERY had been

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sentenced to death in reply to a statement by the British Liberal Party leader GRIMOND that he had received information that DERY had been tried in secret and his life was in imminent danger.

All these denials and attempts to soothe display well the regime's disturbance at the close interest with which the free world is following the fate of the Hungarian writers in jail. They may also be interpreted as the spreading of a smoke-screen behind which the regime wants to settle accounts with the writers. The severe restrictions imposed upon the Hungarian press in covering the political trials -- apparent from reading the papers but here reported explicitly for the first time -- ties in well with the "smokescreen" policy.

It is recalled in this connection that the papers carried only a dozenline MTI communiqué on the trial and sentence of writer Domonkos VARGA and his three fellow writers despite the fact that the trial lasted -- according to the same communiqué -- for several days (see "Nepszabadsag" of 10 October 1957).

Dr. Lajos VIDA, formerly attached to the SZEKSZARD county court, was appointed to the Supreme Court in May 1957. Under the Presidium decree No. 34/1957 (published in the Official Gazetteer on 15 June 1957) the people's court set up at the Supreme Court as a special tribunal can proceed in all cases (without their going through the courts of inferior level), if the president of the Supreme Court or the Chief Prosecutor so decide. In view of the paramount importance of the case of DERY, HAY, TARDOS and ZELK, it is probable that it will be tried before the special people's court of the Supreme Court.

Radio BUDAPEST reported on 4 October 1957 that "every second person" was affected by "Asiatic" flu in BUDAPEST. Therefore it can be assumed that Judge VIDA may also have fallen victim of the epidemic and that the trial had to be adjourned. The "Neue Zurcher" article mentioned in this report was published on October 28 and said that the trial against DERY and the other three writers began on October 2 but was interrupted a day after. Poet Lorinc Szabo died on October 3 and the regime was afraid of demonstrations at the burial if the trial against the writers were continued.

One might also presume that the "Asiatic" flu of Judge VIDA offered the regime a good opportunity to postpone the trial with a view to the situation created by the death of Lorinc Szabo.

It is known from available information that important political prisoners are detained and interrogated for their trial at the BUDAPEST Foe utca prison, which also before the October 1956 revolution was shared by the military tribunal and the political police.

DÉRI Tibor, HÁY Gyula, TARDOS Tibor és ZELK Zoltán ügyében a népbíróság dr. VIDA Lajos tanácsa 1957 október elejére (a pontos napra forrás nem emlékszik) tűzte ki a tárgyalást. A letartóztatott írókat néhány nappal a kitűzött időpont előtt a BUDAPEST Fő utcai börtönből a Markó utcai ügyészségi fogházba szállították át.

A Tájékoztatási Hivatal a bírósági tárgyalást megelőző napon telefonon engedélyt adott a lapok szerkesztőbizottságainak, hogy törvényszéki tudósítók a DÉRI-per tárgyalásán részt vehessenek. Egyben arra is figyelmeztette a szerkesztőbizottságokat, hogy a perről sem tudósítást, sem kommentárt nem közölhetnek hanem csak a Magyar Távirati Iroda hivatalos jelentéseit közölhetik majd.

A bíróságon megjelent törvényszéki tudósítók a tárgyalás napjának reggelén azt a meglepő hírt telefonálták meg lapjaiknak, hogy a DÉRI-per tárgyalása egyelőre elmarad. Az okot majd a Tájékoztatási Hivatal fogja a sajtóval közölni.

A tudósítók telefonértesítése után pár órával a lapok telefonon megkapták a Tájékoztatási Hivatal bizalmas értesítését is, azzal, hogy azt a lapokban nem szabad leközölni. Eszerint a DÉRI-per tárgyalását azért kellett váratlanul elhalasztani, mert dr. VIDA Lajos tanácselnök ázsiai influenzában megbetegedett. A Tájékoztatási Hivatal a szerkesztőbizottságokat az új tárgyalási időpontról kellő időben fogja majd értesíteni.

A lapszerkesztőségek leellenőrizték a hírt és megbizonyosodtak arról, hogy dr. VIDA valóban ázsiai influenzában betegedett meg. Így téves értesülésen alapult a nyugati lapokban, így a "Neue Züricher Zeitung"-ban is megjelent az a hír, mintha DÉRIék perét Szabó Lőrinc halálára való tekintettel halasztották volna el.

1957 október közepén BUDAPESTI újságíró körök arról szereztek tudomást, hogy DÉRI Tibort és társait rövidesen a Markó utcai börtönből a Fő utcai börtönbe fogják visszaszállítani. Ebből arra hivatkozhatnak, hogy az írók perének tárgyalása -- újabb halasztást fog szenvedni.