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HUNGARIAN REVOLUTIONARY NATIONAL COMMITTEE
IN EXILE
COMITÉ NATIONAL RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE HONGROIS
EN EXIL

UNGARISCHES REVOLUTIONÄRES NATIONAL-KOMITE
IN EXIL
COMITATO RIVOLUZIONARIO NAZIONALE UNGHERESE
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THE HUNGARIAN SITUATION /VI./

/5 February 1958/

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THE HUNGARIAN SITUATION /VI./

/from 5 February 1958/

General atmosphere.

Public opinion in Hungary has not been surprised by the dismissal of Janos Kadar, nor by the nomination of Dr. Ferenc Munnich as his successor in the post of Premier. Rumours of Kadar's resignation, or rather his dismissal, have been circulating since August not only among well-informed political circles in Budapest, but all over the country as well. The actual project was initiated in the middle of August. Kadar was to have been made to resign at that time, in order to minimize the grounds for criticism during the discussions of the Hungarian case before the General Assembly of the United Nations in September, and in order that the Soviet, as well as the Hungarian, delegates could defend themselves against the charges made by the Committee of Five, that the Kadar Government, because of its leading part in carrying out atrocities following the Revolution, no longer represented Hungary. This tactical approach was, however, changed in Moscow at the end of August, as the Kfemlin was of the opinion that Kadar's resignation would be considered as a sign of weakness by the West.

Kadar's resignation came again to the fore in November. As has already been described in our last report of December 1957, Kadar was sharply admonished by Mikoyan at the beginning of November that if he did not succeed in gaining some popularity within a given time, he would have to resign from his position. Kadar and his clique attempted from November until the end of January to utilize every means of propaganda at their disposal for the sake of gaining some popularity. Thousands of party secretaries and party propagandists, and hundreds of thousands of leaflets endeavoured to induce the Hungarian population to believe that Kadar had fulfilled a mission in the interests of Hungary when he had agreed to form a government on 4 November 1956, and that it was only thanks to him - contrary to all appearances - that the vengeance of the Soviets had not had even greater repercussions.

The public in Hungary could not be deceived by these obviously transparent words. Kadar remained, despite all the popularization

campaigns, the same despised and hated person he was. As the condition for Kadar's continued premiership was that he must succeed in making himself more popular with the Hungarian masses, his resignation has been regarded as the acknowledgment by Moscow of the failure of his attempts at self-popularization. According to V.Z., a representative of the Ministry of Light Industry who arrived recently in Vienna, Kadar had to go because Moscow had drawn the consequences from the fact that despite all his attempts, he still remained the most detested and despised man in Hungary. He is not only loathed by the non-communist masses, but he is equally disliked by the members of the Party. There is no doubt that he will also have to resign within a short time from the post of First Secretary of the Party. According to Mrs. T. B., an artisan who arrived in Vienna a few days ago, the demission of Kadar must be considered primarily as the consequence of the intransigence of the population, by its rejection and its passive resistance. According to information received from our Budapest reporter, "Moscow had fixed a period of time for Kadar to acquire the good will of the Hungarian nation. As all his attempts were fruitless, he was dismissed by the Kremlin. Janos Kadar was considered ultimately as a dead-weight by the Kremlin, one suitable only to do their dirty work. In order to achieve its new political objectives, Moscow has sought to place at the head of the government of Hungary a person who, according to their opinion, is not so hated by the population and who is more suitable for carrying out their political aims both at home and abroad."

In the week which has passed since Munnich has acquired the post as Hungary's Premier, he has already proven that his personality, too, is just as unsatisfactory as that of his predecessor, as far as popularity is concerned, for the realization of the political aims of Hungary, both nationally and internationally. According to news and reports from people who have recently arrived in Vienna from Budapest, the Hungarian masses have received with indifference and suspicion the notice of the changes in the government. The Munnich government took over its functions officially on Monday, 27 January, and there were held thousands of meetings on the subsequent days in factories, institutions, and offices, in order to explain the importance of these changes in personnel to the masses, and to acquire sympathetic and favourable reactions from the population. These

meetings in the big Budapest factories have met, without exception, with the greatest indifference and lack of interest. In the brick factory of Obuda, none of the hundred workers, who had been gathered together, applauded at the end of half an hour's oration by the party secretary, and the mention of Munnich's name was passed over in silence. The workers at the cloth factory, "First of May", left the meeting hall when invited to sign the wire of congratulations to be sent to Munnich. The workers of the Lang factory were called to a political meeting on Saturday, 1 February, during which the political aims of the new government were explained. Several times there were heard murmurs of discontent during the speaker's oration and there were interruptions demanding free elections. Eleven persons present at the meeting were immediately arrested.

The people in Hungary are convinced that the Munnich government will continue the so-called "harmonica system" initiated by Kadar, that is, the tactic of alternating between a regime of terror and a regime of relaxation. Under the present circumstances prevailing in Hungary, however, there is no doubt that the eventual moderations will also be accepted with complete indifference. There is an atmosphere of lethargy, depression and apathy at home. The Hungarian masses have not yet recovered and cannot yet recover from the discouragement that they were not aided by the West in their fight for life or death, but were left to shift for themselves. However, despite these disappointments, all the alluring attempts of the Soviets and their satellites are obstinately rejected. Besides the hopeless political prospects, the drop in the living standard has also depressed the general atmosphere.

In conclusion, it may be acknowledged that, while the introduction of the Munnich government has been received with lethargic indifference and antipathy, there has been the slight consolation that the Kadar government, as a result of the use of weapons of passive resistance, was finally forced to resign.

Inner Circle Politics

Notices from Budapest point out that the fall of the Kadar government was caused not only by his unpopularity, but also by certain political and economic factors. These were also the factors

which led Moscow to nominate Ferenc Munnich as Kadar's successor. The succession of Munnich is explained in Budapest, first of all, by an increase in Tito's influence, and, on the other hand, it is an indication of the deterioration of Stalinist ideology. "Moscow," explained G.A., a manager of a communist enterprise in Budapest who recently arrived in Vienna, "wants to plant a personage in the place of Kadar who has the confidence of Tito and can be of assistance in returning Tito into the bloc of the people's democracies, and whose person is a safeguard against the return of the Stalin-Rakosi system. In addition, the successor of Kadar must be a person who has not been so strongly compromised by the post-revolutionary repressive measures. These reasons have made them choose Ferenc Munnich."

It is characteristic of the chaotic conditions of the Hungarian communist party that Kadar's rival, Gyorgy Marosan, who is hated at least as much as Kadar, has remained a victor in the rivalry fights which have been going on for the past year or so. Marosan remained in his post as substitute-Premier, while Kadar was released with the formal post of a minister without portfolio. The boundless rivalry between Kadar and Marosan is characterized by the news which arrived via a confidential reporter, that during October last, an attempt on the life of Gyorgy Marosan was made on the orders of Kadar. The details behind this fact are as follows: Kadar had passed approximately two weeks in Moscow in September. During his absence, Marosan planned to organize a conspiracy against him, as a consequence of which there was to have been produced a party decision in favour of the resignation of Kadar and Marosan's own nomination as Premier. Marosan sought to obtain the approval of officials of the Soviet Embassy in Budapest for this plan, but Kadar's adherents notified their leader about this, and Kadar flew back hurriedly to Hungary and thwarted every action directed against himself. Two days afterward, the aides of Kadar attempted to shoot Marosan to death, but he was only wounded by one bullet in his shoulder and one in his arm. The attempt was made late at night, when Marosan stepped out of his car. Kadar subsequently visited the wounded Marosan and extracted a promise from him to leave off all further plots against Kadar in the future - but he took him along on his next trip to Moscow to prevent him from organizing any political activity during his absence.

One of the reasons for Munnich's nomination is the very great balance of exports. Some of the commercial representatives of the Hungarian government abroad have reported that many Western countries, - unfortunately not all of them - are not inclined to build up any commercial relations with the government of Kadar, nor are they willing to increase and develop already existing connections. It was thought in Moscow and also in the party circles of Budapest that it would be advantageous for foreign trade if the ~~generally~~-despised Kadar were not any more the Hungarian Premier. Instead, someone less subject to criticism, in their opinion - as, for instance, Ferenc Munnich - would be desirable. This point of view is all the more important, as the injections given to the Hungarian economy since the Revolution represent a heavy burden for the Soviets, compared to the continuous exploitation of the pre-revolutionary years.

The Munnich clique intends undoubtedly to carry out in some respects the tactics of "new politics in inner politics". To create "mass bases" is today the greatest wish of the political leaders of the Budapest communist party. They staunchly maintain their so-far-unsuccessful idea that the non-communist masses could be gained for the system of the people's democracies by the "Patriotic People's Front". Antal Apro, the unpopular leader of the Patriotic People's Front, was forced to resign his leadership on this basis, and Gyula Kallai was nominated in his place. It is very characteristic of the politics of the party and its propaganda for gaining popularity in Budapest, that it is openly promulgating, both in the case of Munnich as well as Kallai, that both were members of the Nagy government. It has also been mentioned as a very characteristic **symptom** that Imre Nagy's name has not been mentioned lately in the list of "counter-revolutionary malefactors"; not even Janos Kadar mentioned him in his last report as Premier, when he launched a furious attack against the counter-revolutionary "leaders". According to news from Budapest visitors, the Munnich government is also to be temporary, because the intention of Moscow is to set up an adequately controlled government under Imre Nagy, in accordance with the wishes of Tito.

Terror

A superficial glance at everyday life and appearances would give the impression to a spectator without first-hand information that life in Hungary has returned to its normal course. Thus, the Kadar government, and subsequently the Munnich regime, have tried to direct public opinion, by means of some alleviations, away from the awareness of the merciless repressive actions and unceasing terror. Some of the seemingly improved situations are within a short time replaced by terroristic decrees, as the ~~members~~ members of the communist government are well aware of the fact that they are able only by means of continuous threats to maintain their domination.

We shall cite here some characteristic data on the ever-continuing terror in Hungary. The number of arrested and interned persons in January 1958 has exceeded 60,000. There are at present four larger and five smaller internment camps in Hungary. The interned have recently been allowed to receive letters and parcels again, and for good behaviour they may be visited at some intervals by their relatives. Their food, on the other hand, has become worse. ~~They~~ Instead of 25 dkg. of bread, they have been receiving 15 dkgs. lately, and hard labour is obligatory for every interned person.

There has been created an extra internment camp for juveniles in Transdanubia. It is in the Vertes Mountains, where youths between the ages of ten and sixteen years are imprisoned. These youths are kept under strict discipline and are being educated in a communist direction. Only those parents who are reliable from communistic points of view are allowed to visit their children.

where Sentences have been passed in closed courts on the members of a "counter-revolutionary" organization of young boys, among whom a fourteen-year old was sentenced to death and executed. He had been accused of taking part in the revolutionary battles of October - November 1956, and of not having handed over his arms to the authorities, and of having distributed anti-communist literature. Two of the others accused were sentenced to fifteen years in prison and the others received sentences of from three to ten years.

The members of the former AVO, and the armed forces created during and after the Revolution, and also the former "grey" police

have all been assigned to the "State Police". But there reigns no harmony among the members of the three united organizations. There are constant rivalries and struggles for positions between the former members of the AVO, the armed forces and the police. The police are relatively the most humane, whereas the former members of the AVO and the armed forces are competitors in brutality. The former AVO members consider themselves now also the protectors of the system, whereas the members of the armed forces boast of having saved the system from the danger of the "counter-revolution".

A very extended range of action, which is ever increasing, has been accorded to the "Workers Guard", the membership of which has been raised in the last months to 50,000. The members of the Workers Guard have the right to an unlimited use of arms, and they cannot be judged by a high court in case of an armed act. In the course of the last months, weapons have been used in Ujpest and Balatonalmadi by the Workers Guard which claimed two victims and several severely wounded, but despite this, they have not been brought to justice, except for a party investigation, which acquitted them.

The first station of the calvary of political prisoners is nowadays on the third floor of the police direction in the Deak Ferenc utca. It is decided there whether the politically detained is to be sent to an internment camp or whether he is to be handed over for further investigation to the investigating authorities in the prison of Fő-utca. It is said that the same atrocities are being committed on the third floor of the Deak Ferenc utca as were formerly at the Andrassy-ut 60, or the Fő-utca.

The system of raffles in public places and the control of private apartments is also carried on. In the week following the nomination of the Munnich government, mass raffles were arranged at places of public entertainment in Budapest. The dominating clique was afraid that the change in regime would be the impetus for a renewed mass movement by the Hungarian people. There were raffles almost without exception in all hotels, restaurants, espressos and other places of entertainment in Budapest. Some parts of the streets were surrounded in the late hours of the evening and the passers-by were checked, with the result that 500 people were arrested. Exempt from the raffles were only foreign guests at the hotels Gellert, Astoria, Duna, and the Grand Hotel, Margaret Island.

Among the engineers and architects employed at the various institutes of design of the Ministry of Architecture, seventeen have recently disappeared without a trace. All of them were unmarried. Their nearest relatives received a brief notice that they had received a big foreign commission and that they would pass a long time abroad. It has been reported that all of them have been forced to accept work in the Soviet Union. The members of their families have received no further information.

Some policemen who were former AVO members recently invaded the home of Janos Bacsa, whom they called a Kulak, under the pretext of searching it. When Bacsa tried to protest against the looting of some of his valuable possessions, he was shot on the spot, and his wife and son carried away.

There is a formal persecution in factories and offices against those who call the events of October 1956 a "revolution" and not a "counter-revolution". Thousands are sent off to internment camps for daring to use the word "revolution" in connection with the fight for liberty in 1956.

1/2 Situation of Hungarians Returning Home

As with the Kadar government, so the Munnich clique also has tried its utmost to lure back those who have emigrated to the Western countries, but there is little mention made about the fate of those who have returned home as a result of the false promises or other reasons. Following is some data about the fate of those **who** returned. According to the data published recently by the Budapest puppet government, approximately 28,000 have returned from among the 200,000 persons who sought refuge in Western countries. The actual fact is that the total number of refugees who have returned amounts to 19,000 persons. The statistics of the Ministry of the Interior in Budapest, in order to increase the number of those returning voluntarily, has included among the number of those returning from the Western countries also those who had tried by various means to flee to the West but were either impeded in their flight by the Hungarian authorities or were "persuaded" to give up their plans. And so, they returned to their homes without ever having stepped one meter over the Hungarian border. Very many of those attempting to flee have been dragged off to prisons or concentration camps.

More than 4,000 of those who actually returned to Hungary have been arrested. Their future fate is prison or internment camps. In the camps of Kistarcsa and Recski, the "Westerners" are being guarded in separate barracks, under the control of a specially reliable guard. The "Westerners" are not allowed to speak with their relatives or with their fellow-prisoners. Those who have been arrested thus are charged with participation in the revolution or with spying for Western countries, but emigration to the West is always a particularly incriminating circumstance in the sentences meted out. All those imprisoned or in internment camps have received prior to their return a formal letter of amnesty at the respective Hungarian embassies, promising them total acquittal.

The fate of the homecomers is for the most part the following: They are allowed to live for two to three weeks undisturbed in their homes after their return. They are even accepted again in their former jobs or allowed to accept new jobs. After a period of two to three weeks, they are called in Budapest, mostly to the Police in the Deak Ferenc utca, to the third floor of the building. The police officer reminds them at first that they owe the deepest gratitude to the people's democracy for having allowed them to return despite their grave sins. The police officer continues then much more severely But, there are other grave circumstances in the case, as it has come to the knowledge of the police that they have kept quiet about some grave crimes committed on the application for returning, and so the amnesty was obtained under false pretenses. The police officer hints to the shaking and frightened homecomer that he might escape punishment and remain free if he agrees to enter the service of the State Security authorities and signs the relevant contract. If he is unwilling to do so, he is instantly carried off to prison or to an internment camp instead of being allowed to go home.

There are several among those returning who never even reached their homes for the first two to three week period and who were never able to see their families for an instant, and their fate after their return to Hungary remains unknown. At the frontiers these were dragged off instantly to prisons or to internment camps, or, as much information has revealed, they were sent off to the Soviet Union.

Some concrete illustrations are the following:

Janos Nagy and Karoly Nagy, students of 22 and 19 years of age, respectively, returned before Christmas 1957. Their letter of amnesty had been provided by the Hungarian Embassy in Vienna. The two brothers notified their parents about the exact date of their arrival, but they never arrived home and their fate is entirely unknown ever since they crossed the Hungarian frontier.

Miklos Vetó, a 42-year-old Szeged merchant, in possession of a letter of amnesty, returned home in December 1957. The reason for his homecoming was that his wife and son, who had been left behind, could not get an emigration passport. Vetó had passed two years in Auschwitz during the Nazi regime. Two weeks after his return to Szeged he was called before the police, where he was beaten into unconsciousness and thereafter interned for an indefinite period.

Istvan Korponai, a 30-year-old auto mechanic, had to return from Canada to his wife living in ~~Kis-Keregyarmatra~~ Fehérgyarmat. His letter of amnesty was provided by the Hungarian Embassy in Montreal. Korponai could only pass four days after his return in November 1957 at home. He was dragged from his home at night, and his family later received a notice that he had been sent to the Soviet Union in order to make use of one of his technical inventions. His wife was told and advised to move from her native village because she "putrified" the atmosphere there, and that there was no chance that she would ever see her husband again. She has been forced to resume her maiden name and to go to work to the capital.

Dr. Apor, an AVO physician with the rank of colonel, and former head of the Kutvölgyi-ut AVO hospital, arrived in the United States during the first period after the revolution. As he did not mention his AVO rank to the American authorities, he was deported from the USA and was forced to return to Vienna, where he got a temporary job. But, urged by promises of the Hungarian Embassy, he left Vienna and returned to Hungary. At first he was joyously received like a lamb returning to the fold, but after a month he was also sent to the separate department of the Kistarcsa camp.

Ferenc Briza, an artisan from Kispest returned with his wife and two children from Italy to Hungary. He was not only promised complete amnesty, but was also told that his lodging and his workshop

would be returned to him. Briza received a free lodging - as since his homecoming he is a prisoner at the Fo-utca prison. His wife and two children are living in the greatest misery, and even the clothing and presents brought back from Italy have been taken away from them.

In the cases of returning Hungarians, General Gyula Horvath, former commander of the Department of Internal Security of the StatePolice, is the top official; his deputy is Colonel Ferenc Béldi. Both were imprisoned during the Rákosi regime in connection with the Rajk case, but they are today both responsible for the most atrocious treatment of political prisoners.

Standard of Life. General Conditions

News from Budapest, and visitors arriving from Hungary report that instead of the promised ameliorations, circumstances have been getting worse in Hungary. As a consequence of a continuous tightening of the norms, the income of the industrial workers has decreased, despite a slight increase in wages. The aggravation of the financial situation is increased by the fact that, though the income of the employees with fixed wages has not diminished, the supplementary payments deriving from overtime, premiums, and profit-sharing plans has been nearly entirely stopped.

The price of the greater part of consumer goods, as, for example, food, textiles, transportation, and ready-made articles, has remained unchanged, but there is a rise amounting to from 20 to 30 per cent in the price of articles qualified as luxury items. There has been a cover charge imposed in all entertainment places. In every restaurant, coffee-house and espresso an additional 10 per cent must be paid for eating at a table. This amount has to be paid also at places where standing-room for eating is impossible. In places with music, there is a surcharge of 10 per cent; with music and dancing, a surcharge of 20 per cent has to be paid.

People are again purposely dressing poorly in Budapest. This is partly a consequence of the political atmosphere, partly to be attributed to the economic situation. It is again usual to call well-dressed people names, such as, "enemies of the party", "bourgeois", and "counter-revolutionaries". The depressing effect of badly-dressed people cannot be lessened by the fact that the appearance of the city has been brightened by 1

of the city has been brightened by lights and gay colours. Most of the houses of the Nagykörút have been repainted, and the part of the Rákocsy-ut, between the National Theatre and the East Terminal, has been rebuilt with arcades. The main streets are lit up by neon lights.

During the Rákosi regime, Balatonaliga was the resort of the party leaders and of special guests. Outsiders could not even get a glimpse of the luxurious buildings erected behind the fences. These buildings were made available after the Revolution to the Hungarian public and for the use of foreign visitors who were expected. Since the summer, however, circumstances have again changed. Balatonaliga has again become the Eden of the leaders of the party, and it is guarded by special watchmen against uninvited trespassers.

Military Situation

In the Autumn of 1957, 18 per cent of the recruits failed to report for military service.

At seventy-two points throughout the country there have been constructed under the name of "machine stations" secret repair workshops for Soviet tanks. Because of their construction, these shops are suitable for receiving and repairing the greatest Soviet tanks. They are supplied with their own electric current equipment and water reservoirs. They have been built near small communities in a restricted zone. These workshops also have extension buildings for housing the staff of tank battalions.

There has also been an increase all over the country in the number of military supply depots. These have been especially developed along the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier and are in particular ammunition, fuel and food depots. The greatest of these military supply depots has been built near Veszto.

Until the end of last year, approximately 12,000 Soviet soldiers were garrisoned along the Austrian border. From the beginning of January 1958 their number has surprisingly increased; the number of Soviet troops garrisoned along the Austrian border now amounts to 38,000, their centre being in the surroundings of Szombathely.

Dr. Thomas Casper