

NIGHT LEAD SENTENCES

BY RONALD FARQUHAR

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, JUNE 20-(REUTERS)-THE HUNGARIAN SUPREME COURT TODAY CONFIRMED DEATH SENTENCES ON THREE YOUNG HUNGARIANS CONVICTED OF "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY CRIMES" AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH THREE MORE ORIGINALLY GIVEN PRISON TERMS.

IT ALSO IMPOSED HEAVIER PRISON SENTENCES RANGING FROM 14 YEARS TO 2 1/2 YEARS ON FIVE OTHERS TRIED WITH THEM.

THE FINDINGS WERE ANNOUNCED BY A FIVE-MAN "PEOPLE'S COUNCIL" OF THE SUPREME COURT -- SET UP RECENTLY TO HANDLE SUCH CASES -- 10 DAYS AFTER BEGINNING HEARINGS OF APPEALS BY THE ACCUSED AGAINST THE SENTENCES BY A LOWER COURT LAST APRIL. THE PROSECUTION ALSO HAD APPEALED FOR HEAVIER SENTENCES AGAINST SOME.

DEATH SENTENCES WERE CONFIRMED ON 25-YEAR-OLD WOMAN MEDICAL STUDENT ILONA TOTN, 26-YEAR-OLD FORMER ARMY LT. FERENC GOENCZI, AND MIKLOS GYOENGYOESI, 28, AN EX-CONVICT.

ALL THREE CONFESSED IN A LOWER COURT TO MURDERING A SUSPECTED STATE SECURITY POLICEMAN IN A BUDAPEST HOSPITAL LAST NOV. 18 -- A FEW DAYS AFTER SOVIET TROOPS CRUSHED ORGANIZED RESISTANCE IN THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING.

THE SUPREME COURT PASSED NEW DEATH SENTENCES ON GYULA OBERSOVSZKY, 30-YEAR-OLD JOURNALIST, AND JOZSEF GALLI, 27 YEAR-OLD AILING PLAYWRIGHT, ORIGINALLY SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS OF THREE YEARS AND ONE YEAR RESPECTIVELY FOR WRITING AND PRODUCING AN ILLEGAL ANTI-GOVERNMENT NEWS SHEET IN THE HOSPITAL.

THE THIRD NEW DEATH SENTENCE WAS ON FERENC KOVACS, 25, FORMER SECURITY POLICEMAN, CONVICTED OF INCITING OTHER INSURGENTS TO TRY TO KILL

A SUSPECTED TRAITOR, AND ORIGINALLY GIVEN 10 YEARS.

TWO MEN ACTED ON HIS INSTRUCTIONS HAD THEIR SENTENCES FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER AND AIDING AND ABETTING RAISED FROM EIGHT YEARS TO 14 YEARS AND FROM ONE YEAR TO EIGHT YEARS RESPECTIVELY.

TWO OTHERS ORIGINALLY JAILED FOR SIX MONTHS EACH FOR AGITATION WERE GIVEN NEW SENTENCES OF 2 1/2 YEARS EACH. A 16-YEAR-OLD YOUTH WAS IMPRISONED FOR THREE YEARS INSTEAD OF EIGHT MONTHS FOR AIDING AND ABETTING IN MURDER AND FOR HIDING ARMS.

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ALL SIX SENTENCED TO DEATH APPEALED FOR CLEMENCY AND THE COURT AFTERWARD WENT INTO PRIVATE SESSION TO DECIDE WHETHER TO FORWARD THEIR APPEALS TO THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL.

WHEN ANNOUNCING THE HIGHER SENTENCES, THE JUDGE SAID THE LOWER COURT HAD CONFINED ITSELF TO THE CHARGES OF MURDER AND ATTEMPTED MURDER WHEN PASSING THE SENTENCES.

REFERRING TO THE DEATH SENTENCES ON OBERSOVSZKY AND GALLI, THE JUDGE SAID THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL HELD THAT THE CASE MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A POLITICAL QUESTION AND THE LEADERS OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND INSTIGATORS OF SUCH CRIMES MUST BEAR THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY.

THE ACCUSED SHOWED LITTLE SIGN OF EMOTION. MISS TOTN, A FAIR, TALL, SLIM AND PALE GIRL, IN A GRAY DRESS, TURNED AND NODDED TO AN ACQUAINTANCE IN THE PUBLIC BENCHES BEFORE THE FINDINGS WERE ANNOUNCED.

AFTER HEARING HIS SENTENCE, OBERSOVSZKY, A FORMER COMMUNIST, PALE AND DRAWN, TURNED AND LOOKED TOWARD THE PUBLIC BENCHES WHERE HIS WIFE WAS SITTING.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN STUMBLING UP THE STEPS LEADING OUT OF THE CROWDED PUBLIC GALLERY AND COLLAPSED, SCORBING AT THE DOORWAY. A WOMAN IN THE GALLERY ALSO WEPT.