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FROM THE EVALUATION AND RESEARCH SECTION

BACKGROUND REPORT

(Hungary)

27 October 1956

INFORMATION ON MEMBERS OF NEW HUNGARIAN  
GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 27.

Bela KOVACS, Minister of Agriculture.

Former secretary general of the Smallholder Party. Farmer. Arrested on February 25, 1947 by Soviet Military for having allegedly endangered the military security of the Soviet Union. Disappeared and nothing was heard of him until autumn 1955 when released prisoners of war reported that he was detained in a Siberian prison.

His release and return to Hungary was reported by Western news agencies in May 1956. "Dunantuli Naplo" of July 10, 1956, published an official communiqué on his liberation.

After his return to Hungary he joined his family living in his native village in County Baranya. "Dunantuli Naplo" of July 3, 1956 published a statement by KOVACS. He was subjected to repeated pressure by the regime to give his support to the PPF and was allegedly offered also the post of Chief Editor of "Magyar Nemzet."

On September 26, 1956 the Hungarian Radio, in its daily feature "Homeland," broadcast an interview with him in which he took a rather reserved stand. "Magyar Nemzet" of October 12, 1956, reported his election to the social-political and juridical committee of the PPF.

Zoltan TILDY, Minister of State without portfolio.

Aged 66, Calvinist pastor, one of the founders of the Hungarian Smallholder Party, member of parliament before and during World War II. After the emigration of Tibor ECKHARDT to the U.S.A. he became leader of the Smallholder Party. (1941)

After World War II he became Prime Minister of Hungary's first constitutional Government (which succeeded General MIKLOS's provisional Government)

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He held that office until February 1946, when he was elected first president of the Hungarian Republic. In August 1948 he was compelled to resign because his son-in-law, Victor CSORNOKY, Hungarian Minister to Egypt, was involved in an "anti-regime conspiracy" (he was tried and hanged in December of the same year.)

Since then nothing was heard of TILDY until September 1956 when he was noted among the visitors of the national exhibition of agriculture. On that occasion he gave an interview to Radio BUDAPEST on his impressions of the exhibition.

On October 9, 1956, the "Homeland" feature of Radio BUDAPEST broadcast a longer interview with him in which he came out in support of kolkhozes, "the only road toward a better life for peasants." A few days later he was elected member of the PPF's social-political and juridical committee. He attended a debate of the DISZ Petöfi Club on October 17, 1956 and repeated his endorsement of the regime's agricultural policy.

Radio BUDAPEST reported October 20 that he visited SZTALINVAROS (DUNAPENTELE) and subsequently the county of Baranya, in the company of Istvan DOBI, Chairman of the Presidium. It can be assumed that he went to see Bela KOVACS, living in Baranya county, in order to persuade him to give his support to the regime.

(MORE LATER)