

Act Two

Of Hungary's Tragedy

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THE EXECUTION of Imre Nagy, Pal Maleter, and some of their associates marks a further and severe setback to de-Stalinization in all countries of the Communist bloc. The trend against de-Stalinization, which began after the Hungarian rising in October, 1956, and continued with the drive against "revisionism" and the revival of the anti-Titoist campaign, has now reached a decisive point. Even now the Soviet bloc has not lapsed back into the full darkness of the Stalin era, but once again the phantom of the Stalinist terror and the threat of the purge haunt heretics from China to East Germany.

It was not the fear of a new upsurge of Hungarian anti-Communism or of a Nagy comeback that induced the Communist leadership to wreak vengeance on Nagy and his friends. Nor was it the fear of Tito and Titoism that inspired the new drive against revisionism. There is enough evidence to show that the execution of Nagy was decided in Peking and Moscow over the objections of János Kadar, Nagy's successor in the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party, and his colleagues. And the influence of Titoism had certainly not grown greatly in eastern Europe before the new drive against revisionism started. If anything, it had declined.

The initiative to call this dramatic and bloody halt to de-Stalinization has come from Peking—Mao Tse-tung has been the chief promoter of the drive against revisionism. Hesitantly and at first reluctantly, Khrushchev has toed Mao's line.

Mao has performed an amazing somersault since the days when he proclaimed a new era of freedom of expression and criticism in China,

the era in which a hundred flowers were to blossom and a hundred schools of thought were to contend. This slogan continued to resound from Peking for several months after the Hungarian uprising. The cause for Mao's reversal of policy has therefore lain not so much in the repercussions of the Hungarian rising as in the domestic difficulties he has had to cope with.

Khrushchev too has been beset by troubles on his home front. At the



Imre Nagy

same time, Peking and Moscow have been engaged in controversies over foreign policy and military strategy. The execution of Nagy is an outward sign of the critical stage these difficulties and controversies have reached.

Since Stalin's death, attention has been focused primarily on de-Stalinization and the conflict between the de-Stalinizers and the Stalinist die-hards. However, under the sur-

face there have been other conflicts, more confused and perhaps much deeper. The de-Stalinizers themselves have increasingly split into a right wing and a left. The issues over which they have been divided have varied from eastern Europe to the Soviet Union and again from the Soviet Union to China; but the division has run across the whole of the Communist world.

Communism's Internal Triangle

In the main it has been a three-cornered struggle. Orthodox Stalinists, "de-Stalinizers of the Left," and the anti-Stalinist Right have confronted one another in shifting and changing alignments. In addition, in Moscow all these groups had to face a "Bonapartist" threat in Marshal Zhukov's aspiration to leadership. It is impossible to summarize in a brief article the complex and confused controversy and its many crosscurrents. Suffice it to say that in China and eastern Europe, where private farming still predominates or is not yet fully submerged, the program of the anti-Stalinist Right has in all essentials been reminiscent of the policies for which Bukharin and his school of thought stood in Russia in the 1920's and early 1930's. In those countries the Right has been more or less opposed to the collectivization of farming and the forcible development of heavy industry. It has stood for the expansion of consumer industries, for a market economy—i.e., for recasting the exchange of goods between town and country on a commercial basis—and for raising standards of living by these methods.

Within the Soviet Union itself, the "rightists" have advocated similar policies modified to suit the already highly developed heavy industrial base and the already collectivized farming. Throughout the whole of the Soviet bloc the Right has staked its hopes on an international *détente* and on an alliance between Communist and Socialist parties that was to be based on the recognition by the Communists of "the parliamentary road to socialism" and their virtual renunciation of violent revolution in capitalist countries. The chief advocates of this program appear to have been Malenkov, Chou En-lai, Tito, Nagy, Gomulka (until recent-

ly), and, outside the Soviet bloc, Togliatti—before he was called to order.

THE DE-STALINIZERS of the Left have argued that it is impossible to secure a substantial and continuous rise in standards of living without the further planned priority promotion of heavy industry, and that the industrialization of the underdeveloped Communist countries could hardly proceed on the basis of private farming. This attitude has often coincided with that of the Stalinist die-hards. Against both the Stalinists and the anti-Stalinist Right, however, the Left has stressed the need for concessions to workers rather than to peasants and for a more equalitarian labor policy. Together with the Right, the Left has demanded greater freedom within the party and a relaxation of party controls over science, literature, and the arts. Finally, unlike the Right and some of the Stalinists, the Left has viewed critically the prospects of an international *détente* and the idea of a renunciation of violent revolution in the capitalist countries.

The de-Stalinizers of the Left appear to have been far more strongly represented in the middle and lower ranks of the Communist parties and among young people than in the top leadership. In some respects Dmitri T. Shepilov, the former Soviet foreign minister, appears to have been their spokesman within the Soviet Presidium until his demotion last July.

Khrushchev has held a center position all the time, just as Stalin once held it in the controversies between Trotskyists and Bukharinists, building his “platform” with planks borrowed from both Left and Right and struggling to keep both groups in check.

Mao’s ‘Coalition’

There can be no doubt that up to the Hungarian rising and even until the middle of last year, the Right was strongly in the ascendant. For a few months Mao appeared to be its champion, although the de-Stalinizers of the Left also drew inspiration from his hundred flowers and hundred schools. But recently right-wing revisionists have been speaking of Mao’s “betrayal.” Since last Novem-

ber—that is, since the conference of Communist leaders in Moscow, held during the fortieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution—Mao has indeed led something like a broad coalition of de-Stalinizers of the Left and Stalinists against the Right.

The partners of this coalition have, of course, acted from mixed motives. The Stalinist die-hards are primarily interested in arresting de-Stalinization and reversing it as far as possible. The de-Stalinizers on the Left are above all anxious to stem the rightist tide, which at the moment they seem to fear even more than a relapse into Stalinism.

It seems all too likely that in this coalition the Stalinist die-hards have the upper hand, even though their leaders, Molotov and Kaganovich, have suffered disgrace. However, both men have continued to exercise influence and instruct their followers—since the beginning of this year they have repeatedly appeared in Moscow. Khrushchev, despite all his triumphs over rivals in the Presidium, has found his freedom of action greatly restricted. He has had to contend with the right-wing revisionists, who have looked for inspiration to Malenkov; with the left-wing anti-Stalinists; with the orthodox Stalinists; and, finally, with the industrial managers, who have resented his decentralization of the structure of Soviet industry. (That reform has run far less smoothly than is officially admitted.)

Khrushchev’s Two Faces

Khrushchev has therefore decided to calm part of the opposition and to appease Mao by agreeing to call a firm halt to de-Stalinization in the satellite countries and to control it in the Soviet Union as well. At this price he hopes to be able to pursue de-Stalinization in the field he is primarily interested in—the economic organization of the Soviet Union itself. Just a few days after Nagy’s execution had been announced, the

Soviet Central Committee accepted Khrushchev’s proposal that Soviet farmers should immediately be freed—for the first time in more than thirty years—from all compulsory deliveries of food to the government, and that the entire Soviet exchange of goods between town and country should be placed on a commercial basis. With this reform, one of the central elements of Stalinist economics has been swept away. At the height of the drive against revisionism, Khrushchev himself thus appears as the archrevisionist. No one would have approved his latest reform more warmly than Nagy if he had lived to see it.

LAST but not least, the execution of Nagy has an important bearing on Soviet foreign policy. Khrushchev has been under attack in both Moscow and Peking for the failures of his peace offensives. His critics have claimed that such overtures to the West as he has made have all met with rebuffs from Washington, have failed to reduce international tension, and have only served to “soften” the Soviet bloc. He has now given way and has resolved to demonstrate that he is not pursuing the *détente* with too much zeal and that he would, in any case, not allow any softening within the Soviet bloc. (A revisionist told me recently: “Mr. Dulles has been our most dangerous enemy, far more deadly than Mao, Khrushchev, or even the Stalinist die-hards. He has been playing all the time into the hands of the Stalinists and of other adventurers.”)

In these circumstances the latest blood purge in Budapest may well be the signal for a tightening up through the whole of the Soviet bloc, for renewed “vigilance” and discipline, and for a reinforcement of much of that isolationism in which the Communist world lived before the end of the Stalin era, during the years of the Rajk and Slansky trials. However, it remains to be seen to what extent that isolationism can be reinforced now and whether the present relapse into Stalinism is not going to provoke another explosion of anti-Stalinist revisionism later. By ordering Nagy’s execution, Mao and Khrushchev may well have placed a delayed-action bomb in the foundations of their power.



Togoland: The Election That Wouldn't Stay Fixed

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"THIS ELECTION," a United Nations observer remarked to me in French Togoland on April 27, "is so crooked you could walk along it without going in the same direction twice." Within a period of forty-eight hours I had seen truckloads of "voters" come in from a neighboring country, electoral cards sold in an open market, and a "thumb-washing plant" where voters cleaned the indelible ink off their thumbs and went to vote again.

French Togoland, a country about the size of West Virginia with a population of more than a million, is on the West Coast of Africa between the French territory of Dahomey and independent Ghana. It is part of the former Germany colony of Togoland, which after the First World War was divided between France and the United Kingdom under the League of Nations system of mandates. After the Second World War, both mandates were continued under U.N. trusteeship. In 1956 the people of British Togoland voted—in a plebiscite supervised by the United Nations—to unite with the Gold Coast as the new independent state of Ghana.

'Organized' Elections

But self-determination in Togoland is no simpler than elsewhere. While British Togoland did vote for integration with the Gold Coast, not everybody wanted it. A section of its population, the Ewe tribesmen, voted in significant numbers for continuation of British trusteeship, apparently hoping to be reunited some day with the Ewe of French Togoland and eventually to achieve some form of autonomy. In fact, much of the drama of the recent elections in Togoland can be attributed to the tribal ties of the six hundred thousand Ewe who live on the French side of the frontier with the three hundred thousand Ewe who live on

the Ghana side. (The figures come from Ewe spokesmen; some sources give much lower figures.)

In 1955, the French authorities in Togoland had organized elections—as a part of a program of extending additional self-government to the Togolese—but used an electoral list from which they had eliminated many of the elements that favored independence. These included a number of legislative candidates like Sylvanus Olympio, who was the leader of the major opposition party, the Comité de l'Unité Togolaise (C.U.T.). As a result of the recent elections Olympio is now premier, but in 1955 he was stripped of all civil rights for the minor technical offense of signing a sterling check in a franc-zone city. In retaliation, Olympio's party and the Mouvement Populaire Togolais (M.P.T.) refused to participate in the elections. The French were successful in their editing of the electoral list, and the legislative assembly that resulted from the 1955 elections was composed entirely of pro-government representatives from the two major pro-French parties, the Parti Togolais du Progrès (P.T.P.) and the Union des Chefs et des Populations du Nord (U.C.P.N.). Nicolas Grunitzky, the Afro-German leader of the P.T.P., became premier.

THE FRENCH administration held a referendum in 1956—from which the two main opposition parties again abstained—which "endorsed" the new government and asked the U.N. to terminate its trusteeship over the territory and give France permanent control. The U.N. had been asked to supervise this referendum but declined when France refused to revise the old electoral list.

In 1957, the U.N. General Assembly, having declined to recognize the elections of 1955, the referendum of 1956, or the "autonomous republic" that France claimed the 1956

referendum established, sent a commission to tour the territory. It found an increasing measure of local autonomy, but suggested that in order to terminate the trusteeship agreement new elections must be held under conditions agreed to by the U.N. The puppet Grunitzky government and France reluctantly agreed, thereby becoming morally obliged to invite U.N. observers.

A U.N. election commission, presided over by Max H. Dorsinville of Haiti, arrived at Lomé, the capital of French Togoland, on February 27, 1958, two months before the election, to find the notorious old electoral list still in use. Fifty thousand people—later the figure passed seventy-two thousand—were appealing to the courts against disfranchisement. The courts were dealing with fifteen cases a day, of which they were rejecting about seven. Among the documents plaintiffs were asked to produce were certificates of birth, residence, citizenship, and nonregistration elsewhere, photographs, and fingerprints—all signature-witnessed by village and cantonal chiefs and the local French administrator.

There were now just over a hundred candidates for forty-six seats, and candidates' deposits had been raised from \$24 to \$240 (to be returned if the candidate received at least ten per cent of the vote in his electoral district). This is one of the highest deposits required of candidates anywhere in the world, even though Togoland's per capita income of \$20 is one of the lowest. Grunitzky's P.T.P. and his allies, who together held all the seats in the previous assembly, were contesting forty-three out of forty-six seats in the new and enlarged legislative assembly.

Stacked Cards

I arrived at Lomé on Friday, April 25, two days before the election, and called on the government information officer, two opposition leaders, and the U.N. office, which was receiving reports from twenty observers in the field. I learned that over half of the seventy-two thousand disfranchisement cases had now been dealt with—most of them in the past few days—and that fifteen thousand people had been reinstated. But