

Yugoslavia

1956

Curt - Yugo paper on (H) Imre Nagy

B-89

MUNICH, September 12 (GEN. DESK-ERS)

The August 20 (delayed) issue of the Yugoslav paper Vjesnik (Zagreb) carries an article from Budapest which rather sarcastically reviews the position of the Hungarian Workers (Communist) Party regarding Imre Nagy. It points out that many of the "right deviationist" policies for which Nagy was condemned are now being officially supported by the party. Commenting on the lack of anti-Nagy statements by the party, the paper reports that representatives of the Central Committee have unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the former premier to renounce his former policies publicly.

The full text of the article follows:

Talks about Imre Nagy.

A former member of the Hungarian Workers Party, former member of the Central Committee HWP, former member of the Politbureau, and former Prime Minister, received illfamed publicity at the July Plenum of the CC HWP. His name was twice mentioned in speeches and was immortalized in such important documents as the Resolution of the Plenum. The man in question is Imre Nagy who according to his present official status is a man retired on a pension and whose name was always brought up in the Plenum whenever there was question of "rightist deviation."

This happened exactly one month ago and would be of little interest had this same "line" been continued also during this month when the decisions of the Plenum were being worked out. Now, what happens in fact? Many observers here have noticed that during this past month the name of Imre Nagy has not been even as much as alluded to. I do not mean only in the press. Last Sunday, for instance, long and exhaustive reports were published on several large meetings at which ranking government and Party functionaries elaborated on the material discussed at the Plenum. But the name of Imre Nagy was nowhere mentioned.

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This seems to be a paradox precisely because one may assume that the slightest allusion to that name could only carry a *negative* connotation.

Some people here are inclined to draw from this sole *B-9c* fact certain conclusions as to the further political fate of Imre Nagy. On the other hand, in spite of this official silence, you cannot speak with anyone for three minutes without him turning the conversation toward "scrutinizing" recent events, and after five minutes he brings up the role of Imre Nagy. For the sake of truth it should be said here that his name is mentioned without any show of passion, enmity or condemnation.

What did he commit.....?

Why do they always, whenever mention is made of Imre Nagy, put before his functions and even before his Party membership the qualification of "former?" Here is a man with a long Party affiliation, a man who has been a member of the Party for long years, for years also member of the Central Committee and of the Politbureau..... a man whose name and activities regardless of whatever might have been said of him later on, is linked to the beginning of the process which in those days meant the first radical break with sinister practices in Hungarian politics. If you put the blunt question about the beginning of a relative consolidation of the economy or when did the process of raising the standard of living start, the answer will always have to be: in the second half of 1953. They will tell you here about the "Hungarian miracle," meaning how after a catastrophic fall of the standard of living during the preceding five years suddenly in 1953 empty shops began to fill with goods and how one was able choose from a variety of goods to an extent which no optimism -- if one could speak of optimism at all in those earlier days -- could have warranted.

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They will also tell you that with that period coincides also the first energetic steps to liquidate the reign of terror and, also, that then for the first time the gates of forced labor camps were thrown open to let the internees free. Back in those days the first steps were also made toward establishing tolerable relations with Yugoslavia, and other measures which have contributed to make breathing easier. This was the most important of all in those days. B-91

Well, people here will tell you that it would be wrong to link all these changes exclusively with the name of Imre Nagy. The "new course" policy of which the eight month (sic) rule of Imre Nagy is a part, was initiated by the June 1953 Plenum of the CC HWP. Thus, in fact, the initiative for these changes (under Nagy) came from the highest Party forum in which in those days prevailed opinions that the regime and its methods were incorrect till then. Later developments during the ensuing three years have shown that these positive forces were not strong enough to be able to continue the new road without difficulties.

Thus it happened that in February 1955 Imre Nagy suddenly had a heart attack (coronary thrombosis,) had to quit the premiership and, one month later lost all his Party functions and was dismissed from the HWP membership under the accusation of "right deviation."

The three points of "right deviation."

What is meant by this term of "right deviation" is most powerfully summed up in a signed article published in the June-July 1956 number of the ideological magazine of HWP, the Tara Adaimi Szemie.

There is a special piquancy linked up with this particular issue. The manuscript was sent to the printer on July 16 1956, that is, two days before the last Plenum of the CC HWP, while the issue was put in distribution after the publication of the Resolution of the Plenum.

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In what, then, consist the symptoms of "right deviation" according to this article which gave the tune for the condemnations voiced in the Resolutions of the CC Plenum of July 30 1956 referring to the discussions on the "Petoefi Circle?"

First: endeavors to stop the development of heavy industry

Second: endeavors to hold up the Socialist transformation of the countryside.

Third: endeavors to establish a Patriotic People's Front to take over the leading role of the Party.

"Softened contradictions"

One hears here in certain serious circles very interesting facts in connection with these viewpoints... It is said here, that while the "new course" put emphasis on developing light industry, after the liquidation and condemnation of this course during the three preceding years a much greater emphasis is given to this branch of economy than ever before. One feels the positive results of this policy every day, while similar tendencies expressed along with underlining the primacy of heavy industry can be clearly seen in the new five-year-plan. This, after all, is good and indispensable. Therefore, the development of light industry, is going together with the strengthening of heavy industry, should not, one would think, be considered ~~as sinful~~ but rather as a necessity for the rising of the standard of living.

The problem of agriculture is a little more complicated. Now, one should not forget that at the time the "new course" was proclaimed (in 1953) there existed a large number of enforced collective farms (cooperatives) which had very little support while, on the other hand a pitiless drive raged against individual producers, and the class war in the villages was growing more and more bitter. All this brought this entire branch of the economy into a critical situation and caused a catastrophic fall of production.

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May we quote here but one characteristic instance. According to a customary list there were in a certain village 63 kulaks in 1954. After two years of Socialist development in the same village there were 12 kulaks. Clearly, administratively created. If intentions and steps are weighed with which the resolution of the last plenum anticipates strengthening democracy in the cooperatives, respecting the principle of voluntariness, strengthening of the individual producer and liquidation of the "kulak problem," we arrive lastly at positions which have been essentially condemned during the liquidation of the new course. To the third accusation the answer is given by the resolution because far-reaching strengthening and spreading of the People's Patriotic Front -- hitherto consciously pushed into the background -- has been anticipated while it was condemned in the last year to vegetate and did not represent a factor in political and social life at all. B-93

This mass organization has been ^{revived} ~~received~~ only on paper and formally in pre-election periods because according to the rules the members must confirm the proposed candidates. On the other hand, the resolutions of the last plenum and also speeches at the plenum stress and underline the inevitable strengthening of this organization. In these conditions news was spread in Budapest which, to a certain extent, explains why so little attention has been given in the newspapers and in speeches of prominent politicians to a negative approach to the person of Imre Nagy. According to some information, representatives of the CC of the Hungarian Worker Party have recently twice held conversations with the former Prime Minister and the possibility of his rehabilitation in the Party and his further collaboration were discussed. The talks were held, as it has been learned, by

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some members of the CC.

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Likewise, information circulates that the conditions which have been put at these talks by one and the other side are incompatible. While the official representatives ask that Nagy should, at least formally, publicly renounce his "right deviation," the former Premier considers that he has done no wrong and, accordingly, he has nothing to renounce. He considers that what he had previously initiated and carried out could not be identified with the conception of "right deviation." Certain circles here are of the opinion that in his public appearances, articles and reports, which he held during the implementation of the new course, as a matter of fact, there could hardly be found views which have not been in some way expressed as the officially approved line. The great interest with which this news is followed, can easily be understood. There are enough people here, who have been put aside as "right deviationists," even if it cannot be said ~~that~~ that all of them are enemies of a healthy Leninist development and of strengthening socialist democracy in this country. Finding a platform for solving this problem, which was in many cases artificially and deliberately created during the months of stagnation, should mean, as is said here, a contribution ~~to~~ to the much stressed strengthening of Party unity in the recovery of political life. Quite frankly this unity of the Hungarian Worker Party should not be cast away at that time.

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