

Hungary & Eastern Europe - Sixty Years Ago A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

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1955. 04. 1–15.

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Hungary 'Undoing Damage'

By Reuters

Vienna

Matyas Rakosi, the political boss of Hungary, says the Communist government is busy "undoing the damage done in the last 18 months."

In the presence of the heads of state of Hungary and the Soviet Union, Mr. Rakosi told a party-state gathering in Budapest April 3 that heavy industry must be given top priority

in Hungary and "political vigilance" must be sharpened.

Significant absentee from the star-studded gathering—held to mark the 10th anniversary of Hungary's World War II "liberation" from German forces—was the reportedly ailing Imre Nagy, Premier for the last 18 months.

Mr. Nagy followed the "new course" policy, which meant producing more consumer goods for the people, with heavy industry taking a back seat.

Now Hungary, following the new Moscow course, has gone all out for heavy industry. Mr. Nagy was attacked for "deviation" in a resolution of Hungarian Communist Party chiefs last month.

But there has not so far been any announcement of his replacement as Premier.

Praise for Soviet

Mr. Rakosi, whose post is equivalent to that of Nikita S. Khrushchev in the Soviet Union, spoke in the Budapest Opera House, which was decorated with the national flags of Hungary and the Soviet Union.

On the stage with him were Hungary's President Dobi and the head of state of the Soviet Union, Marshal Kliment Y. Voroshilov.

Only the Soviet Union prevented the restoration of an "imperialist" regime in Hungary in 1945, the stocky boss of Hungary's Communists asserted.

Mr. Rakosi painted a rosy pic-

ture of conditions in Hungary today. He said production in every branch of industry was today higher, and every section of the population lived better, than in 1938.

As if to ram the point home, he said Hungarian breweries were today brewing six times as much beer as in the year before World War II began.

But, he added, "it is our duty to strengthen our national Army and cultivate a spirit of national defense in the Hungarian people."

Cue From West

Hungary's workers must realize that "still more, and better, work" is the price of welfare, he said. Heavy industry must be given top priority and there must be every support for the Soviet-type collective farms.

Mr. Rakosi warned: "Every indication of hostile tendencies must be nipped in the bud at once. At present we are in the process of undoing the damage done in the past 18 months."

He said the Paris agreements to rearm West Germany had increased the danger of war. "But the socialist group of nations (the Soviet Union and its European satellites) has taken its cue from this," he added, and has taken effective measures to increase its strength and security.

A limited amnesty was announced in Budapest April 3 in connection with the liberation anniversary.

An official announcement said it applied to "individual cases" in which the sentences and the legal consequences of the penalties imposed would be quashed.

It was stipulated that those to benefit from the amnesty should not have played a leading part in the "reactionary (right-wing) regime before the liberation."

Also excluded were those convicted of having committed crimes "according to a deliberately hostile design" or "under the influence of enemy propaganda."



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East-West Conference As Viewed by Adenauer

By Gaston Coblentz

BONN (Wireless).

About two weeks have now gone by since the idea of a new high-level meeting between the East and West was blessed by President Eisenhower, and then given a somewhat twisted okay by Russian Premier Bulganin.

However, it is still impossible to discern when a meeting of this sort might be held, or where, or who would take part, or exactly what would be discussed.

The Adenauer regime in Western Germany usually manages to keep itself well informed on such questions. But so far, it appears to be as much in the dark as every one else on this one.

Changed Conditions

However, a number of ideas appear to be under consideration by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer that may be of importance if the East-West meeting should materialize.

At the Berlin conference last year, the seventy-nine-year-old Chancellor's influence on the Western Allies was already considerable, although Western Germany was still occupied and was not at the conference table.

This time, before another meeting with Russia will be held, the Chancellor's regime and his country of 50,000,000 people are almost certain to have recovered their sovereignty under the Paris rearmament treaties. The German Chancellor's voice will thus be even more important than before.

Some Ideas

Therefore the Chancellor's thinking is of high interest. It is, in part, as follows:

First, Chancellor Adenauer does not intend to insist that Western Germany should be invited to an East-West conference table at the outset. He also does not intend to insist that the German problem—that is, the critical issue of German reunification—should be at the top of the agenda, or even one of the first items.

Instead, he has leaned in recent months more and more to the view that there simply cannot be a solution of the German question without a prior general understanding between the East and West—in other words, without relaxation of the cold war.

Therefore, the Chancellor believes that a new East-West meeting, if it were to be suc-

cessful, might first have to reach agreement on the basic issue of mutual security. That is, first of all, an agreement on the control of nuclear weapons and on a reduction of conventional weapons.

He feels that this might be discussed with a greater chance of success if an East-West meeting were held on a higher level than the recent disarmament talks in London.

If an accord could be reached on atomic and hydrogen weapons, the Chancellor believes the entire international atmosphere would be changed immediately. He thinks the East-West negotiators could finally get down to business if they did not have the nuclear nightmare in mind.

Non-Aggression Pacts

From that point on, Chancellor Adenauer would foresee a chance of solving the German problem in the framework of non-aggression pacts on the European continent.

He would insist upon a reunified Germany remaining in a Western alliance. But he would be prepared to give guaranties of non-aggression to the East.

How far Chancellor Adenauer might want to go in this direction once the chips were down is hard to say. But his statements so far have envisaged the satellite states in Eastern Europe (except Eastern Germany) remaining within the Soviet defense orbit.

He voiced this idea at the National Press Club in Washington last October, when he suggested that the Western bloc might "enter into a relationship to be settled by treaty with the Soviet bloc, a relationship which would offer all those participating security against aggression."

Another View

A week ago, he voiced a somewhat similar thought: "One can imagine a comprehensive agreement between the two power blocs which would include military, economic and political questions. If security is guaranteed in both directions, then all reasons disappear, from the Soviet standpoint, which could justify Russian retention of the Soviet Zone of Germany."

This idea, as the Chancellor has voiced it so far, is not bad from the German point of view. But it is not very hopeful for the Poles, Czechoslovaks, Hungarians or the Baltic peoples.

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Reds Drag Refugee Family of 4 From Hospital Beds in Austria

VIENNA, Austria, April 2 (AP). Russian soldiers last night dragged four Hungarian refugees—three of them injured—from an Austrian hospital and carried them back to Hungary, Austrian police said today.

The incident occurred at the town of Eisenstadt near the Hungarian border, which the refugees—a family of four—had crossed yesterday in the early morning hours to escape their Communist homeland.

While making their way through the wire fences guarding the border, one of the refugees stepped on a mine and caused an explosion which injured three members of the family, including a 12-year-old girl.

Hungarian border guards, alerted by the explosion, immediately opened fire on the group. The four Hungarians, despite their injuries, managed to reach the Austrian border village of Nickelsdorf, in the Soviet occupation zone. After receiving first aid from the villagers, they were

transferred in an ambulance to Eisenstadt for hospital treatment.

A local Communist, who had learned of the incident, alerted Austrian officials, who have orders from the Soviet to report all escapes.

The Russians acted promptly. They first placed Austrian police guards inside and outside the Eisenstadt Hospital, warning them that their own security would be at stake should any of the Hungarians be allowed to escape.

Soon afterward a heavily armed Russian patrol entered the hospital and dragged two of the refugees almost off the operation table, hospital officials said. Together with the two other members of the family, they were carried off in a Soviet truck across the Hungarian border.

The refugees were identified by police as Istvan Bago, 60; Stefan Bago, 33; Maria Bago, 28, and Anna Bago, 12, all of Kalucza, south of Budapest.

Times 3 IV 955

VOROSHILOV IN HUNGARY

Soviet Union President Will
Join in Liberation Fete

BUDAPEST, Hungary, April 2 (AP)—Marshal Kliment E. Voroshilov, President of the Soviet Union, arrived here today. He heads a Soviet delegation to help commemorate on Monday the tenth anniversary of Hungary's liberation from the Nazis.

He headed the Russian Control Commission in Hungary after World War II.

MOSCOW, April 2 (UP)—A formal reception was held at the Kremlin Hall of Columns today, marking the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Hungary.

Morale in Satellites Is Low; Life Is Confused, Unhappy

BY CROSBY S. NOYES
European Correspondent of The Star

VIENNA.—Two months before the dramatic resignation of Soviet Premier Malenkov on February 8, intelligence officers at this Eastern listening post had evidence of the impending shakeup. It happened when Matyas Rakosi—Hungary's Communist boss—returned suddenly from a prolonged "vacation" in Moscow and promptly blasted the "new course" which Mr. Malenkov had launched throughout the Communist domain.

Matyas Rakosi is no bush-league Communist. As one of the original Bolshevik group and former secretary of the Communist International, he is believed to be one of the very few really powerful men in party circles. When his attack was echoed a few days later by Pravda, it was a reasonable deduction that Mr. Malenkov was on the skids.

The incident illustrates the importance of the satellite states to the critical guessing-game being played by the West. Very often, understanding of what is happening in Russia depends on far more readily available information which funnels through Austria from the vassal states. And the fact that the satellites are sometimes used as a proving ground for Soviet plans makes them an invaluable barometer for predicting what is to come.

In comparison to Western knowledge of conditions in Russia, the picture of life in the satellites is remarkably complete. It is pieced together from masses of haphazard information carried through the Iron Curtain by refugees, from normal contacts between people and families which no political boundary can stop, and by the careful monitoring of Communist radio stations which often supply illuminating glimpses of conditions beyond the Iron Curtain.

Today this picture is a confused and unhappy one. The changes that have shaken the Communist world in the past few weeks have hardly brightened the life of the average satellite citizen. By any yardstick—political, economic or social—Russia's allies seem to have little to gain in the switch from the "old new course" of Malenkov to the "new new course" of Marshal Bulganin and Nikita S. Khrushchev.

On the political level, the changes, in any case, are more apparent than real. In Hungary, where the new course made more impression than anywhere else, it was always clear enough that Mr. Rakosi held the real power and that the Premier, Imre Nagy, was little more than a highly dispensable figurehead. It came as no surprise when Mr. Nagy was unceremoniously booted from his high office last month, charged as a "deviationist" and an "opportunistic demagogue."

Real Leaders Return

The truth is that the policies of Mr. Malenkov have never been popular with party bosses outside Russia. To the extent that collective leadership was tried at all, it was merely a device for sparing the real leaders the embarrassment of self-criticism which characterized the Malenkov regime. As long as someone had to stand up and admit that mistakes had been made, it was useful to have a stand-in for the top job. Now that breast-beating has gone out of fashion, the real leaders are taking over once again.

While this process has caused

a certain amount of unrest and confusion, it has not seriously threatened the stability of the satellite governments. Allied intelligence officers see no chance of a major upheaval at this point, either as the result of quarrels among the leaders or of rebellion from below.

The same generalizations apply in the economic field. Throughout the satellite states, both the "new course," with its emphasis on consumer goods, and the more recent return to heavy industry have been from the beginning more talk than fact.

In Poland and Czechoslovakia, there has never been any convincing de-emphasis of heavy industry. In Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, where the basis for heavy industry never existed in the first place, no real effort to create one is expected now.

When the new series of five-year plans are launched next year, what is expected rather is a more realistic approach to economic problems. Specialization will be encouraged, leading to greater interdependence between the various satellite countries. Production schedules will be tailored sharply to be brought within reasonable limits. At present, the failure of the Communist industrial program is too obvious to be tolerated. In many areas, a production schedule which averages 50 per cent of quota norms is considered a good record.

Farm Picture Worse

The agricultural picture is even worse. Food production throughout the satellite states has reached a disastrous level as the result of political mismanagement. Faced with resistance of farmers to Soviet-style collectivization and enforced production for the state, the Communist leaders have vacillated ineffectively between liberality and harsh repression. Neither has worked. Many cases of sabotage by crop burning have been reported within recent months. Despite severe penalties, farmers have continued to hide produce from the state inspectors and refuse to meet their delivery quotas.

The Communist radio stations supply particulars in abundant detail. Radio Kossuth in Czechoslovakia reported:

"Almost nobody has met his delivery obligation. So far the town has delivered only 4.4 per cent of its milk, 10.3 per cent of its egg and 9.8 per cent of its poultry quota. And many peasants are still in arrears on last year's deliveries . . ."

In both industry and agriculture, a new toughness by party leaders is indicated with the return of the old order. Police and terror methods are back in fashion as the accepted way to maintain discipline. Enforced collectivization, halted in an effort to liberalize the farm program in 1953, is expected to be ruthlessly revived.

However effective these methods may be, it seems unlikely that they will provide the cure for the real problem of the satellite regimes: The intense unpopularity of communism throughout the area and the stubborn, low-pressure resistance of the people.

Sabotage Continues.

Sabotage continues as an occasional nuisance. In Poland, two workers at the Bytom coal mine throw explosives into a stove, damaging drilling machines and mechanical equipment. Another tosses a piece of burning paper onto a transmis-

sion belt, starting a serious fire. In factories, there is widespread destruction of machines and materials.

In Czechoslovakia's Vithovice steel plant, iron bars and hammers turn up mysteriously in heavy cog-wheel machinery. Other machines are ruined by sand, poured into oil pumps. Machine guns designed for satellite armies have turned up with bores which would not fit the calibre of ammunition for which they were designed. The Polish minister of security complains publicly about conditions at the Gdansk shipyard where some scoundrel bored holes in the frame of a ship to make it collapse on launching.

A Bulgarian railroad official bewails his lot:

"The enemy has resorted to all kinds of methods to cause train delays, disorganize traffic and increase car stoppages. The enemy secretly writes slogans on the walls of cars, pointing out and exaggerating the difficulties connected with our socialist development. . . ."

Morale Low

In a society where out of sheer economic necessity, virtually everyone must have a racket of some kind, public morale and public morality are at a low ebb. In the past months, party leaders throughout the satellite states have issued a flood of complaints about the growth of juvenile delinquency and the "bourgeois" attitude of young people in adopting Western customs. There is suspicion of a resentment to communism in such hooligan activity as wearing American-style neckties, chewing gum, jitterbugging and listening to American jazz. Prostitution, once considered as the prime manifestation of bourgeois decadence, is flourishing as never before.

Nothing that the Communist leaders can do—no resounding plan or shuffling of slogans—is likely to relieve the drabness and boredom and despair of life as it exists behind the curtain. The record of frustration and failure that has been written so far can provide little comfort to the Communist leaders as they look to the future. In the struggle for Europe, the West may not have all the answers. But there is reassuring evidence that in their new-won provinces the Russians are up against some serious troubles of their own.

Russia's Seven Vassal Nations Possess Armies That Make NATO Look Puny

BY CROSBY S. NOYES
European Correspondent of The Star

VIENNA — Measured against the mass of information on satellite military forces available here, there is something grimly humorous about Mr. Molotov's threat to set up a sort of Eastern NATO in retaliation against German rearmament.

It is hard to understand what the Soviet Foreign Minister is talking about in calling on his allies to take "common measures in the field of organizing their military forces and their commands." On the basis of proved fact it was possible to write authoritatively of the satellites a year ago that:

"Never in the history of the world has there been a military bloc more carefully directed, more closely disciplined, provided with better standardized arms and equipment, or trained with more uniform tactical and operational rules."

Here, in brief summary, are some of the details of the military force that Russia has been patiently building in the six vassal states along her western borders. In comparison with the strength of NATO, these latest reports provide sobering food for thought.

Treaties Join Satellites.

To begin with, the military coalition has long existed on the diplomatic level through a series of interlocking treaties of "friendship and mutual assistance" joining the Soviet Union to the satellite states. Most of these treaties run for 20 years, renewable indefinitely. As originally written, the military clauses of these treaties called for immediate action in case of aggression by Germany or any other power allied with her—a formula vague enough to permit very broad interpretation. More recently, however, these terms have been further broadened. For instance, the agreement between Russia and Romania provides for joint action to "remove any threat of aggression." The most recent treaties do not name Germany specifically, referring only to aggression by "any third state."

On this political platform, the command structure of the Eastern military force has been raised. According to recent intelligence reports it divides itself into three separate parts:

1. A Western Defense Group, comprising Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, possessing its own joint general staff and political operations (i.e. Communist Party control) mechanism.
2. A Southern Defense Group, consisting of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, with a similar command setup.
3. A Baltic Sea Command, including naval units of the East German Republic, Polish and Russian units, under the supreme command of the Soviet admiralty staff.

Albania Not Included

(Albania—the seventh satellite state—is not considered as part of the southern group. Its army of 50,000, grouped into six divisions, is believed to be relatively lightly armed.)

In terms of fighting strength, the first of these groups, the so-called Western Defense Group with its military headquarters in Warsaw, is believed to be by far the most important. Its mission, in contrast to the southern group, is believed to be mainly offensive. It receives a major share of military equipment provided to the satellites by Russia. Although there is no evidence so far that the satellite forces are in possession of tactical atomic weapons, a move to equip them in the near future is believed possible.

The northern group is under the command of Marshal Kon-



MARSHAL ROKOSSOVSKY

His mission is mainly offensive

stantin Rokossovsky, who, in addition to being Polish Minister of Defense and Deputy Premier, also happens to be a Russian citizen. Under the supreme commander, both the Poles and Czechs retain their own general staff. The Germans, at least so far, have none.

In terms of power, the northern group consists of about 1 million men, organized into some 37 divisions, of which the majority are motorized and at least seven are armored. The East German force, consisting of about

150,000 heavily armed "People's Police," is not yet organized on a divisional basis.

605,000-Man Force

The southern group, with headquarters in the Romanian capital of Bucharest, is thought to be principally a defensive force. It consists of about 605,000 men, grouped into another 37 divisions, of which eight are motorized and six are armored. In connection with Soviet complaints about treaty violations by the West, it is interesting to note how the rule has been observed in these former Axis states. At this point, Hungary and Bulgaria have about four times as many men under arms as permitted by treaty, while Romania has more than six times the number allowed.

These ground units are supported throughout the satellites by tactical air forces, featuring the Russian MIG-15 jet fighter as standard equipment. Although most of these planes are imported, it is known that jet aircraft factories have recently gone into operation in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In all categories, the fighting power of the satellite armies is admitted to have been greatly increased during recent months by mechanization and modernization. Making all allowances for the uncertain factor of morale, it is believed that their 80 divisions would give a