

1958

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R. AGITPROP CHIEF CALLS "REVISIONISM" A "FIFTH COLUMN"

Breve Background

BUDAPEST, February 20 (REASON)... The chief of the Hungarian Communist Party's Central Committee Agitprop Department, Istvan SZIRNAI, wrote in yesterday's *Nepszabadsag* that the current aim of the "Imperialists'" "Fifth Column" of "revisionists" in Hungary is to slow the development of socialism and stop progress. The purpose of this "Fifth Column" in 1958 was to defeat socialism and to restore capitalism in Hungary, SZIRNAI said.

SZIRNAI became chief of the Agitprop Department of the Central Committee in October 1957; his rapid rise in the Communist Party hierarchy is probably indicative of the Party-Government regime's need for faithful supporters. In December 1956, at the time of the final armed defeat of the Revolution, SZIRNAI organized the government's Office for Information for the newly-installed KADAR regime. A few months later, in June 1957, he was named a member of the Central Committee. His promotion to head Agitprop also reflects what seems to be the present trend to reinforce the Party itself by men who served in the government during the crucial period (for the Party) of 1957. (KADAR and his political friend KALINAI, who had both served in the government through 1957, returned to full-time Party duties after the meeting of the Hungarian parliament last month).

SZIRNAI's article in *Nepszabadsag* was interesting for the same reasons that the one by the Party's chief of cadres, Karoly KISS, in the February 9 issue of *Nepszabadsag* was interesting. Both appear to attempt to achieve a middle policy between the dangers of "revisionism" and "sectarianism"; but whereas KISS criticized the "sectarianism" most severely, SZIRNAI attacked "revisionism"; this, in itself, represents a balance of sorts by the two men who probably are most influential in Party thinking at a rank-and-file level. KADAR, who now -- according to formulations expressed at the last parliamentary session -- will concentrate specifically on Party duties, presumably sits at the apex, combining both ideological notions;

1.2. against the "left" and the "right".

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SIEMIAL's use of the term "Fifth Column" to describe "revisionists" is a mere polemical device. With all the World War II connotations, the term "Fifth Column" perhaps signifies how serious a problem "revisionism" has come to be to the Communists, not only in BUDAPEST but in MOSCOW. Two recent radio commentaries by Radio MOSCOW, in Serbo-Croatian, have identified the Polish philosopher Leszek KOLA-KOWSKI with the Yugoslav "revisionist", Milovan DJILAS, who is now in jail. Other commentaries have linked these two with the man who probably can be considered the extreme "revisionist", Iure NAGI. [But KOLAKOWSKI's philosophical and moral argumentation against the Communist "system" and "ideology" will assuredly prove in the long-run to have been the most dangerous of all.]

To the two categories of "sectarians" and "revisionists" -- whose deviations or crimes remain roughly the same as those outlined by Karel KISS, SIEMIAL now adds a category of "opportunist" who do not demand a rendering of accounts of the "counter-revolution" and do not "oppose the nationalists and anti-Semites for [fear] of diminishing the mass base of the Party". This "opportunist" view also holds that the Party has become sufficiently strong since it has outstripped the "majority of workers".

Opposing this view SIEMIAL stipulates, however, that the circle of allies of the working class can never be enlarged at the cost of "compromise".

He seems to say that this is so because the "international reaction" still holds an important "political base" in Hungary. Its influence is "much larger" than the numerical force it represents. It is no accident that among the supporters of Iure NAGI there were a number of "petit bourgeois". "Capitalism" is not represented only by its supporters in Hungary but also by an "economic base" which is still important. (Efforts to diminish this "economic base" are currently increasing. BUDAPEST Radio announced on February 18 a new law which forbids Hungarian workers from transferring from State to private industry and which decrees that private craftsmen will not in the future be given licenses unless there is sufficient raw material to support them. In addition, new tax laws have been announced which discriminate against private businessmen and craftsmen.)

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KISSAI declared that October 1956 proved that the "enemy" is still capable of an armed attack "in certain favorable conditions -- for him"; such conditions would be when "the directors are cut off from the masses or when the Party is eaten away by treason or when the unity of the Party is disturbed".

In these conditions, said the Agitprop chief, it is "not only unjust but directly dangerous" to speak of peace among opposing forces.

The above could seem to be a very telling attack on KISSAI's "opportunist" faction.

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KISSAI said the "enemy" (obviously the "revisionist" enemy) has adopted a tactic whereby at every regime advance toward "socialism", it cries out that this is a "return to the old methods, of the sectarian policy of KISSOTI, of compulsory deliveries and of a forced socialization of the countryside".

In a very significant statement, KISSAI says: "We must prove that even without compulsory deliveries, without violence and without sectarian methods we can (nevertheless) progress." This is another regime statement that it will not return to the "old methods" to rebuild the "socialized structure" of the countryside.

KISSAI said that "revisionism" amounts to treachery to the workers' regime and national independence and that it "prepares war".

Repeating KISS almost word-for-word, he spoke of the "untenable character" of "Stalin's thesis which affirmed that the class struggle is automatically sharpened during the construction of socialism". But at the same time, KISSAI, according to KFI, "advised the error of those who speak of a necessary relaxation of this struggle": the latter would "revive in another form an armed conflict in Hungary".

Thus, though KISSAI says that Stalin's thesis that the class struggle automatically sharpens is wrong, he leaves little doubt that the regime, to prevent "armed conflict" in Hungary, has decided that the present "sharpness" must be maintained in Hungary, at least for the present period. His logic here is that although the "enemy" has been rebuffed, "its resistance can again eventually be intensified".

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SHEINAI concluded his article by recalling the 13-Party Declaration signed in MOSCOW last November, in which it was stated that the common traits of all countries building socialism must be observed but that "true national peculiarities" must be taken into account. Exactly what SHEINAI means to imply by "true" in this phrase is not elaborated upon. He adds that attempts to liquidate the "leading role of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat" do not represent a "national trait", but "counter-revolution".

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In its divergences from the KISS article in 'Sopentobudung', SHEINAI's is a very strong statement of the dangers of "revisionism", particularly as it comes from a man whose duty it is to lay down the Party line for Party functionaries at every level.

But all the same, in his avowal that the Party will not resort to coercion in its agricultural policy -- which question has come to be a sort of touchstone in judging development in East Europe -- the speech does adhere quite faithfully to KISS' relatively "centrist" position. It can probably be said that SHEINAI, allowing for his "tough" asides, also has decided it politic to support KADAR's line, which is generally assumed to fall somewhere between the "sectarianism" of a NEVAI (HAROSKI's editorial chief) and the "opportunism" which SHEINAI criticized. Thus, it would appear that SHEINAI would prefer that "revisionism", as an ideological arguing point, be expurgated from Hungarian political vocabulary and that "opportunism" -- meaning willingness to make peace with the past and rebuild the Party on that basis -- be accepted as the opposite of "sectarianism".

End.