Hungary

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Background Information USSR

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23 June 1958

MALENKOV AND IMRE NAGY

The relationship between G. M. Malenkov, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers from March 1953 until February 1955, and Imre Nagy, Chairman of the Hungarian Council of Ministers from June 1953 to April 1955, cannot be determined from any Soviet or Hungarian sources. The evidence of their association is, at best, only circumstantial.

Not only do the periods of their incumbency as governmental heads coincide chronologically, but the policies of the "new course" in both countries--correction of the previous disproportion between the rates of development of heavy and light industry and concessions in agriculture--are popularly associated with their persons. In the case of Nagy, the shifts effected were extremely far reaching in scope, particularly the dissolution of the cooperative; Malenkov's objectives and implementation had more limited aims. Nevertheless both were subsequently accused of errors of "rightist deviation", Nagy directly, and Malenkov indirectly in the Shepilov article (Pravda, 25 January 1955) and by Khrushchev in his speech at the plenum which preceded the announcement of the removal of Malenkov (see Background Information, 28 February 1955). As the result of the Hungarian October Nagy's ideological errors regarding the peasantry have been retroactively labelled the "roots of his treason" (See Background Information 1 February 1958); Malenkov, on the other hand, has merely been deprived of the credit for the 1953 tax concession to the peasantry and, in addition, has been censured, on unspecified charges, for "incorrect guidance of agriculture" and, more specifically, for disregard of "material incentives" in the post war period when the present First Secretary was the Kremlin's spokesman on agriculture. To justify the inclusion of Malenkov in the anti-party group along with Molotov and Kaganovich, Khrushchev has also been compelled to reverse the original charges against his more youthful opponent and blame him, not for favoring light industry, but for opposing the program of simultaneously overtaking the U.S. in per capital output in agriculture and heavy industry--"rightist opportunism" in the eyes of the anti-Party dogmatists (A. Rumyantsev, Kommunist, #10, 1957).

This amorphous amalgam of economic errors has now hardened into a more readily identifiable political compound through the gradual addition of the grave accusations of Malenkov's coresponsibility in Stalin's and Beria's political crimes and cultural terror. (Khrushchev's speeches on literature, Pravda, 28 August 1957; C. C. Resolution annulling the decrees on the operas--1949-51, Pravda, 8 June 1958).

To the circumstantial connection between Malenkov and Nagy and to the officially documented charges can be added the information provided by the former functionary of the Polish Central Committee, S. Bialer,[1] who

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[1] For the accuracy of Bialer's information on the July 1955 plenum see Background Information: 18 June 1958.