

1960

SPY EVALUATION AND  
ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT

Steve Backstrom

CONFIDENTIAL - NEW YORK (A) HUNGARIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE  
F-220

HUNGARIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE NEW AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW

MUNICH, May 18. (Hungarian Unit). The Presidential Council has dismissed the Hungarian Ambassador in Moscow, Janos Boldoczky, and appointed Defense Minister Gasa Kovacs as his successor, according to Radio Budapest of May 17 (see CS 154 of May 17). Major Grigoga became the new Minister of Defense. Radio Budapest gave no information on a new job for Boldoczky. As, however, he was also relieved of his rank as ambassador, it may be that his diplomatic career has ended. He had been ambassador in Moscow from August 1958. Prior to that appointment, he had been Minister of Foreign Affairs from July 1953 until July 1956. Official silence over the new employment of Boldoczky, as well as the fact that the dismissal was not accompanied with the customary acknowledgment of good work, would suggest that he lost his job because the Hungarian regime was not satisfied with his activity, for what reasons is of course not known. All through his career Boldoczky has been a rather colorless personality, although he was elected a full member of the central committee in May 1954. On 1 November 1956 the revolutionary committee of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested his immediate dismissal to the cabinet.

General Gasa Kovacs, the new ambassador to Moscow, has been relieved of his position as Minister of Defense (from 30 February 1957) with "acknowledgment" for his good work. He is no doubt one of the most important and interesting personalities of the regime. It might be added that he is also one of the most sinister and passing characters of Hungarian Communism.

According to the official biography ("Nepesztarsag" of 1 March 1957) Gasa Kovacs was born at Sateral, Hajholy in 1908. His father was an artisan. In 1918 Kovacs joined the movement of young workers as an apprentice metalworker. He joined the Communist Party in 1918. As a member of the Third International Regiment he fought in the Hungarian Red Army during Bela Kun's dictatorship in 1919. After the collapse of that dictatorship, he was active in the underground of young Communist workers. Arrested in 1922, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison. In 1925 he was sent to the Soviet Union within the framework of an exchange of Hungarian prisoners of war detained in Soviet Russia against Communist personalities detained in Hungary.

He graduated from the Moscow Technical University and subsequently he worked in various Russian factories. During World War II he participated in the "liberation" of Hungary. As a representative of the Hungarian Communist Party he cooperated in the organization of the partisan movement. From Hungary's "liberation"

4/100

CURT - @ NEW @ AMMANUATOR TO

HAZARD  
F-221

WEST BACKGROUND, May 18, page 2

In 1945 until the end of 1947 he headed the military and police section of the Central Committee. In 1948 he was Hungarian Minister to Warsaw. After a year's stay in the Polish capital he was called back to Hungary and made a two-star general. From the end of 1954 until February 1957, he was one of the deputy presidents of the National Planning Office. He entered the Central Committee of the Party as a full member in February 1957, and was confirmed in that position at the June 1957 Party conference and at the December 1959, (seventh) congress of the Party. In March 1959, he was promoted to the rank of three-star general. In November 1958, he became a member of the Hungarian Parliament.

This official biography, however, has to be completed with a few more details. According to EPE reports, Genn Beveas married a Soviet girl. Opinion is divided whether she was a fellow student at the University named Claudia, or a member of the Moscow "high society" as rumor had it, one of Isaac Kaganovich's daughters. Genn Beveas did his best to get acclimatized in the Soviet Union. In the early thirties he was called up for military service and became a captain of the Engineering Corps. He fought in the Red Army and in 1944 he advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His first job in Hungary was that of interpreter for Marshal Voroshilov, the chairman of the allied control commission.

Soon after he was transferred to the Party Central Committee's military police section, becoming its chief. In 1948-49 he was chairman of the Ministry of Defense special committee which screened the officers of the Red Army. After the one year (1948) intermission, he became chief of the military-political (counter-intelligence) section of the Ministry of Defense. He succeeded General Mihaly-Osterweicher who was implicated in the Rajk case and executed in autumn 1949. Genn Beveas, already a two-star general, conducted the purge of the Red Army officers with exemplary ruthlessness. It has been indicated that as chief of the military espionage and counter-espionage he became a rival of Gabor Peter, the omnipotent chief of the secret police AVH. In January 1953, the hour of Gabor Peter's downfall struck. General Beveas, who has been collecting evidence against Peter and his men for years revealed that the huge sums of money earned by the Hungarian secret police by granting passports to prospective emigrants were not sent on to the officers of the Party and the secret police, but to a considerable extent wandered into the pockets of Peter and his accomplices, among others Minister of Justice Gyula Beodi, who earned a bad notoriety as the investigator of Cardinal Mindszenty.

As chief of the military-political section Genn Beveas built himself a very influential and much feared position. He has earned the reputation of a cold, calculating and ruthless man, devoid of personal vanity and passions, a very hard worker and extremely efficient organizer. While Rajk and his main associates, in the enjoyment of power, were basking in the limelight of the so-called "cult of personality", Beveas remained in the background as a highly secretive figure, a genuine "spy evidence" in a position to collect material even against the holders of the highest offices.

4/30 1957 - (2) - NEW ORLEANS

NEWS BACKGROUND, May 16, page 3

TO HONOR

Nothing is known about the reasons for which Kovacs' job as chief of the Defense Ministry's military-political section came to an end. It is known that the Hungarian police was reorganized in 1957 after Erno Gero became Minister of Interior, at that time the secret police (ATH) became a section of the Ministry of Interior. It can be conjectured that the activities of the Defense Ministry's military-political section in the field of espionage and counter-espionage were concentrated in the Ministry of Interior. It is also unknown why Kovacs, who spent his life in military careers, was sent to the National Planning Office as one of the vice-presidents.

F-222

It is, however, not surprising that as soon as Ferenc Huszák could give up the Ministry of Armed Forces in February 1957 (to become First Deputy Premier) the Ministry of Defense was given to Kovacs (while Bela Bicska became Minister of Interior). Kovacs' good Soviet contacts, as well as his organizational skill, stood him good stead in the task of setting up the Hungarian armed forces, which collapsed during the October-November 1956 revolution. An expert at purges, Gero Kovacs presided over the selection of the new officer corps. Regular military training was resumed in May 1957. At the June 1957 Party conference Kovacs announced that the reorganization of the armed forces had been completed.

As to the question whether his new assignment in Moscow as Hungarian ambassador is a demotion or promotion, biographical details point to the second alternative. At any rate the change cannot be considered as a routine move only. It might be assumed that the Kadar regime thought it necessary to be represented in Moscow by a much more influential personality than Seidensky was.

The new Hungarian Defense Minister Lajos Csizsagi is only 36 years old. He entered the Communist Party in 1945. From 1951 to 1954 he served in the Hungarian Army attaining the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel. At that time he also attended the military-political academy which trained the political officers of the armed forces. From 1954 until the 1956 October revolution he was chief of the Central Committee's administrative section. In 1957 he returned to his native county, Eszék, as the first secretary of the county Party committee. He was elected to the Hungarian Parliament in November 1958 and became the chairman of the Parliament's permanent defense committee.

At the December 1956 Party congress he was elected a full member (for the first time) to the Central Committee. According to his official biography published by Radio Budapest he participated in the fighting against the "counter-revolution" in October 1956. For his exploits he received the 3rd Banner order in November 1957. On his appointment as Minister of Defense he was promoted to a two-star general.

Lajos Csizsagi is a representative of the younger upcoming generation of Party leaders. It is recalled that Bela Bicska, another person who rose quickly to prominence after the 1956 October revolution, was only 36 years old when he became Minister of the Interior in February 1957.

End (P. 10) 205