

'The situation in Hungary' from the Luxemburger Wort (6 June 1947)

Caption: On 6 June 1947, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort considers the events in Hungary which have led to the ousting of the democratically elected government headed by Imre Nagy by the communist government of Matyas Rakosi.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 06.06.1947, n° 157; 100e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Zur Lage in Ungarn", auteur:Guinn, Jack , p. 1.

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The situation in Hungary

(by AP correspondent Jack Guinn)

As indicated on Monday by an authoritative American source, the governments of the two Western powers will, in the next two days, once again officially present the Russian authorities in Budapest with their demand for a tripartite investigation into the latest political developments in Hungary. In so doing, it is quite possible that the two Western powers will ask the UN to deal with the events in Hungary, and that the request for copies of the documents allegedly incriminating the former Prime Minister, Ferenc Nagy, is to be seen as a prelude to a UN investigation.

The US Administration's note of 17 March protesting against the arrest of the General Secretary of the Independent Smallholders' Party, Bela Kovacs, struck the sharpest note so far. It speaks of a threat to democracy from an attempt to grab power in Hungary.

Bela Kovacs was, it will be recalled, arrested by the Russian military on 25 February and committed to a Russian military prison on a charge of espionage. Before Ferenc Nagy left for a holiday in Switzerland on 14 May, the Russians announced that they would charge Kovacs with espionage and then hand him over to the Hungarian Government.

In the meantime, however, it became known that Kovacs had made a statement while in Russian custody and Nagy formally requested General Sviridov to make the statement available to him. The General promised to send the document and Nagy set off for Switzerland. Subsequently the document was delivered in Nagy's absence to the acting Prime Minister, Matyas Rakosi, currently leader of the Communist Party, a Russian citizen and a general in the Russian Army. The Hungarian press was immediately full of suggestions that Kovacs in his statement had incriminated Prime Minister Nagy, the President of the National Assembly, Bela Varga, the Foreign Minister, Janos Gyongyosi, as well as many Hungarian bankers, business people and prominent anti-communist political leaders in the country.

As a result, Nagy was advised by his friends to stay abroad or risk arrest if he were to return, and he resigned. Varga fled on 1 June. Janos Gyongyosi was ousted from the Foreign Ministry by the new pro-communist government.

The Catholic priest Istvan Baloch, who was a permanent secretary under Nagy and General Secretary of the Independent Smallholders' Party, resigned from both offices and has been taken ill. His friends say the communists have threatened him with arrest. It seems likely that Cardinal Mindszenty's meeting on Wednesday with the acting Foreign Minister, Erno Mihalyfi, had to do with Baloch.

The communists are now in power in Hungary, and Matyas Rakosi, who has already been sentenced to imprisonment for attempting to set up a communist government in Hungary, in practical terms now exercises the powers of a dictator.

The Independent Smallholders' Party, which emerged from the last elections with a majority of 57 %, has more or less broken up. Its leaders have fled. Its most prominent member still in Hungary is the Hungarian President, Zoltan Tildy, a former Protestant clergyman. Abroad, however, there are already reports that the leader of the National Peasant Party, Peter Veres, who owes total allegiance to Rakosi, will within three months be the new President of Hungary.

Meanwhile, communists and social democrats, who had been partners in the political struggle since before the November 1945 elections, have started to attack each other. Rakosi said in a speech to factory workers on Wednesday that there is a group of people in the Social Democratic Party who are working to split the proletariat. By this he meant that some socialists might not be happy to dance to the communists' tune. In the last few days, there have been violent incidents between communist and social democratic workers, because the social democrats had refused to take part in meetings called by the communists. The possibility of a split between the majority of members of the Social Democratic Party on the one hand and the party

leadership and also the Communist Party on the other already exists, and Rakosi is now struggling to maintain political unity with the probable objective of drawing up a combined list for the forthcoming elections.