

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This is the complete text of what the author calls a "dissertation," written during Imre Nagy's forced retirement in 1955 and 1956 after he had been ousted from his position as Premier and expelled from the Central Committee. It was directly addressed to his former colleagues on the Central Committee and indirectly to Hungary's Russian overlords. A copy of the original mimeographed document was smuggled out of Hungary in the spring of 1957. It is unquestionably authentic. In July, 1957, it was also printed clandestinely in Hungary by Nagy's friends and distributed throughout the country.

The book is a statement of principles, policies, and plans—set forth by one Communist for consumption by other Communists—that is meant to justify Nagy's "New Course" program and to establish the need for liberalization within the framework of Communism. What is most significant, as revealed in this book and in the events in Hungary which followed its writing, is that the power-mad oligarchy of Communist rulers denied the Hungarian people the measure of freedom Nagy sought to give them, and that Nagy, the idealist, his faith unshaken, writing as a devoted Communist calling upon the words of Marx, Lenin, and even Stalin, to support his tenets and programs, clinging to Communist theory as the only salvation of mankind, was himself repudiated and crushed, denounced as a heretic by his associates who, as practical and genuine Communists,

obeyed only their own motivation of ruthless application of power.

Imre Nagy is best remembered in the West as the Premier-of-a-week in revolution-torn Hungary last October; the last hope of a Hungarian Communist Party desperately seeking to placate the rising tide of the people's demand for freedom. At that moment in history he emerged as a symbol of liberalism within the Communist movement. The precedent for this had been established earlier, during Nagy's less well known Premiership, when, from July, 1953, to March, 1955, he had introduced a new set of liberalizing policies which became known as the "New Course."

The tragic irony of the book and of Nagy's position is that his program, though couched in Communist terminology, buttressed with the Communist scriptures, and proposed as the only "correct" application of theory as opposed to Rákosi's "deviations," is in direct opposition to all the realities of Communism, and Nagy cannot see this. More clearly than any document or statement that has come out of the Communist world, Nagy's argument reveals the insoluble contradictions besetting Communist dogma and practice.

Nagy's book is a crushing indictment of the policies of a satellite government imitating and sometimes even refining the total slavery practiced in the USSR. Unfortunately, Nagy's picture of Hungary under Rákosi is also the picture of Hungary under Kadar, whose government and its political police is replete with the same power-drunk bureaucrats and callous murderers who previously served Rákosi. It has reverted very quickly to the methods and fabrications of the Rákosi period.

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