**Hungary and Europe – B Török**

**Extract -The Russian Occupation**

The Russian-installed regime was however only the willing tool of the sponsor to achieve the bolshevization of the country. In their defence, one can only admit that the strong political will of Russia was no match for the new leaders. Anyhow, only the so-called "not exposed" politicians and administrators could take up positions which meant the rule of a sub-standard third-grade group. The leaders of the nation were jailed or in exile. Anybody who had an independent mind and moral com­mitments turned his back on public life.

This situation was as a result of the terror regime conducted by the occupation forces and supported by the agents of the Bolsheviks camouflaged under a flag of war against the "war-criminals."

The spirit of Nurnberg was short-lived in the Western World. The critics of the judicial revenge pointed out that the principle of "nullum crimen sine lege".( one cannot be punished for doing something that is not prohibited by law) cannot be dismantled without a destruction of the Western-Christian civilization. Consequently, the judicial processes were only instituted to judge over the criminals who committed unlawful atrocities during the war. In Hungary however, everybody was a "war criminal" who was not ready to serve the Marxist cause and had a potential for political leadership.

If the regime would have been ready to call elections based on a universal suffrage, this would have proved its sincerity. However, the electoral laws allowed only the left wing and left of centre parties to participate in the elections. The country, in this election, proved her political maturity and unity against the parties serving the occupation forces when the party of the small landholders achieved an absolute majority in the Assembly.

Notwithstanding, the military Government and the Communist Party who were the agents of their Russian masters enforced the formation of a coalition government of -the main parties and, in this coalition, the Communist Party was the de facto ruler, notwithstanding that the Bolsheviks received only a small fraction of the votes.

Consequently, the Government only served Russian imperialist aims. National aspirations, the idea of defence of the territorial and political integrity of the country were not represented by this regime.

The Russians themselves called the Second World War the Great Patriotic War and Stalin in his own hour of defeat appealed to the national sentiments of the citizens against the German imperialists. He posed as the heir of Peter the Great and the Tzars and moved the powers of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Black Sea, the Dardanelles and the Balkan Peninsula. If the agents of the Hungarian Communist Party would have had some connection with the Hungarian national aspirations, the defence of the territories of the country should have been their aim. In 1919 the Hungarian Communists had acted in this manner. In 1945 however the leaders of the new regime, most of them Russian citizens and non-Magyars, abandoned all claims of the country regarding the territories lost after the Great War. They did not raise the Transylvanian question either, however the Soviet Union knew well that the Hungarian action against Rumania was carried out in diplomatic under­standing with the U.S.S.R. Rumania was, on the other hand, not a trusted ally to be rewarded for services, as she was a fully mobilized enemy of the Soviet Union during the war and during the German advance into Russia, Rumania annexed old Russian territory, to further her imperialist aims.

The constitution of the Soviet Union was based on the federation of autonomous soviet republics, representing the various nationalities of the Empire. Moscow was constantly stressing that nationalistic oppression of the minorities was a consequence of class differences and was proud of the liberal treatment of their nationalities. 19 The communist agents of Moscow in Hungary however witnessed coldly the cavalry of the Magyars in Transylvania, the mass murder of Hungarians by the Tito Communists and the cold inhuman deportations of the Magyar population in Czechoslovakia. The centre of their policy was the negation of the national past and the surrender of the future of the nation.

Nationalistic-revenge had its field-day in Europe, but a voice in the interest of the oppressed Magyars was regarded as fascist. The new Paris peace negotiations were orders of the victors. Nobody was counsel of Hungary and the members of the Communist delegation dutifully voiced their "mea culpas". The new rulers were clearly the slaves of the Russian-Communist masters.

This regime co-operated fully with the barbaric practice of the U.S.S.R. which moved thousands of civilians for public works into the Soviet Union under most inhuman conditions.

There were no "Geneva agreements" valid for the former prisoners-of-war, who were often transported to Russia after they received their discharge documents from western military authorities.

A radical agrarian reform would have been another measure which would have given the new regime some credentials. The distribution of the big land estates and an effort to build economic-sized peasants' holdings were aims in which left or right-wing radicals could have been united. The "democrats of Yalta" however did not want the strengthening of the peasants' lot. The Communist aim was to introduce the Russian Kolkhoz, the tool for the destruction of the peasants, the firm bastions of a free enterprise system.

The introduced agrarian reform was based on uneconomical small holdings and the new units were unable to produce sufficiently for their new owners. Consequently the regime enforced co-operatives of small landholders who now became the agricultural workers of the new units. The strict rules of the management of those co-operatives ensured a low produc­tivity which is a common feature with the Communist regime in Russia. This system only survived for decades with the help of capitalist deliveries of wheat and other agricultural products.

The regime artificially raised inflation. The aim was to force the population to sell their remaining valuables and so achieve the general poverty, which is the basis of the Soviet man, the type of slave who bends his head for a piece of bread.

The forceful industrialization of the country was also a sheer imitation of Russian policies. Hungary was certainly 30-50 years behind the West European industrial developments as a bitter legacy of Turkish and German occupations. But to build industries which due to lack of raw materials were fragile and to direct the trade of the country exclusively to the Soviet Union was not even serving Russian economic interests. Perhaps it was the wish of the Russian military to create heavy industry in Communist Hungary which would be a springboard for a future attack against Austria and the Balkan Peninsula.

The suffering population then turned to God. Humiliated, looted and raped, the people withdrew into the churches. The image of the crucified Christ became symbolic for the nation and the Priests and Pastors received their complaints.

Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, became the representative of the oppressed national feelings. Around him gathered the people, notwithstanding denominational differ­ences, who still believed in nation, faith and family. For a short while there was a hope that the Church would be the rock which would at least control the flood from the East. Pope Pius XII raised his voice against the new barbarism, but the response of the West was unsatisfactory.

On the other hand, the U.S.S.R. saw her chances to complete her military and political aims. The Russians were the behind-the-scenes instigators of the civil war in Greece. At one stage, it was hoped by the Soviets that the attitude of the French and Italian Communists would create a situation to achieve a domina­tion of Western Europe. The solution of the German question, to serve Russian interests, was pressed vigorously. The status of the Dardanelles was questioned. The spectre of a Communist hegemony over Europe cast a shadow over the destroyed continent.

In Eastern Europe the U.S.S.R. discarded the mask of democracy and gave orders to proclaim the dictatorship of the proletariat in the satellite countries.

**The Dictatorship of Moscow**

After the terror of the Yalta democracy, camouflaged as the punishment of an aggressor country for the participation of its citizens in the war (this in itself being branded as a war-crime), the Politburo ordered the scrapping of the democratic facade and the Asiatic-Slav Bolshevism openly took over the political scene. The executive power of the country in the shadow of the Russian arms was concentrated in the group which was called by the oppressed as the "Muscovites." This group was a distinct section of the Communist Party of Hungary whose past association with the land was rather superficial.

At the end of the Great War, when Russia was in revolu­tionary fever, some of the first and second generation Russian-Jewish immigrants felt great sympathy for the Bolsheviks who also promised the liberation of their people from the yoke of the pogroms-ridden Tzarist regime. As a result, the overwhelm­ing majority of the people's commissars in Bela Kun's Communist regime were those superficially assimilated migrant elements. This communist regime lasted only for a few months and most of the involved fled to Moscow. Under the Communist rule they lived there for two decades, became Soviet citizens and the gap between them and their chosen land in immigration (Hungary) widened considerably……

The Christian future has its framework based on the family unit and the religious education of the children. Therefore, the most vehement attacks were directed against Christian morals and religious education. In these fields the Hungarian Catholic Church had the greatest of material and spiritual backgrounds and the attack of the Bolsheviks centered against the Head of the Church, Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, the Primate of Hungary. The First Baron of historical Hungary, based on his rights expressed in the Hungarian constitution, took up the challenge. He remembered his predecessors who died on the battlefields or suffered imprisonments if required in defense of the high principles of the Faith and declared himself ready to taste martyrdom.

The agents of Moscow however were willing to interfere with the most sacred Hungarian traditions and organised a "show-trial" against the Cardinal in order to remove him from the political scene. The "free-world" was a stunned spectator of this disgraceful process, and the captive Cardinal was physically and mentally tortured.

Some of the matters raised against the Cardinal were primitive. The alleged currency offences were clearly fabricated ones. The treasonable count was better prepared. At least on this count he was prosecuted for alleged acts which were really in the interest of the country only if the alleged plans were successful. The restoration of Habsburg and a federation of free Danubian States under the rule of the dynasty were of course aims which were pursued by the Church between the wars and so could be alleged against the Cardinal. The Magyars, on the other hand, still had dark memories of the Habsburg rule and this was an attempt to discredit the Church and the Cardinal and in fact was a cover-up move so that their underlying aim of the destruc­tion of Christian Hungary would not be exposed.

The attacks also emphasized an alleged aim of the Cardinal to re-establish the Church's large land ownership lost by the Communist land reforms. The Cardinal and the Church raised their voices against the general practice of "nationalization" of all kinds of properties. But the Cardinal himself was a represen­tative of the Christian-Socialist movement and a professed disciple of the late Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, who represented the policy of a socialist renewal of the Church in Hungary. Accordingly, his person was in fact an assurance that the Church would never have opposed a sincere social reform.

The agents of Moscow however wanted to remove from the political scene the last leading man of the nation who boldly opposed the Communist-Slav rule. They wanted to destroy national Hungary's last constitutional representative, whose presence in Esztergom as Prince of Hungary was a constant reminder of the past.

The show-trial ended. The primate was imprisoned, the Church schools were nationalized, the teaching orders dispersed and the Church life was forced underground. Religious teaching was nearly an impossibility. Secret marriage ceremonies and masses conducted in private homes were the order of the day.

The regime, using the pretext of overcrowding in the Capital and in the bigger cities, began the forced deportation of sections of the population. The last untouched members of the national leadership, mostly old and helpless people and their families, had to leave their homes very often without advanced warning or on short notice. The method of their forced journeys was cruel and they had to re-establish their lives under most degrading and crowded circumstances.

Tertiary education was allowed for those whose parents and grandparents were not associated with the middle class. The aim of this was to ensure the rule of the foreigners in the country.

The destruction of the peasants continued as prescribed by Moscow as the new rulers imitated the processes that resulted in the Russian peasants' tragedy. The co-operative agricultural units were forcefully mechanized and a great proportion of the peasant workers were not needed. So the unemployed peasants were driven into the cities and swelled the proletariat masses of the suburbs.

The new regime and the occupied country were called a republic and a "people's democracy," but this state had no elements of national sovereignty. The country was under military occupation by the Soviet Union and her right to organise her own internal administration was denied to the conquered. The Russian agents introduced a copy of the state-organs of the Soviet Union. A constitution was proclaimed which had no connection with the Hungarian past and its statutes were only Russian orders framed in the Hungarian language.

During the Second World War there was general fear in the country that Hungary would suffer the fate of the Baltic States and would be incorporated in the Soviet Union as a further Soviet Republic. The Russians did not go so far. Evidently, in order to preserve the outside appearance of the independence of the subjugated country, in a truly neo-colonial fashion, the framework of a state was allowed to exist. Hungary was represented by diplomacy, claiming independence, and a Hungarian army and police force were also created. Notwithstanding, the controlling power of the Communist Party and the occupation forces ensured a Communist rule. Political life was also con­trolled by economic means. The external trade flowed mostly in the Russian direction. The country would "buy dear" and 'sell cheap" to the "Great Ally." Only the necessity to acquire hard-currencies opened windows of contract with the West.

Under the bloody terror of this regime a new spirit of national resistance was born. The old differences of classes faded away and the country stubbornly resisted the conquerors. The resistance could not be an open one, but the old weapon of the Hungarian past of passive resistance against the aggressor was available. The gross national product steadily declined. The general attitude of the population was basically negative and this was evidenced by a low birth rate and an increasing number of suicides.

In the meantime, the Cold War was in full swing and Moscow had to realize that she could not force further Western with­drawals without an all-out war. Russia anyhow was still desperately short of raw materials. Her war-devastated economy was only gradually improving. In Hungary she had witnessed that the foreign leadership of the country only aggravated the problems of the occupation.

Consequently, Moscow decided to dismiss Rákósi and replace him with a man who was more closely rooted in Hungarian life. Imre Nagy was the chosen leader of Moscow and he did his best to improve conditions. Rákosi was however still a power in the background and Nagy's efforts were effectively blocked by Rákosi. Finally, in 1956 Rákosi was totally removed from the political scene. By that time however the desperation of the country was so great that a bloody outbreak became unavoidable.