

JB  
April 17  
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HUNGARY

EXILE (1200)  
Organizations Abroad(1202)

FOREIGN RELATIONS (1500)  
Hungarian Missions (1502)  
Abroad  
COMMUNIST HOLIDAYS (3600)

HUNGARY'S LIBERATION FETED IN LONDON.

SOURCE LONDON: RFE News Bureau.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: April 8, 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: None.

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The LONDON celebration of the 11th anniversary of Hungary's "Liberation" took place on Sunday, April 8, 1956, at the "Classic" cinema, at 11 a.m.

The main attraction was the Hungarian film: "Fourteen Lives Saved," a good picture showing the rescue of miners trapped in an accident. The propaganda of the Hungarian Regime and of Soviet friendship is toned down in the film and, therefore, more effective.

After the showing of the film the Reverend. Dr. W. BRYN THOMAS, Chairman of the British-Hungarian Friendship Society which had organized the celebration, introduced Arthur HORNER, the British miners' leader, Janos KATONA, Hungarian Minister to LONDON, and Mrs. HART, member of the Executive of the BHFS. The addresses of these three people were correct and had the usual ring of banality at "friendship" celebrations. Mrs. HART appealed for donations for the Society, took herself pound and ten shilling notes offered by the audience, while members of the

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Society also made a collection among the audience. It was announced shortly before the end of the program that the collection amounted to £ 24.14.0.

The Reverend Dr. W. BRYN THOMAS, Vicar of Ascension Church, Balham, LONDON S.W., Chairman of the Society made an astonishing speech, very far removed from the correct addresses of the other speakers including Arthur HORNER, member of the British Communist Party Executive, who was never introduced in this latter capacity. Dr. BRYN THOMAS, in spite of his degree, gave the impression of a man, both uneducated and ill-informed. He insisted on calling J. KATONA "Minister for Hungarian Affairs," and seemed to be unaware that the BUDAPEST Regime had recently "suspended" the sentence of Archbishop GROSZ relegating him to "some ecclesiastical building." Here are the three major blunders of BRYN THOMAS' jovial speech.

1. He revealed implicitly that at the celebration at the "Classic" cinema there was a group of "chuckers out." (They must have been so cleverly mixed up with the general public that it was impossible to notice them.) The speaker then mentioned "gangs or rather gangsters" who used to break up similar "friendship" manifestations and threateningly said that the British-Hungarian Friendship Society Executive was quite determined not to let this meeting be broken up like for instance a Czechoslovak one, at the "Friends' House", where "only Mr. Arthur HORNER dared to speak." There was, however, no opposition whatsoever, no interruptions either.

2. Dr. BRYN THOMAS boasted how he, the sly Welshman, had in a way black-mailed a former Scot, then Home Secretary. (Clear allusion to Viscount KILMUIR now the Lord Chancellor, the former Sir David Maxwell Fyfe.) The speaker then said that he had invited Hungarian Reformed Bishop Janos PETER to preach in his church at BALHAM, and that the Home Office had, at that time, refused a visa. "So, with a lot of mimicry" -- the speaker went on -- "I tried a different approach.... and had Bishop PETER invited by a Presbyterian Church in Scotland." Asking the Home Office on the telephone he was told the grant of visa was doubtful and, in 15 minutes time, I got the decision: the visa was granted." The audience roared with laughter and the speaker added: "But we can only do it, if you are behind us."

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3. Explaining away the persecution of some Roman Catholic prelates by the Hungarian Regime BRYN THOMAS said that 50 per cent of the clergy's stipends of all denominations were being paid in Hungary by the State. Now, Archbishop GROSZ, the "Roman Catholic senior bishop," was for years getting salaries for many of his priests who, in fact, had been dead. (Loud laughter.) From that money, GROSZ financed with American help subversive activities of the former HAPSBURG dynasty, to reintroduce a monarchy in Hungary. By now the speaker was full of righteous indignation: "GROSZ was thrown into prison, he is still in prison. The Arch-bishop of CANTERBURY himself would be in prison, if he had plotted against the State here." (Audience delighted.) No question, of course, why Mgr. GROSZ needed money, if it was done "with American help." No question either, whether this evidence was not similarly faked as, admittedly, at the RAJK trial? And the chairman was beaming.

Dr. BRYN THOMAS and also Mrs. HART mentioned that the British-Hungarian Friendship Society progressed during the four years of its existence from about 100 to nearly 1,000 members. Before the meeting a dozen new members enrolled. During the speeches "honorable usherettes," members of the Society, offered forms for further enrolments, and the speakers explained that for half a crown yearly they would be able to watch more film shows, etc.

The audience comprised about 250 people, with a big sprinkling of Communists, of Communist sympathizers and Hungarians, also emigres. Tickets were freely available either on application to the Society, which involved giving name and address of applicants or directly to be taken away at the various COLLET's bookshops. In the hall propaganda literature was freely available like "New Hungary" etc.; also a few older "Information Bulletins of the Hungarian Trade Unions" as it was a miners' film, and as the Trade Unions are among staunch supporters of the various friendship societies.

The whole celebration lasted until about 1.15 p.m. No appeal was made to Hungarians to return to their country. The meeting was meant for the British public and members of the Society seemed unable or unwilling to answer questions about repatriation.

End.