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CHAPTER XII

REASSERTION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS

(26 October - 3 November)

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1. The Transitional Period: The National Government  
of 27 October (26 - 29 October)

On 26 October the Council of Ministers announced the "beginning" of the mopping-up of the remnants of the armed revolutionary groups, in the same phrases as had repeatedly been used since the 24th.<sup>1/</sup> Under a new amnesty, which was to expire by 10 p.m., "Members of the armed forces, soldiers, armed workers, Comrades" were called upon to "treat those who lay down their arms humanely" and to "let them go home after they have surrendered".<sup>2/</sup> Hardly a word was said about Soviet forces; the fiction was maintained of a fight between Hungarian forces on the one side, and, in the words of the Party newspaper Szabad Nép, "counter-revolutionary forces and other bad elements".<sup>3/</sup> The Government order cited instructed non-existent Hungarian forces to "deal annihilating blows to all those who continue the armed fight against the people's power" after the time limit had expired.

Such phrases were indicative of the continued use of the propaganda slogans of the past years. But propaganda was no longer powerful enough to shape the facts to fit its own fancies. Although the insurgents had been reported for two days as surrendering en masse, they still refused to lay down their arms. A new approach was imperative. In the 26 October issue of Szabad Nép, severe condemnation was offered of "a clique of wicked leaders estranged from the people, who cannot be

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<sup>1/</sup> Radio Budapest, 26 Oct., 4.30 a.m., text reproduced in Szabad Nép, 26 October 1956.

<sup>2/</sup> Radio Budapest, 26 Oct., 5.34 p.m., and 8.08 p.m.

<sup>3/</sup> Szabad Nép, 26 October 1956.



identified with the Party"; it was acknowledged that the people "led by their despair over the country's situation have taken part in the armed rising".

On Thursday, 25 October, Mr. Kadar had replaced Ernő Gerő as First Secretary of the Central Committee. The next afternoon, Mr. Gerő and Mr. Hegedűs had fled from Party Headquarters, and Mr. Nagy had been able to move to the Parliament Building where he immediately sought contact by telephone and otherwise with a number of people regarding the formation of a new Government. On Saturday morning, 27 October, at 11.18 a.m., the new Council of Ministers was announced over the radio. It was stated that the Government "after taking the oath. . . had entered into office immediately". The announcement explained that the Government was "elected by the Presidium of the Hungarian People's Republic which acted on the recommendations of the Central Committee of the Party and the Presidium of the National Council of the Patriotic People's Front". The PPF<sup>1/</sup> to which reference was made in the announcement on the same level as the Communist Party, was created in August 1954 on the initiative of Mr. Imre Nagy, when he was Prime Minister the first time, with the purpose of obtaining the active support of intellectuals, bourgeois and other non-proletarian elements for the construction of Hungarian socialism.

By the careful selection of Communist members and the inclusion of non-Communists, the composition of the new Council of Ministers went far towards meeting the insurgents' viewpoint. Mr. Nagy had left out

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<sup>1/</sup> The PPF had not been an active force in Hungary since the beginning of 1955.



several Communists who had ordered Hungarians to fire at Hungarians, or were "Stalinists". The Minister of the Interior, Piro, who, together with the First Secretary of the Communist Party, had had some authority over the AVH, and the Defence Minister, Istvan Bata, were removed from office. Mr. Nagy's predecessor, Andras Hegedüs, who had been a Vice Chairman of the Council of Ministers since 24 October, and Jozsef Darvas, Minister for Propaganda, had also been omitted.

Excluding the Rákosi wing from power, Imre Nagy brought their opponents in the Communist Party into the Government. György Lukacs, the most eminent of Hungarian Marxist philosophers and scholars, became the new Minister of People's Culture. Radio Budapest commented on this appointment on 27 October at 5.52 p.m. that "the dogmatism which prevailed in Hungary in recent years had tried to push him into the background of the country's scientific life". It added that Antal Gyenes, the new Minister for Produce Collection, a former Secretary-General of the People's Association of People's Colleges (NEKOSZ), had similarly been "pushed . . . aside, and although he had an economist's diploma, he had had to work as an unskilled worker, until he had been engaged by Mr. Nagy as his assistant at the University of Agronomy. The key posts of Interior and Defence were assigned to Ferenc Munnich, a lawyer in his seventies, who was well regarded by the surviving followers of Rák, and to Karoly Janza, who had a pro-Nagy record. Similarly, Arpad Kiss, the new head of the National Planning Office, had backed Mr. Nagy's campaign in favour of the promotion of light industry. Later in the day, Zoltan Vas, well known to the Writers' Union, was placed in charge of Budapest food supplies. He had distinguished himself in this sort of work after the liberation of Budapest in 1945.



But the most striking feature of the new Government was that, in the spirit of the revived People's Patriotic Front, it contained two members who formerly held leading posts in the two large Peasant Parties: Zoltan Tildy and Bela Kovacs. Tildy, who was made a Minister of State, had been one of the founders of the Independent Smallholders' Party in 1930. He had been active in the wartime resistance movement, headed the Government in November 1945 and had been President of the Hungarian Republic from 1946 to 1948. "The Rakosi clique, however, forced him to resign", the commentary recalled, "and kept him under house arrest for a long period". Bela Kovacs, the former Secretary-General of the Independent Smallholders' Party, who became the new Minister of Agriculture, had been attacked by the "Rakosi clique", accused of conspiracy and had been under house arrest for some time. Two other former members of the Smallholders' Party became members of the Government, Jozsef Bognar, Deputy Chairman of the Council and Miklos Ribianszki, Minister of State Farms; a former member of the National Peasant Party, Ferenc Erdei, became Deputy Chairman of the Council.

The pressure still exercised by the old forces limited Nagy's ability to form a Government altogether acceptable to the fighters. Antal Apró became another Deputy Chairman of the Council, in charge of Construction; several other unpopular Communists or Stalinists had been carried over into the new administration. The appointments of Istvan Kossa, Lajos Debrits, Janos Csorgo and Sander Csottner, as Ministers of Finance, Post and Communications, Metallurgy and Machine Industry and Mining and Electricity, respectively, specially irritated the



insurgents as well as the retention of Eric Molnar as Minister of Justice in the face of a campaign against him in the Irodalmi Ujság (Literary Gazette), which spoke for insurrection circles. Moreover, the presence of members of members of two peasant parties in the Government inevitably caused the question to arise of the reason for the non-inclusion of a Social Democrat - since the Social Democrats had been one of the non-Communist "big three" at the 1945 elections. Witnesses stated to the Special Committee that Mr. Nagy, as well as the Chairman of the Presidium, Istvan Dobi, had indeed approached such Social Democrats as Anna Kethly, Gyula Kelemen and Agostan Valentini without success. The Government had not as yet recognized even the Peasant parties; the members of the latter joined the Government only in a personal capacity - even though the public announcement referred to their association with the peasant organizations. The circumstances of Mr. Kovacs' participation in the Government were explained by him in a speech on 31 October. He said that he was "astonished" to see on the new Government list the names of Communist leaders. He drafted a letter of resignation, expressing disagreement with the composition of the Government, but his friends persuaded him not to send the letter.<sup>1/</sup>

The carefully balanced Government team of 27 October did not please the insurgents - who cared little about political niceties and compromise. Generally speaking, they accepted Imre Nagy without enthusiasm; nobody else more qualified was acceptable to the Soviet authorities, with whom a Hungarian Prime Minister had to deal.

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<sup>1/</sup> Kis Ujság, 1 November 1956.



Mr. Nagy sought to placate the insurgents in other ways, by adopting a line sympathetic to their views, in a broadcast speech on 28 October, at 5.25 p.m., when he stated: "The Government condemned those views according to which the present vast popular movement is a counter-revolution". While "evil-doers seized the chance of committing common crimes" and "reactionary counter-revolutionary elements joined in the movement", it was "also a fact that . . . a great national and democratic movement, embracing and unifying, unfolded itself by an elemental force."

One more step was necessary before the one-party system could be discarded, namely the disbanding of the political police. In his speech of 28 October, Mr. Nagy had dealt with the question of the AVH in somewhat cautious terms: "After the restoration of order we shall organize a new unified State Police and abolish the State Security Authority." In actual fact, the decision was taken almost at once. At 5 p.m. on 29 October, it was announced in a newscast, that the Minister of the Interior started on 28 October the organization of "the new, democratic police," and in that connection he had abolished "all police organs invested with special rights, as well as the State Security Authority (AVH)", for which there was no further need "in our democratic system".



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2. Abolition of the One-Party System and  
Establishment of Inner Cabinet of 30 October

It had been customary in the People's Republic for the First Secretary and the Head of Government to make joint broadcasts to the nation. A broadcast of 30 October at 2.30 p.m. was different. Four Hungarian leaders spoke in turn, each in his own mood or in that of his Party or group. Developing further his democratic programme, Imre Nagy, addressing himself to the "working people of Hungary, workers, peasants, intellectuals", announced a decision which, he said, was "vital in the nation's life. In the interests of the further democratisation of the country's life, the Government acting in full agreement with the Praesidium of the Hungarian Workers' Party has abolished the one-Party system ... In accordance with this, it is setting up an Inner Cabinet within the National Government". It was clear that Mr. Nagy had gone beyond his earlier position. From his address of three hundred words, two words were conspicuously absent, "Communist" and "Socialist". Instead the new slogan was: "Long live free, democratic and independent Hungary!" The relatively sober, brief address of Imre Nagy was followed by a ringing declaration in patriotic terms from Zoltan Tildy: "Hungarian brethren! The will of the nation and the national revolution has conquered. The representatives of this nation will have been the young people with their heroic struggle, the writers, hundreds of thousands of workers, the peasants, the farmers - in short, the whole country. All violence and all resistance against this will was in vain. I stand before the microphone deeply moved. I haven't written down my speech; it may therefore



be disjointed. But I greet, I embrace, Hungary's dear youth, my heart overflowing with warmth." It was left to Tildy to draw the consequence of the abolition of the one-Party system in the declaration that "we must prepare for free elections."

Ferenc Erdei, speaking for the other peasant party, the National Peasants, hailed "the struggle of the rising nation"; but the problem of reconciling the gains of the revolution with the achievements of the post-war was stressed in his speech: "The creative force of the revolution will ... still have to be carried to final triumph. The victory of the revolution must now be defended with unmistakable determination, above all against those who would like to reverse it. It also has to be defended against those who would like to drown it in anarchy or to turn it against the vital interests of and rights attained by our people." Lastly, János Kádár voiced the pledge of the Communist Party to take its place alongside rather than above the other parties: "Moved by the deep sense of responsibility to spare our nation and working masses further bloodshed, I declare that every member of the Praesidium of the Hungarian Workers' Party agrees with today's decisions by the Council of Ministers. As for myself, I can add that I am in wholehearted agreement with those who spoke before me, Imre Nagy, Zoltan Tildy and Ferenc Erdei, they are my acquaintances and friends, my esteemed and respected compatriots."

The "Inner Cabinet" announced by Mr. Nagy was set up within the Council of Ministers and was made up of the Chairman of the Council, Mr. Nagy (Communist), and three members of the Government,



Zoltan Tildy and Bela Kovacs (Smallholders), and Ferenc Erdei (National Peasants). In addition, János Kádár and Geza Losonczy (Communists) not previously in the Council of Ministers of 27 October, were made members of the Inner Cabinet; to conform with constitutional requirements, Mr. Nagy stated in his speech of 30 October that he would submit a proposal to the Praesidium of the People's Republic to elect them Ministers of State. Mr. Nagy added that the Cabinet would include a person to be nominated by the Social Democratic Party. As against a proportion of non-Communists to Communists of 5 to 20 in the Government as a whole, the Inner Cabinet ratio was three to three, not taking into account the prospect of Social Democratic participation. Moreover, the non-Communist members were no longer to serve in a personal capacity but in Mr. Nagy's words, the Government of the country was now placed "on the basis of democratic co-operation between the coalition parties reborn in 1945."



### 3. The Rebirth of Political Parties

X After the spring of 1949, political parties in Hungary, with the exception of the Hungarian Workers' (Communist) Party, which in January 1948 had absorbed part of the Social Democratic Party, ceased in effect to exist, though no legislative text was published in the Official Gazette, forbidding or dissolving them.

*which of course implied the revival of parties*  
The introduction of multiparty system was among the most popular demands of the insurgents and it had reappeared constantly among the demands voiced by different groups ever since the resolution of the students of the Building Industry and Technological University on 22 October. Thus it was quite natural that almost within an hour of the announcement by Prime Minister Imre Nagy of the abolition of the one-party system, <sup>1/</sup> political parties were being re-established in Budapest and in the Provinces. Messrs. Tildy and Erdel, who spoke after Mr. Nagy, appealed to leaders and members of their respective parties, the Independent Smallholders and the National Peasants, to revive party organizations all over the country. These two parties and the Social Democratic Party, were formally reconstituted on the afternoon of 30 October, and their national headquarters were re-established in Budapest. Two of them, the Independent Smallholders and the Social Democrats, had even reoccupied the former premises of their party headquarters. Party newspapers appeared from 1 November and appeals had been

<sup>1/</sup> Radio Budapest, 2:28 p.m. on 30 October.



issued through the radio and the press and through leaflets for the setting up of local party groups. By 3 November these three major parties had groups reconstituted in most of the twenty-two districts of Budapest, as well as in the provincial cities in various parts of Hungary. In addition other smaller parties were set up.

X Among the three major parties that were revived on 30 October, the Independent Smallholders Party<sup>1/</sup> had been the most powerful in the past. Founded in 1930 by the late Gaston Gaal, Zoltan Tildy and Ferenc Nagy, its original programme included universal suffrage, land reform, improvement of the economic and cultural status of the peasant population, progressive taxation, simplified public administration and increased social benefits. This party had polled at the general elections of 4 November 1945, 2,688,161 out of 4,717,256 votes (57.5%), obtaining 245 of the 409 seats to be filled by election. Thus at that time the Smallholders' Party had represented a clear majority of the Hungarian people. On 30 October 1956 a provisional executive committee, which included József Kovágo and Istvan B. Szabo, was charged with the management of party affairs, and Bela Kovacs was elected Secretary-General. Apart from local party groups which had been set up in a number of areas of the country, several specialized party organizations were established during the four or five days of the party's new existence: a party organization for the technical intelligentsia, another for educators "who do not stand on the platform of Marxism, materialism and ... wish to ... re-establish the religious,

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1/ Fuggetlen Kisgazda Part



moral and European basis of Hungarian education."<sup>1/</sup> Groups were also set up of party members who had in the past occupied posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as party organizations for railway men, doctors and artists.<sup>2/</sup> The Party had a daily paper between 1-3 November, <sup>Kis Ujság</sup> (the Little Paper). By 3 November the party had not drawn up a new programme, but its political outlook is known through statements of witnesses, declarations of the party's leaders, and resolutions of party meetings between 31 October and 3 November. Witnesses explained to the Special Committee that Smallholders basically opposed the forcing of workers into particular jobs or the drafting of farmers into Kolkhozes. They stood for free choice for the peasants to own their property or to join a collective organization. They were, however, not really in doubt as to what the peasants would decide, and believed that Hungarian peasants would never work well for the Kolkhoz system. Bela Kovacs, speaking on 30 October before a meeting of party members at Pecs, said <sup>3/</sup> that the Independent Smallholders' Party was the only Hungarian party which "since 1945 has really wanted to build a Hungary on the basis of independence and liberty". As for the future he added that members of the party had to change their way of thinking, not to think any more on the lines of the past, but whatever new programme they will draw up, it "must be based on the creation of a new Hungary". On foreign affairs Mr. Kovacs stated: "When Hungarian freedom fighters

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1/ Kis Ujsag, 1 November 1956.

2/ Kis Ujsag, 2 November 1956.

~~3/ Kis Ujsag~~

3/ Kis Ujsag, 1 November 1956.



fought against the Russian tanks, they fought for the country's independence. This does not mean that we regard the Russian people as our enemies, but one cannot follow a unilateral policy... It is necessary to establish relations, based on equal rights, with all nations and one cannot tie the country's fate to one or another military bloc. The Hungarian people want a neutral Hungary."

In an appeal issued on 2 November by the provisional executive committee<sup>1/</sup>, the Independent Smallholders' Party called on "all Hungarians" to resume work; "let us restore order and start work". The revolution needs now ploughs, hammers and production. The revolution worded our national demands: freedom, independence and equality among nations. Every Magyar may fight for the realisation of these aims in our party".

The Social Democratic Party<sup>2/</sup> founded in 1880, with a Marxist programme, secured a sixty-nine parliamentary seats at the 1945 elections, and ceased to exist as an independent party three years later. In the years after, many of its leaders and members had been imprisoned or interned in labour camps and tortured.

On 30 October 1956, Anna Kethly, who spent many years in jail under the Rakosi era, became the President of the reorganized Party; Gyula Kelen became its Secretary-General and Dr. Andras Revesz Deputy Secretary-General.<sup>3/</sup> The executive committee of the Party stated that it would not take back former Social Democratic leaders (like Arpad Szakasits, the first chairman of the Praesidium of the People's

<sup>1/</sup> Magyar Nemzet, 2 November 1956.

<sup>2/</sup> Magyar Szocial Demokrata Part.

<sup>3/</sup> Nepszava, 1 November 1956.



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Republic, elected in August 1949), who supported the "fusion" in 1948 between the Communists and Social Democrats. Mr. Kelemen, who was charged with the re-building of the party, appealed on 1 November, to the Hungarian Social Democrats in the following terms: "Hungarian brother workers ... Hundreds of thousands of organized workers, who had suffered the bitterness of oppression, are today rebuilding the Hungarian Social Democratic Party. Not even the most cruel capitalism exploited us as have the masters of our country during the last eight years. They lied when they said they were governing in the name of the workers!" He asked them to support the Revolutionary Councils and National Committees in their tasks and stressed the need to develop youth organizations and peasant groups within the party.<sup>1/</sup> The next day, another appeal was made to "young workers and students", asking them to join the Social Democratic Party to promote "the independence and full democratization of the country". The convening of a mass meeting of the Social Democratic youth was also announced.<sup>2/</sup>

On 30 October, an invitation was extended by Mr. Imre Nagy to the Social Democratic Party to join the Inner Cabinet set up on that day. It was reported on 1 November that the Party was "negotiating" concerning this matter.<sup>3/</sup> It was known, however, that Socialist leaders did not favour entering the Government at that time on account of the continued presence of Soviet troops

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<sup>1/</sup> Nepszava, 2 November 1956.

<sup>2/</sup> Nepszava, 2 November 1956.

<sup>3/</sup> Nepszava, 1 November 1956.



on Hungarian territory,<sup>1/</sup> and they also contended that "in the Government every key position is in the hand of the Communists" -- a situation which, in their opinion, corresponded "neither" with justice nor the actual political situation".<sup>2/</sup>

On 3 November, three Social Democrats were added to the Government, including Anna Kethly. The latter had been in Vienna since 1 November, attending an executive committee meeting of the Socialist International, and was prevented from returning to Hungary on 2 November by Soviet guards on the Austrian frontier.<sup>3/</sup>

On 1 November, Nepszava, the central organ of the Social Democratic Party for seventy-six years, and the mouthpiece of the Communist controlled trade unions between 1948 and 1956, reappeared as a Social Democratic paper; from the three issues of Nepszava during this period little information can be derived regarding the programme of the party in the new circumstances. The first issue carried an editorial by Anna Kethly in which she wrote that the Social Democratic Party in the last eight years had been "a giant paralyzed by dwarfs", until it had won its freedom "from a régime which called itself a popular democracy," but which, in form and in essence, was neither popular nor democratic.<sup>4/</sup> In later issues both Anna Kethly and Gyula Kelemen stressed that Hungary should become a socialist, democratic and neutral country.<sup>5/</sup>

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1/ Nepszava, 3 November 1956 (statement by Anna Kethly in Vienna)

2/ Iszvasag, 1 November 1956 (statement by Lasso Farago)

3/ Kis Ujsag, 3 November 1956.

4/ Nepszava, 1 November 1956.

5/ Nepszava, 2 and 3 November 1956.



The National Peasant Party<sup>1/</sup> had been founded in July 1939 by Imre Kovacs, Ferenc Erdei and Peter Veres to represent the interests of the agricultural labourers; it had twenty-three members in the 1945 Parliament. After 1948 many of its former members, among them its last President, Peter Veres, collaborated with the Communists; some of them from 1955 on became active in the Writers' Union and the Pet5fi Club.<sup>2/</sup> The Party was formally re-established on 30 October, and the first local organizations were set up the following day. On 2 November, Uj Magyarorszag (New Hungary), the official Party organ, appeared. The Party spread rapidly in Budapest and in North-eastern and Eastern Hungary. At its first public meeting, held on 31 October, it decided to change its name to Pet5fi Party; elected a provisional executive committee of eleven members, including Istvan Bibo, a professor of law, and Attilas Szigeti, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Gyor-Sopron county. Ferenc Farkas was elected Secretary-General. Instead of a Chairman, a supervisory committee of eleven members was set up composed of well-known members of the Writers' Union, such as Lazzlo Nemeth and Gyula Illyes.<sup>3/</sup> While Ferenc Erdei, Minister of State, had taken the initiative for the revival of the Party on 30 October, he was unpopular -- owing to his collaboration with the Hungarian Workers' Party -- with the rank and file of the National

<sup>1/</sup> Nemzeti Paraszt Part.

<sup>2/</sup> See Chapter IX \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3/</sup> Uj Magyarorszag, 2 November 1956.



Peasant's Party, and was not included in the provisional leadership.<sup>1/</sup>

The attitude of the Petöfi Party was made clear in an article in the party paper by Mr. Farkas. He stated that the Party wished "to serve the cause of the peasantry" and of "Hungarians in general". Mr. Farkas announced that: "as long as Soviet troops were in Hungary", his Party could not take part in the Government. He contended that, although the insurrection had scored a military success, it had not so far been politically successful. In order to support Mr. Nagy's decision to terminate the Warsaw Treaty, he proposed that a referendum be held within three days on the following points: immediate abrogation of the Treaty, neutrality and non-adhesion to any particular group of interests. With regard to internal politics, he proposed that a Supreme National Council be formed of representatives of the armed insurgents, the democratic parties and the Writers' Union, to be headed by the composer Zoltan Kodaly - one of the ten personalities who, in 1945, had been selected to supplement the elected membership of Parliament. This Council would be the supreme governmental power in the revolutionary period and would also exercise the functions of head of state."<sup>2/ 3/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The following statement was issued by Mr. Erdei on 31 October: "Several fellow-members of the former Peasant Party have criticised the fact that it was I who made the appeal for re-organization of the National Peasant Party. I feel it my duty to state that my simple reason was that I took part in initiating and making this decision, and I alone was in a position to make the relevant announcement. Of course, this does not mean that I intend in any way to influence the reorganization of the National Peasant Party (Szabad Szo, 31 October 1956).

<sup>2/</sup> Uj Magyarorszag, 2 November 1956.

<sup>3/</sup> On 3 November the organizing Secretary of the Petöfi Party for the County of Borsod, Sandor Varga, outlined the following programme:

(footnote continues)



Both the Independent Smallholders' Party and the Petöfi Party supported the re-establishment of the Hungarian Peasants Alliance (Magyar Parasztsovetség)<sup>1/</sup> which was to represent and protect the cultural and professional interests of the peasants.

An indication of the speedy revival of political freedom was the establishment of more and more organizations <sup>2/</sup> after 31 October as well as the establishment of several minor political parties. Between 31 October and 3 November. Among these was the Christian Democratic Party <sup>3/</sup> which had been dissolved in June 1947; it appealed to "Christian Hungarian brethren" and asked them to help the building of a "new, happier, free and independent Hungary in the sign of Christian morality". Other parties re-established included the

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over Radio Borsod County Miskolc:

"The Petöfi Peasant Party believes in private property and advocates free production and marketing. In the field of religion we advocate the fullest freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and institutional protection of the activities of churches true to the spirit of Christ. The Petöfi Peasant Party announced that it will not retreat from its demand to give to peasant children and peasant youth more education. We declare that we accept fully the 1945 Land Reform Law, that we will not return land now in the possession of our peasantry, that we will fight relentlessly against any attempt which would try to challenge the rightfulness of that great national achievement, against anyone who would dare attack land reform measures. But we deem it necessary to re-examine all illegalities in this field that committed from 1948 until our national revolution. While fully respecting the right of peasants to sell their products without restrictions, we consider it necessary to maintain existing agricultural co-operatives until peasant-co-operatives are set up on a sound basis..."

<sup>1/</sup> Magyar Nemzet, 1 November 1956; Uj Magyarorszag, 2 November 1956.

<sup>2/</sup> The Christian Youth League, the existence of which was reported by Budapest Radio on 31 October, with the aim to rally Hungarian Christian youth into a single camp "which would represent the ideals of young masses on the basis of christian principles and within the forces guiding the country's political life."

<sup>3/</sup> Magyar Vilag, 3 November 1956.



People's Democratic Party, which stated its support for the Government "as far as the maintenance of order and protection of life and property are concerned"; and the Hungarian Independence Party. In addition, a "Christian Front" was set up to co-ordinate "Christian parties and organisations"; the Hungarian Revolutionary Youth Party was established and the existence of the Hungarian Conservative Party, which functioned "for 10 years in illegality" was announced.



4. The streamlined coalition Government of 3 November

The creation of the Inner Cabinet on 30 October had the effect of concentrating the executive responsibilities of the Government within a small group of personalities acceptable to the fighters, but the status of the other Ministers was not clear. Nominally, they remained in office. In fact, several of them had been in conflict with the staff in their Ministries who had formed Revolutionary Committees which, in some cases, refused to recognize them or admit them to their offices.<sup>1/</sup> The question of the Social Democratic participation in the Cabinet, as envisaged on 30 October, was yet to be solved.

On 3 November, the Praesidium of the People's Republic announced that three Deputy Chairmen, Antal Apro, Jozsef Bognar and Ferenc Erdei, and twenty Ministers, including those of the Interior (Ferenc Münnich), Defence (Károly Janza), Foreign Affairs (Imre Horvath), and Justice (Erik Molnar), were "relieved ... from their posts at their own request"; but, "for the purpose of complementing and consolidating the National Government" a small number of appointments were made, including General Pal Maleter as Defence Minister. Imre Nagy remained Chairman of the Council of Ministers and retained the portfolio of Foreign Minister which he had assumed on 1 November. No other portfolios were assigned to individual members of the Government, which now consisted exclusively of Ministers of State. Four of them had been Ministers of State in the Cabinet constituted on 30 October, namely, two Communists, János Kádár and Géza Losonczy, and two

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<sup>1/</sup> See Chapter XI, Part 1.C.



Smallholders, Bela Kovacs and Zoltan Tildy. Six new Ministers of State were appointed, one Smallholder, Istvan B. Szabo; three Social-Democrats, Anna Kethly, Gyula Kelemen and Jozsef Fischer; and two members of the Petöfi Party, Ferenc Farkas and Istvan Bibó. Thus the Cabinet of 3 November consisted of four Communists, three Smallholders, three Social-democrats, and two Petöfi Party members. The Praesidium had decided to leave all but two Ministerial portfolios - those held by Mr. Nagy and General Maletér - vacant and to appoint Deputy Ministers - not members of the Government - to be in charge of the Ministries concerned. The explanation was given that it would be "the duty of these Deputy Ministers to exercise leadership over the functioning of the Ministries and their governmental and economic activities, and to do so on the basis of decisions and measures taken by the National Government." Members of the National Government, as Ministers of State, would be designated later by the National Government to undertake responsibility for the Ministries through the Deputy Ministers.

A witness, who had been a leader of the Smallholders' Party, emphasized the significance of the entry of his Party into the four-Party coalition. Considering the clear majority which the Smallholders seemed to have at the last free elections in 1945, their decision to participate in the Government of 3 November on an equal footing with the Communists and Social Democrats demonstrated, in the opinion of the witness, that his party had no intention of eliminating genuine socialist achievements such as land reform.



Similar views had been expressed by Bela Kovacs, of the Independent Smallholders' Party who stated on 31 October, before the constitutive meeting of his Party in Pécs: "No one should dream of going back to the world of aristocrats, bankers and capitalists. That world is definitely gone! A true member of the Smallholders' Party cannot think on the lines of 1939 or 1945." <sup>1/</sup> These views largely coincided with opinions voiced by leading members of the two other major parties. On 1 November, the President of the Social Democratic Party, Anna Kethly, said: "The factories, mines and the land should remain in the hands of the people." <sup>2/</sup> Writing on the same day in the newspaper of the Petöfi Party, Laszlo Nemeth suggested that all the four parties should issue a declaration in which they would confirm their faith in some great principles of socialism, such as retention of factories in the hands of the State; no return of land properties larger than 25 - 40 hectares to their former owners; the participation of the workers in the management of factories, and the support of smaller co-operatives. In conclusion Nemeth called for what he said would be "a political system of historic importance; a multi-party system based on a common fundamental principle combining the force of an ideologically based social system with the elasticity of a parliamentary system." <sup>3/</sup>

One of the last political statements broadcast over the Hungarian Radio before the second attack of Soviet troops also dealt with the areas of agreement among the four political parties

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<sup>1/</sup> Kis Ujsab, 1 November 1956

<sup>2/</sup> Hepszava, 1 November 1956

<sup>3/</sup> Uj Magyarorszag, 2 November 1956



in the coalition <sup>1/</sup> and it was delivered by Ferenc Farkas, Minister of State, the Secretary-General of the Petöfi Party. Mr. Farkas said that all parties in the coalition showed that "they identified themselves with the activities of the National Government to achieve neutrality". The new government was not separated by the differences which characterized the coalition of 1945, but had a "completely unified stand" on the following points:

"1) It will retain from the socialist achievements and results everything which can be, and must be, used in a free, democratic and socialist country, in accordance with the wish of the people.

"2) We want to retain the most sincere and warmest friendly, economic and cultural relations with every socialist country, even when we have achieved neutrality. We also want to establish economic and cultural relations with the other peace-loving countries of the world.

"3) We, the parties participating in the National Government, feel that party interests must be subordinated unconditionally to those of the Nation.

"4) We must continue our efforts and the negotiations which we have started with the Soviet Union as regards the recognition of our neutrality and independence and the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

"5) We consider it absolutely essential that an appeal be made to the great friendly socialist empires, the

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<sup>1/</sup> Budapest Radio, 9.19 p.m. on 3 November 1956.



Chinese People's Republic, the friendly Yugoslavia and the neighbouring friendly Poland to the effect that they support us in the peaceful settlement of our just cause.

"6) The National Government is completely unified in its stand that the resumption of work and production are absolutely essential to the realization of our independence demands through peaceful means.

"7) The Government is also unanimous that it will prevent most severely any kind of anarchist or counter-revolutionary activities, and should such demonstrations take place, would punish them."

By the changes of 3 November, the Government of Hungary commanded the virtually unanimous assent of the nation. The four parties sharing power had received 4,632,972 of the 4,717,256 votes cast and had won 407 out of 409 seats in the free elections of 1945. <sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> The two remaining seats had been secured by the Democratic Party.