

SUMMARY

In the present issue of *Történelmi Szemle* the majority of the articles deal with the first few years of Hungary after the Liberation.

A. J. Pushkash: Some Problems of Historiography on the History of the Second World War

The Study of the Soviet historian is based on his report of research results read out at the conference of the history of the Second World War in Budapest in September 1973. In the Soviet works on the international relations and foreign policy of the Soviet Union during World War II significant space is devoted to the problems of the East and South-East European countries. The author of the study enumerates the most important publications of documents, memoirs and syntheses which have come out recently. In Soviet works Churchill's plans of a Mediterranean second front and the landing of the troops on the Balkans is interpreted as an anti-Soviet project. This strategy expressed the financial and political interests of the Anglo—American ruling circles, i. e. the maintenance of their positions in this region, the continuation of their colonialist policy in the Near and Middle East. Even the opening of the West European Second Front was determined above all by political motives. On the other hand the Western Powers wanted to maintain the good relations with the Soviet Union, and at the same time they did not want to let Soviet armed forces liberate Western Europe.

The Soviet historians have extensively dealt with the evolution of the works written by their Western colleagues in the last few years. They refute the views which maintain that the steps taken by the Western Powers were primarily motivated by the intention to help the Soviet Union. As far as Hungary is concerned the author mentions Macartney's work, titled "October Fifteenth". He states that though the book is based on real facts, its aim is to defend Horthy's regime.

M. Korom: The Preparative Committee of the Provisional National Assembly and the Parliamentary Elections

In his study the author discusses the circumstances of the formation of the Preparative Committee of the Provisional National Assembly, the Debrecen negotiations to form a government, and the national elections on the basis of hitherto undiscovered sources, and mostly of recollections of people actively participating in the events collected by the author himself.

The realization of the project of a new Hungarian government, taking its final form in Moscow and approved by the anti-fascist Great Powers began in Debrecen, on 12 December 1944. During the negotiations between the former Hungarian delegates to Moscow, the Soviet deputies, and the local leaders, the concepts formulated earlier were compared with the concrete projects of Moscow, and the actual possibilities. The meeting decided upon the formation of a preparative committee under the leadership of István Vásáry, and upon the convening of the Provisional National Assembly for 21 December 1944. In the decision of the form of government and the person of the head of state after the provisionality, the wide anti-German cooperation played a significant part. At the meeting on 12 December the Hungarian military problems were also touched together with the actual preparatory measures. Although the discussion of military matters made several important problems clearer, it did not achieve more than that, the author says. This can be accounted for by the fact that the military policy of the Soviet Union and the anti-fascist Great Powers tended to change in a way that they no more stressed the quick formation of a new Hungarian army that could be confronted with the Germans, but rather promoted the going over of the army corps to the anti-fascist side, turning against their former allies. The setting up of the new Hungarian army was thus postponed, became an official demand of the future government, and became dependent on the armistice agreement.

The next subject of the study are the preparations for the National Assembly, the proposals as to the composition of the Preparative Committee, and it describes how the deputies, who were to be sent to the towns or villages to lead the elections, had been nominated. The

Preparative Committee was based on the principle of coalition, but actual work was done mostly by the Communists. The Communists planned to hold elections in 38 settlements of the liberated territories, so 212 representatives would have got seats in the National Assembly. Owing to military and transportation problems the elections could be held in a smaller territory only, but it included more settlements. Compared to the number and composition of the voters under the Horthy regime, the 1944 elections were — with all the difficulties — much more democratic and represented the interests of the various classes and strata much better.

The deputies who had been nominated to hold the elections, set out on 15 or 16 December and finished their work in the country by 20 December. In the organization and completion of the elections the local popular organs, esp. the *national committees* played a significant part. Out of the 44 settlements in 24 the representatives were elected by the national committees. The author points out that the Communist Party (MKP) gained *overwhelming majority* and became the leading party in the Provisional National Assembly not through its *direct* candidates, but by the fact that owing to the difficult circumstances and the Communists' activity for the interests of the county or of the particular communities, they were elected at some places even if they campaigned not on the party lists.

During the elections in the country some members of the Preparative Committee were doing technical and political preparatory work in Debrecen under the direction of Ernő Gerő and József Révai. First of all they discussed the persons in the presidency of the future National Assembly, the still missing members of the government and the designation of political Secretaries of State. Parallel with this the "Manifesto" was also written by József Révai. The persons of the three Colonel-generals, Géza Teleki and two Communist ministers had already been accepted in Moscow, five other portfolios were still unclaimed at the time of the formation of the Preparative Committee, and what is more they were not even distributed according to the ratio of the parties. These portfolios were the topic of the talks of Ernő Gerő and the would-be ministers between 18—20 December, where the question of the deputies and the former talks were also taken into consideration. The author stresses and also proves that the Communists did not aim at a majority in the government in December 1944. All what they wanted was "parity", a proportionate representation of the parties in the government, Prime Minister included. These efforts became prominent when it turned out that the appointed Prime Minister is in need of a qualified collaborator, and this post had been taken by the Smallholder István Balogh, as his State Secretary. Erik Molnár was not made a minister and the eleventh ministry was not created to secure left-wing majority, but only to ensure the right proportions within the government.

Not only the ministers but also the parliamentary under-secretaries were chosen in the days prior to the opening of the National Assembly. In contrast with the suggestions for the persons mentioned earlier, here the leaders of the four coalition parties and the inter-party talks played the decisive role.

The study also deals with the propaganda of the new power in the newspapers of the day, and the rightwing attempts against the democratic popular trend. The early attempts fell into the background and were not prominent in the period of preparation and organization. Although the class and social conflicts within the Hungarian National Independence Front did exist, and operated in an indirect way, the majority was able to subordinate them to the great tasks of saving the country and the nation.

S. Balogh: Problems of Democracy in the Structure of the Hungarian Parties after the Liberation

When the Hungarian National Independence Front was established at the end of 1944, it combined five parties, namely the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP), the Social Democratic Party (SzDP), the National Peasant Party (NPP), the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP), and the Bourgeois Democratic Party (PDP). All these parties rallied around them certain layers of society with the slogans of democracy, and the antifascist, antifeudal, antiimperialist democratic programme of the Independence Front. At the same time they differed in the degree of their social homogeneity and in their views on the party as a political organization. The greatest difference could be observed in their real purposes, ultimate ends. In this respect the MKP and the FKGP stood on the two extreme poles of the Independence Front. The openly proclaimed aim of the former was Socialism, while that of the latter was bourgeois democracy.

The MKP required three things from its members: the acceptance of the party's aims and political programme, the regular payment of the membership dues, and active work in one of the party groups. The first two requirements are included — with minor modifications — in

the party rules of every party in the Front. The third item, however, can be recognized — to a certain extent — only in the practice of the SzDP and the NPP.

Only the workers' parties accepted the principle of their members' equal rights within the party. In practice, however, even the SzDP ensured regulated advantages to its older members especially in the occupation of party posts and in the nomination of candidates for the municipal elections. The NPP and the FKGP spoke of two kinds of members, viz. "founding and non-founding members" in the party rules. The party rules, especially those of the FKGP, ensured special privileges for the "founding-members".

Another questionable interpretation of party democracy was that the parties — with the exception of the MKP and the NPP to a certain extent — tried to secure full participation "ex officio" for their functionaries or MP's at programmes (conferences, congresses, etc.) where participation was possible through election only. The views of the SzDP were close to those of the bourgeois parties also in this question, but while in the case of the KGP and PDP the number of those participating "ex officio" exceeded the number of the elected delegates, the SzDP secured majority for the latter group.

The members of the parliamentary fractions and the municipal councils played a peculiar role within the parties. In the MKP no member with parliamentary or municipal council membership enjoyed special rights or privileges in the party as a result of these functions. The MP-s of the SzDP and the NPP had the right to be present at the discussions or meetings of the various party organs but had no vote. The FKGP MP-s, similarly to the ones in the PDP, were full right "delegates" of the party congress as well, and at the same time they formed a separate corporate body in the party centre. This group mostly regulated its own activity itself, even the party congress was to be convened at their request. The MP-s were in the last resort responsible not to the party but to their own elected leaders. As a consequence the parliamentary group represented a separate, independent party within the PDP, and even more so in the FKGP.

1. Vida: Contribution to the History of the Crisis in the Coalition in the Summer of 1946

The author adds valuable new pieces of information to the history of the internal crisis in the summer of 1946, mainly on the basis of the American diplomatic papers published in 1969. He points out that the social and political conflicts, grown out of the soil of inflation, were more severe in many respects than they have been thought so far. The political crisis pointed towards the resignation of the Nagy Ferenc cabinet. The left-wing parties could settle the disagreements to a certain extent only by concessions, and with the help of the president of the republic, Zoltán Tildy, and the Allied Control Commission. The provisional inter-party agreement of 5 June, published in detail in the present study for the first time, managed to slacken inner tension only temporarily.

It happened in broad daylight on 16 June that an eighteen-year-old young man shot two of the unsuspecting Soviet soldiers walking in the street in central Budapest. This assault meant an open breach of the armistice agreement signed on 20 January, 1945. General Sviridow, Deputy President of the Allied Control Commission handed a note to the Hungarian government on 7 July, where he suggested preventive measures against other similar insults, namely the suspension of the mandates of Smallholders' Party members of parliament fallen under the suspicion of collaboration with illegal anti-democratic groups, the suppression of the KALOT (Organization of Catholic Young Men), the Boy Scouts and other right-wing youth organizations, the purging of the state apparatus of Horthy's followers, the dismissal of the right-wing Smallholder lord lieutenants and Zoltán Pfeiffer, Secretary of State or Justice, and the restriction of the anti-Soviet propaganda on the part of the reactionary clergy. Under the pressure of the two workers' parties and the National Peasant Party the government accepted the suggestions of the Allied Control Commission. The Western Powers, however, demanded the reprieve of the decisions saying that the Soviet Deputy President had not consulted them in the matter. The Soviet Union, wanting to avoid the sharpening of contrasts between the Great Powers on the eve of the Paris peace negotiations, agreed to this demands. The Smallholders' Party, knowing the result of the Western intervention, tried to hinder the government in realizing its decisions. The party's efforts were partly successful and it managed to keep all its significant positions in political life.

The internal crisis was also determined by the inter-party agreement of 16 July 1946. Under the influence of the note of the Allied Control Commission the Smallholders' Party became more rigid and returned to its former claims. The negotiating parties decided on holding the municipal elections, urged for by the Smallholders' Party so much, in the autumn without stating the exact month. The Smallholder leaders were promised that one hundred police officers would be commissioned out of the ranks of the party, and that its members would get some of

the posts of the deputy lieutenants and mayors, who were deprived of their offices after they had been registered on the so called B-list (Black-list). Ferenc Nagy and his group in turn assumed to fight against the right-wing members of their party who were against coalition, but did not promise to expel party members again. These agreements did not go beyond those made in early July, which meant that neither wing of the Independence Front changed its opinion as to home politics. The agreement was not put into practice, as new problems arose in the autumn of 1946 after the Paris decision on a Hungarian peace agreement and the elimination of the inflation in the country.

S. Orbán: Problems in the Transformation of the Detached Farm System after the Liberation

The author was led by two factors in choosing his subject: first, it was twenty-five years ago that the so called Detached Farm Council was formed to solve the problem of the liquidation of detached farming in Hungary; second, the results of the two-year research into the history of detached farming in Hungary, lead by the Modern and Contemporary History Department of the Eötvös Lóránt University in Budapest and promoted also by the History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences are numerous enough to survey. There is plenty of material for the researchers in this field, but the fact that it is badly arranged makes research often difficult. Examples for this are the census returns from every ten years, where the detached farm population is not separated from the population of the other peripheries with their ever changing boundaries. On the other hand the population and its composition at the time of the census (1 January) do not reflect those in the hard-working seasons.

The activity of the Detached Farm Council was necessarily restricted mainly to the territory of the Great Plain, where the majority of the detached farms could be found, still we have to admit that only less than half of the one million people in 1949 left these farms by 1970. During the given period the number of settlements in peripheries has decreased only by one fifth of the number in 1949.

Several decrees have been adopted to accomplish the aims of 1949 meaning to prohibit house building in the peripheries and urging construction in the traditionally built up areas parallel with the establishment of the administrative, financial, and technical apparatus. In spite of these efforts, the development of the detached farm centres failed to meet the expectations, and some of the newly formed settlements proved unable to exist. Thus the decrease of the detached farm population comes actually from the natural migration, which is due to the development of urbanization and industrialization. The earlier statement of Ferenc Erdei, namely that the backwardness of the detached farm system is inseparable from that of the national economy and social welfare in general is true also of this situation. Many people moved from the detached farms to towns skipping over the intermediate stage, the detached farm centre or village. The author sees the causes of this in the circumstances after 1949, namely that the socialist transformation of agriculture questioned the very existence of the detached farm system. Its peasantry was to suffer a double change in its former way of life. On the one hand the farmers were to give up the traditional individual farming and join a collective farm, on the other hand they ought to have had to leave the farm and move to a village. At the same time, however, the various economic measures forced them to stay and so they could avoid the negative effect of these measures. The lack of the necessary financial means made the impossibility of the quick realisation of the original aims the more obvious. The migration of the population of the detached farms, however, became part of a more general, nationwide organic mobility.

J. Jemnitz: Contribution to the History of the Relations between the Hungarian Social Democratic Party and the English Labour Party in the Years between 1945—47

The English Labour Party—naturally—had a prominent position in the foreign political plans and international relations of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party after 1945. The Labour Party had taken the initiative in the revival of the international social democratic movement already towards the end of the war and from 1946 onwards the party controlled the work of organization as well. The fact that the Labour Party had formed a government in London in 1945 gave the party special importance. There were, at the same time, some shades of difference between the Foreign Office, lead by Bevin, and the Foreign Department of the party; concerning also the relationship with the Hungarian social democrats. The Foreign Department — at that time led by Denis Healey — showed a definite sensitivity towards the realities of Eastern Europe. Although Healey did not approve of the cooperation with the Communists

either, he knew that this relationship cannot be fully neglected, and realized that, at least in Hungary, there existed dangerous counterrevolutionary forces which caused justified anxiety among social democrats.

The relationship of the two parties is discussed in the paper on the basis of the sources found in the archives of the Labour Party. This additional material makes the picture based on Hungarian archives much more complete. The material 1945 is rather poor, the only interesting feature being the prominence of the figure of Anna Kéthly towards the end of the year. In the sources concerning 1946 we can read about the visit of Morgan Phillips, Secretary of the Labour Party to Hungary. The main idea in his records is that the real danger threatens from the side of the Communists, and the anti-Communist aspect of the Social Democratic Party should be strengthened above all. This shows a significant difference between the views of Morgan Phillips and Denis Healey. The short portraits of the Hungarian Social Democratic leaders are of special interest in Healey's notes. The letters of Vilmos Böhm are also noteworthy in this new material. Böhm occupied a special position in the Hungarian party. He established close relations with the Labour Party as early as the 1930's, and Healey spoke of him as the only man competent to lead the Hungarian party in 1946, were he not old and ill. In 1947 Böhm really took the lead. It becomes clear from the correspondence that after the critical days in September Böhm wanted to secure the leading role partly for himself, partly for Antal Bán. His ideas differed, however, not only from those of the left-wing Social Democrats at home, but also from those of Bevin. The material in the Labour Party Archives provides significant details also to the portraits of other Hungarian party leaders, such as Anna Kéthly and Antal Bán. From the autumn of 1947 the relations of the two parties loosened and eventually died away owing to the changes in the international and Hungarian political life.