

TARCSAY PÉTER¹**The First Years of the London Residence of the Hungarian State Security Authority²****Az Államvédelmi Hivatal londoni rezidentúrájának első éve****Abstract**

During and after World War II centres of Hungarian emigration formed in the biggest cities. One of the biggest – if not the biggest – was the community in London. These communities naturally formed their own organizations. During the meetings not only culture, but daily politics was also among the topics. For a quite obvious reason the emigrants were not fond of the Rákosi regime. On the other hand, for the Hungarian communist leaders it was vital to know that the opinion of these organizations are. That is why – under the cover of the Embassy – they created the residence of the State Security Authority in London, which had the main goal to observe the Hungarians in England and influence them in a “politically correct” way. They also had to do industrial espionage, too. But the fulfillment of these was seriously set back, since the agents did not speak English at all.

Key words: State Security, London, Hungarian Embassy, emigration, residence

Absztrakt

A II. világháború után a világ legnagyobb városaiban magyar emigrációs központok alakultak ki. Ezek közül az egyik legnagyobb - ha nem a legnagyobb - közösség Londonban volt. Ők természetesen megalakították saját szervezeteiket. Találkozásokon a kultúra megőrzésén kívül napi politikai kérdések is terítékre kerültek. Nyilvánvaló okok miatt az emigránsok nem szimpatizáltak a Rákosi rendszerrel, A másik oldalról viszont a magyarországi kommunista vezetőknek kulcskérdés volt ismerni ezeknek a szervezeteknek a véleményét. Ezért - a nagykövetség égisze alatt - létrehozták az Állambiztonsági Hivatal londoni rezidentúráját, melynek fő célja a az angliai magyarok megfigyelése és "politikailag helyes" irányba való befolyásolásuk volt. Ezen kívül pl. ipari kémkedést is végez-

¹ E-mail: tarcsaypeti@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-0125-1947

² In Hungarian Államvédelmi Hatóság (ÁVH)

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

tek. Viszont jelentős akadályt jelentett a feladatok elvégzésében, hogy a kiküldött ügynökök egyetlen szót sem beszéltek angolul.

Kulcsszavak: állambiztonság, London, Magyar Nagykövetség, emigráció, rezidentúra

After World War II the largest Hungarian community was to be found in London. These Hungarians left their homes either during the war, or after it, fleeing for the occupying – or liberating, as it was said back then – Soviet Red Army. One of the most popular centres of the “free world” was in London, so it seemed obvious for the immigrants from Eastern Europe to find a new home there. All the nationalities tried to keep their own identities in the emigration so they tried to live in the same neighbourhoods and also formed their own organizations, in which they had both cultural and political programs. Since the Communist regime (not only in Budapest, but everywhere in their territory) tried to oppress anything and anyone that did not live up their propaganda, it was a crucial question for them to observe and infiltrate the immigrants’ organizations all over the world. This was also the task of the covert operatives assigned to London.

The London residence of ÁVH was established in August 1951 under the auspices of the Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic in London. This step was both necessary and logical at the same time because the delegated agents needed some kind of jobs to cover their secret mission with. The official representation of the Hungarian state, the Embassy offered for that the best and most obvious opportunity. This provided a chance to observe the Hungarians going to the Embassy for visa or wishing to send a letter or a parcel home, without awakening suspicion. Of course the current ambassador was always informed of that, as he had to allow their employees to leave the building of the Embassy for several reasons, and to stay longer there in the night, respectively.

THE PLACE OF THE RESIDENCE

According to the data found in the Hungarian National Archives the residence was placed in the building of the Embassy under No. 46, Eaton Place, the Embassy operated under No. 35, Eaton Place. On the basis of the data found in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security³ the flat of the ambassador was there. This was an unfortunate solution from the point of view that it was not quite separated from the Embassy itself, thus the danger of ‘deconspiracy’ was continuous, i.e. that the secret colleagues become uncovered by the employees of the Embassy. For the same reason it was a further problem that the building was locked by a night watchman, who exactly knew who and when left, and also the closeness of the telephone operator on night duty was disturbing, because as we know

³ In Hungarian: Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történeti Levéltára (ÁBTL)

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

also from the report of second lieutenant of ÁVH, István Fenyvesi, the telephone room was next-door to the residents' room.⁴

It is clear from the same report that the residents could not build up any system of connections in London as they did not have any living room suitable to receive guests; the ambassador, Imre Horváth was a single man (neither the materials available on him in the Institute of Political History, nor his obituary contain any mentioning of a family⁵), he spent all his time among his colleagues. Beyond all that the strangest and inconceivable cause was that the secret colleagues did not speak English at all, and disposed of almost no local knowledge. That raises the question why the State Security Authority had delegated fully unprepared people for tasks where just the main point would have been to make the given person inconspicuous. It shows the inadequacy of the delegating body that Miklós Bauer had to apply for it on 23rd October, 1951 extra that the money sent for the residence be sent in English and American currency, exclusively in small notes because when changing high denominations, the changing person had to identify himself (as higher denominations have always been 'popular' subject of forgery), and it would have created a danger of getting disclosed if the same person changed higher amounts by certain periods.⁶

It is also clear from the above report, in compliance with Fenyvesi's report mentioned earlier, that the salaries of the representation's members did not enable them to appear on occasion in elegant places or at parties. The residence had a 'representative flat' maintained by Vince Házi (cover name: Ervin Tabi) but even in this concern Budapest had to be requested for a salary raise.

THE QUESTION OF SPEAKING ENGLISH

The rather funny situation that the agents posted to London did not speak English at all, raises serious questions both as to the care of the delegating body and the disability of the delegated agents. Funny in the situation is that the question of language learning and the ignorance of the English language occur as a serious problem yet in 1952. Although the agents have lived there already for a year, they were not even able to learn the language at a level to understand simple speech or to 'do' newspaper reading.⁷ The question of language teaching and English speech were problems continuously occurring; it is stressed in all the work plans and instructions of the period discussed that the comrades working there should at last master the language. In the lack of penalties, they did not much care about that even in spite of an explicit command. As a result of that behaviour all of the colleagues delegated to the London embassy had serious language difficulties even in 1956.⁸

⁴ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of István Fenyvesi on 12th September, 1951

⁵ Institute of Political History 306.f, preservation unit 2

⁶ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, 23rd October 1951 Report of Miklós Bauer

⁷ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, work plan dated on 11th May 1952

⁸ Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 13; folder No. 00318, top secret report No. 00318

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

The behaviour of the head of the residence, György Lóránt⁹ characterises the initial situation well. According to the report dated on 4th December 1951 the principal does not organise work well, and does not even execute the instructions of the headquarters in full. He ignored the commands coming from Budapest, and did not care for making out receipts of the Headquarters moneys to the Embassy either. The 'most interesting' fact is however that they wanted to delegate a radio operator (captain of the State Security Authority, Tibor Vadász) for intelligence job and train him to do observation work. The use of an unprepared agent 'in field' can lead to deconspiracy as mentioned earlier several times.¹⁰ Lóránt did not even care for how far his men went in disclosing their job on the occasion of a conspirative talk or recruiting, and also ignored that the target person may have perhaps become suspicious.¹¹

In December 1951 the first head of the residence, Lóránt was ordered home to Budapest for reporting. During that the earlier head of the London Embassy, named Kovács deserted. Since his appointment Horváth continuously let Kovács feel that he 'was a fallen man', which could have considerably contributed to his deserting.

After Lóránt had returned from his Budapest reporting, the morale in the residence lifted for a short time, for about two weeks but after that everything returned to the 'old routine'. The low spirits prevailing in the residence was, at least according to the report of Tibor Vadász, due to the behaviour of Lóránt.¹² The roots of the problem he sees in Lóránt's inexperience because he has not acquired practice enough in Budapest, thus he is not suitable to lead the residence. As a result of the professional failures he did not at all or only partially meet the instructions received from the Headquarters as a head. Practically he does not do any work for the Embassy, not even since his return, he continuously makes fun of the ambassador. He ignores the instructions of the leader newly appointed, he does not observe them. It may be called interesting that this behaviour was not 'addressed' to the employees of the Embassy only but Lóránt was not able to behave as a 'civilized man' even on the street. On one occasion for example he slapped in the face of a drunken man in a London restaurant, and insulted American tourists. With manifestations of that kind he continuously endangers covered work, as with his striking acts he with intention or without draws the attention of people to himself, a serious obstacle when performing secret jobs. When he was confronted with these behaviour problems, Lóránt replied that he was behaving in the right way, and he was not able and did not even want to change. Therefore, Captain Vadász urged the soon and possibly final recall of Lóránt.¹³

⁹ His name is written in the folders No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1 and OL-8-003-2 alternately as Lóránt and Lóránd, sometimes it occurs even 'combined' as Lórándt. Throughout I had the feeling that the typists did not exactly know the last name of the head of the residence.

¹⁰ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of Tibor VADÁSZ (no date is indicated)

¹¹ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, 23rd October 1951 Report of Miklós Bauer

¹² See: Annex No. 2:

¹³ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, memo of 13th June, 1952

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AMBASSADOR

At the time when the residence was established in 1951, Imre Horváth¹⁴ was the ambassador in London. His operation highly influenced the work of the residence in the first period, until 1953. At that time Horváth was namely ordered home to Budapest, then he was appointed to ambassador in Prague.¹⁵ It is interesting that in the materials I have found in the Institute of Political History, the period between 1951 and 1953 is practically a blank spot, in the official obituary and the biography available there only the ambassador's status of Comrade Horváth is mentioned in this period, however as to what happened during his three years there, nothing is written in detail. It is even more interesting that in his own recollections Horváth himself hardly mentions his period in England. The single document which I consider worth mentioning is a letter of December 1953 in which Horváth complains of his heart. In addition it is also worth mentioning when Queen Elisabeth II was crowned in 1953, although he was not ambassador any more, the Buckingham Palace sent him a dedicated photo of Her Majesty, which was then forwarded to him in Prague.¹⁶

Within short after his arrival the ambassador got under the total influence of the agent with the cover name of Lutheránus (in other documents: Luteránus).¹⁷ This is clear among others also from the system introduced by the ambassador, according to which anybody leaving the building has to inform him or if the ambassador is not there, he/she has to tell Lutheránus where he/she is going and when he/she is to return. One exception from that is possible, if somebody leaves upon the personal instruction of the ambassador. On this occasion Lutheránus has to be told only that they follow the personal instructions of the ambassador. Later Horváth gets to the point that he gives the instruction that Lutheránus should be advised if anyone stays in the building of the embassy after 10 p.m.¹⁸ This measure causes major difficulty to the secret staff working under the auspices of the embassy as only those do not know who, when and where is going, who does not want to. The report dated on 11th March 1952 well reflects the relationship of the ambassador to the residents, according to that the ambassador rides the high horse with the residents and imposes that many embassy tasks on the secret staff that these are at the cost of their special jobs. (The agents thought that by his superciliousness Horváth wanted to make them feel that they are by far second to him both as to knowledge and experience.) He acted like that in spite of the promise he had to make when he was appointed to ambassador in London, that he would render every help to the members of the residence in fulfilling their intelligence tasks.¹⁹

¹⁴ He took over the leadership of the Embassy from dr. BOLGÁR Elek. Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 112; folder No. 00428

¹⁵ Institute of Political History: 306.f. 2.ő.e

¹⁶ Institute of Political History: 306.f. 2.ő.e

¹⁷ See Annex No. 3

¹⁸ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

¹⁹ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 12th January, 1952

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

As I have already mentioned among the immigrant organisations, Eaton Place Club (EPC) was opened close to the embassy, which had also a restaurant²⁰. They requested Budapest for the permission of that in the report of 13th February 1952. Ambassador Imre Horváth wanted Mr. Mikó to enter into a tennis club probably with the aim of establishing contacts, and requested the approval of that from the headquarters.²¹

Another source of conflict was the ambassador stated that both the employees of the embassy and the residents received their salaries from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter: MFA) therefore he, the ambassador, had to observe the instructions of MFA only, and he was entitled to neglect the orders received extra for the residence. In the opinion of Lóránt however they should have to observe not the interests of MFA but the benefit of the Party and the people. Here the covered comrades working in London could again feel that it depended exclusively on the ambassador what they were allowed to do in the course of their secret job as the ambassador knew about everything and placed the embassy tasks over every other first, so the orders of state security could not be fulfilled at all or if only, in a very difficult way.

According to the evaluation dated on 11th March 1952 the ambassador had rather been an obstacle than a promoter of the residential work lately, in spite of his promise made at the time of his appointment, as I have mentioned earlier...²²

The relationship between the ambassador and the residence did not improve during the year at all, the ambassador took even measures which explicitly hindered the secret work of the agents. As it has been mentioned above, he stated that the members of the residence received their salaries not from the State Security Authority but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thus they were under the control of the ambassador.²³ In connection with the same he stated as well that he did not acknowledge any kind of special tasks, and there was only one man in the embassy to give instructions, and that was him, and this fact had to be noted by the Authority. He even forbade the head of the residence to assign any tasks to the secret staff until he, the ambassador had approved them previously. He backed the proposal submitted by Lutheránus against the organisation of the night duty, and he placed embassy work clearly over the secret tasks. He had the keys of the embassy building collected from the members of the residence²⁴ although the preliminary head, Comrade Tar had requested with stress not to do that as on occasion the entering of the embassy could save the secret workers from disclosure and capture. It jeopardises the incognito of the secret staff that he asks them openly at the meetings whether his ideas, e.g. the inclusion of women working at the embassy into the night duty, would fit into the 'special instructions'.²⁵

²⁰ See Page 7

²¹ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 13th February, 1952

²² Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 11th March, 1952

²³ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

²⁴ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

²⁵ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

It shows well as to how the presence of the ambassador made a difference in the maintenance of iron discipline that when neither the ambassador, nor the first subordinate took part in the meeting held on 14th May, 1952, so Comrade (Ms.) Zs(uzsa) Fazekas was in charge. She was unheeded, everyone was doing as one liked it at the moment. Also Fazekas mentions that this is probably due to the extreme rigour of the ambassador: 'when the cat's away, the mice will play'. This is however unfortunate because it may cause considerable damage also to the embassy, as for example Bánlaki, being a simple telephone operator, is inclined to begin serious negotiations with clients and in the lack of actual knowledge, makes mistakes; they document also a case when this comrade negotiated, playing the role of the consul, destroying by that the reputation of the body, too.²⁶

One of the best examples of public humiliation and deconspiracy was the event included in the report of 9th October 1952 cited several times: One day comrade Torda left the embassy extraordinarily, on the basis of the special permission of the ambassador. The ambassador entered this fact also into his calendar. (I remark that this was also available for unauthorised persons without problem.) Later Horváth called the head of the residence in the presence of Lutheránus to account, where Torda was. When he received the reply that in the knowledge of the resident it was personally the ambassador who sent Torda somewhere, he checked it in his calendar, and smiling at Lutheránus, he remarked that 'I have hardly forgotten that I have given a task to Comrade Torda recently'.²⁷ In my opinion the whole event was a show aimed at letting the head of the residence feel that the ambassador was second to none, and everybody owes obedience to him first of all.

The ambassador has appointed Házi (Lutheránus) to the first subordinate of the embassy, quasi his right arm, in spite of that he makes the members of the residence responsible for the organisation of all embassy tasks, may that be administration, assistance or even driving jobs. Everybody is afraid of the ambassador and hates him because he behaves towards all members (except for Házi) contemptuously. He on his part takes it even for degrading if some of his subordinates addresses him. Nobody is allowed to criticise him in the party meetings either because he qualifies that as interfering in his leadership.²⁸ In my opinion by these measures Imre Horváth wanted to build up the same type of personality cult and absolute, centralised power in London as Mátyás Rákosi did for himself in Budapest. Since for what other reason he would place himself second to none (even over the members of ÁVH), why he would behave towards everybody so as to be afraid of him, if not to achieve that everything depended only and exclusively on his person (and his 'favourite').

The purpose to centralise is well shown also by the fact that when the leaders of the party unit had to be elected in London, the ambassador did not feel any discussion on the merits necessary but the members had to approve the candidates named. Once also the

²⁶ Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 13, meeting of 14th May, 1952

²⁷ Cited from the report of 9th October, 1952 of Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1

²⁸ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

case occurred when Mihályi asked for a day free from embassy tasks because he wanted to take part in the holy mass on 26th August, 1952 remembering the recently died Eva Peron, and the ambassador claimed beside himself how anybody could get a day free and extra task, respectively, without his knowing and approval. The ambassador's opinion of his colleagues is well reflected by the following sentence: 'Mihályi is a lazybones, he does not learn, does not work, treats confidential data carelessly, he is careless in handling the residence's money. His wife is a hooker.'²⁹

Yet another good example how Imre Horváth neglects the special needs of the agents staying there, and how far he is not interested in their being disclosed, he wants to retain his power only: On one occasion, after an evening meeting Tar and Torda returned to the building of the embassy without extra permission. When the ambassador noticed that, had the officer on duty order Torda and Tar to him and beside himself he called them to account in the open street as to how they dared to stay in the building without his approval. When the agents replied that this was a single, extraordinary case, the ambassador cried back that he did not accept any kinds of such special cases. As already told, the case happened in the open street, and according to the report also an Englishman taking his dog for a walk listened to the quarrel to the end.³⁰ The case between Lóránt and the drunken man mentioned earlier and this latter one made the job of the eventual English observers a lot easier and could contribute to the disclosure of the agents working there.

The situation did not change even by the end of the year 1952, therefore the ambassador was instructed to make the job of the members of the residence easier. It is important to mention that the officers of the State Security Authority did embassy work only to disguise their real tasks. Under an extra point the ambassador's attention was called to that intelligence work was not restricted to the traditional working hours and it was possible that the secret agents would have to get into the building even in the night. Therefore, he is instructed to give back the keys³¹ taken from them in August, and not to deconspire them with calling them to account publicly. He may not stick to his earlier order as well, according to which Tar could not give any instruction to the members of the residence without the knowledge and approval of the ambassador. In order to eliminate mutual distrust Horváth has to more rely on Comrade Tar in future, in return for that Comrade Tar and the Budapest headquarters will do their best in supporting the ambassador.

SECURITY QUESTIONS AND NIGHT DUTY

In January 1952 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the embassy to protect also the code room independently from protecting the safe. This is essential because if the enemy would get into one of the rooms, the other could be protected yet separately, and the eventual damage could be mitigated this way. In compliance with the instruction of the ambas-

²⁹ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 29th August, 1952

³⁰ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, report of 9th October, 1952

³¹ See Page 10

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

sador Comrade Szabó (radio operator) and an embassy messenger were on duty in protection of the room. Szabó had to be involved in the protection of the safes of the residence but the ambassador insisted on the earlier stipulated course of the code room's protection (neglecting the needs of the residence). Therefore, the empty room on the 4th floor neighbouring the safes was installed radio room, so the protection of both could be solved at the same time, in spite of the fact that they should have been protected separately. The ambassador wanted to involve also other employees in it, the residents did not however approve that. The making of the working hours stricter is mentioned also here, which has significantly reduced the field of movement of residents, namely every occasion of leaving the embassy had to be reported to the ambassador or Házi.

The night duty should have been organised from 1st April by principle, it started however from 7th April only. They received information on the enemy's intention to disturb the celebration of 4th April, therefore they decided to postpone it, so as to avoid that Lutheránus was on duty in these days. They had to involve him, too, although they did not want to, as it would have been suspicious if he had not been involved. Night duty time begins after the working hours and lasts until 8:30 a.m. At that time the person in charge of the duty receives the keys of the safe in an envelope stamped (also the safe is stamped with the stamp of the MFA). It is interesting, and it very well shows the comrades' mistrust of Lutheránus, that when Lutheránus was on duty, he did not receive the true keys of the safe. The envelope containing the keys may be opened by the person on duty only, and exclusively in the case of danger. In such a case also the embassy messenger on duty who was the night watch man at the same time has to be alerted. In daytime the materials preserved in the safe are with the residents.³²

THE FIRST INTERNAL SUPERVISION

Due to the earlier operational difficulties and embassy problems the central, internal supervision of the residence became topical. As I have mentioned earlier the residence was established in August 1951 but during the year since than no one travelled there to check it. The agents staying there did not execute the first three-months work plan, and they did the second one also partially only. During an intelligence task the English disclosed two members, and at the time of the escape of Tabi in December 1951 the whole residence became deconspired, therefore they were not doing any intelligence work at this time.

In the course of the actual supervision in May of 1952 several points considerably helping the work of the residence had to be considered. These were:

- 1) placement of the residence, night duty, protection of the documents, opportunities to move within the embassy and in town
- 2) circumstances of report making, as it is important how much secret members 'deconspire' themselves towards the other employees of the embassy

³² Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1, 9th April, 1952: Organisation of night duty

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

- 3) What opportunities have the agents for using the London Hungarian Club, the Society of English-Hungarian Friendship, as well as the Press Agency for the purposes of research and further infiltration? How far have they proceeded in studying English clubs, and what social relations do they have?
- 4) How behave the members of the residence in general, and how do they relate to the head of the embassy, as well as to the employees? How far do they educate themselves politically, how do they arrange themselves time and material for their political education? How do they develop themselves in their profession, what opportunities they would have? How do they proceed in learning English, who teaches them, how many times a week they have lessons?
- 5) The organisational operation of the residence, what opportunity the members of the residence have to carry on both individual and joint discussions with the preliminary resident. According to what kind of method they distribute the tasks received from the headquarters, and on the basis of what point of view the resident assigns them to the particular members. It is important to survey also how far the particular employees are familiar with all of the tasks, as it is essential how much the individual jobs can be concealed from the comrades. It has to be agreed with the preliminary resident what type and kind of tasks may be assigned to which comrades because performing would be much easier in future if the central instruction explicitly included, who should execute it.
- 6) What is discipline like in the residence? Did they succeed in restoring the head's prestige lowered during the period of Lóránd?
- 7) Discussion of the individual problems of the members of the residence, e.g. the questions of flat, salary, and family difficulties etc.
- 8) The leader of the embassy should be asked about how he evaluates the work, the individual behaviour of his subordinates, what problems he personally has in connection with the people working on secret assignment there.
- 9) It must be agreed with the preliminary resident, according to which points the man with the cover name Temesvári should be employed, how his person, his politically proper 'education' and supervision have to be dealt with.
- 10) It must be checked how far the comrades staying in London executed the work plan scheduled for the period from February to April. They stipulate directives for the period from May to July in the framework of which also actual matters are on the agenda, among others the preparations to recruit the man with the cover name Kárpáti or the studying of the dentist, Dr. Sándor Ledermann on the occasion of a dental treatment.
- 11) We will discuss the difficulties of the move of the embassy, within that those of the placement of the residence, further the question of buying a car for the residence, the placement and legalisation of the safe.³³

³³ Folder No. ÁBTL OL-8-003-1 of 9th May, 1952 – Plan to supervise the London residence

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám

According to Imre Kutas (assistant to the Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) leading the internal supervision, the comrades staying in London are not due to their expertise there but only because they are politically reliable.³⁴ Therefore the question occurs in everyone rightly, what quality of work may be expected from those who have been delegated to foreign mission in spite of their being dilettantes, due to their reliability. Apart from that Kutas reports as a failure that work is not organised, the documents lie in a confusion (confidential documents are stored in the writing table's drawer, confidential folders disappear, the safes are not stamped, i.e. it may not be made clear whether somebody has opened it in the night; the employees do not keep a register of the documents as to with whom they are. The keys of the safes are given to the person on duty without any kind of 'protection'. In the opinion of Kutasi the keys may not be just handed over but they have to be placed in an envelope. The inventory of the embassy is inexact, the employees do not keep order on the tables – secret documents may be mixed up with newspapers, and may then disappear. And as it is mentioned in all major important reports, except for 1-2 persons nobody progressed in language learning at all (this is mentioned by Házi, too). Therefore, Kutasi wanted to request the ambassador to be stricter to the comrades (it seems that the rigour of the ambassador did not include the general order, only the execution of tasks): 'for the much money, which may be spent here as a result of the hard work of the Hungarian workers, also sacrifices should be made'. Also Szedlák remarks that bad relations are general within the embassy therefore they do not even speak with each other about the problems. Tar remarked that he did not exactly understand the working progress in the filing department therefore files could get lost. Those working there does not at all train themselves politically.³⁵

Apart from the above also the fact should be mentioned that during the period of more than one year which the agents spent there they did not establish a single contact which could provide some information on the 'armaments race', popular in the age.³⁶ Knowing the above circumstances we may not wonder; it is however more interesting that the Budapest headquarters did not exert greater pressure on the employees in London in this field.

In 1951 both the resident and the ambassador were changed in London, which made the atmosphere a little lighter and even some real operative work was done. Of course, not everything went well for all of a sudden, but there were signs of change. I have to admit that this is only one aspect. I would be very interesting to see the other side, that is what the English have seen from these "actions". Maybe one day – continuing this research – the English files will also be published.

³⁴ Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 13

³⁵ Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 13, report on the internal supervision of 1952

³⁶ Item No. MOL XIX-J-1-j 13, meeting of 19th May, 1952

HADTUDOMÁNYI SZEMLE

2017. X. évfolyam 2. szám
