

June 16, 1989

KGB Chief Kryuchkov's Report, 16 June 1989

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Summary:

KGB Chief Kryuchkov reports that research into Soviet repression in the 1930's through 1950's reveals that Imre Nagy willingly worked for the NKVD as an informant. Using the pseudonym "Volodya," Nagy information is said to have led to sentences for Hungarian émigrés. Kryuchkov states that the documents should be shown to the Secretary General of the HSWP and possibly used in response to calls for Nagy's rehabilitation.

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Contents:

Translation - English

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SPECIAL FILE
Of Special Importance

To the CC CPSU
Committee of State Security KGB of the USSR
June 16, 1989

“About the Archive Materials Pertaining to Imre Nagy's Activities in the USSR”

The data we received show that the full scale campaign of the opposition forces in Hungary connected with the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy, the former leader of the Hungarian government during the period of the 1956 events, is aimed at discrediting the whole path traversed by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), undermining the party's authority and present leadership, and stirring up unfriendly feelings toward the USSR among the Hungarian people.

The opposition organizations demand a full rehabilitation of Imre Nagy. He has acquired the halo of a martyr, of an exceptionally honest and principled person. Special emphasis in all this uproar about Imre Nagy is placed on the fact that he was a “consistent champion against Stalinism,” “an advocate of democracy and the fundamental restoration of socialism.” In a whole series of publications in the Hungarian press, one is made to think that Nagy, [solely] as a result of Soviet pressure, was accused of counterrevolutionary activities, sentenced to death, and executed. The opposition is trying to raise Nagy on a pedestal and make him a symbol of the “struggle for democracy, progress, and the genuine independence of Hungary.”

In the HSWP leadership, there is no united opinion as to the extent Imre Nagy should be rehabilitated. Deciding above all to strengthen their influence in the party and society, I. Pozsgai, M. Sjures, and I. Horvat sometimes openly flirt with the opposition in praising the services and dignity of Imre Nagy. K. Grosz, R. Nyers, M. Jasso and others, in advocating his legal rehabilitation, believe that this full scale campaign of unrestrained praise for Nagy will strike at the HSWP and at Soviet Hungarian relations. There are many mid level and especially senior Hungarian communists who are very critical of such a campaign. Widespread among them is the opinion, founded on the stories of several party veterans, that the behavior of Imre Nagy in the 1920 30s in Hungary and the USSR was not as irreproachable, as is being suggested to the Hungarian population, which is under the control of the opposition's press.

In the course of the KGB's work on archival materials dealing with the repression in the USSR in the second half of the thirties to the beginning of the 1950s, documents were uncovered that shed a light on the earlier, not well known activities of Nagy in our country. From the indicated documents it follows that, having emigrated to the USSR in 1929, Nagy from the very beginning, of his own initiative, sought out contact with the security organs and in 1933 volunteered to become an agent (a secret informer) of the Main Administration of the security organs of the NKVD. He worked under the pseudonym “Volodya.” He actively used Hungarian and other political emigres—as well as Soviet citizens—for the purpose of collecting data about the people who, for one reason or another, came to the attention of the NKVD. We have the document that proves that in 1939 Nagy offered to the NKVD for “cultivation” 38 Hungarian political emigres, including Ferenc Munnich. In another list he named 150 Hungarians, Bulgarians, Russians, Germans, and Italians that he knew personally, and with whom in case of necessity, he could “work.” On the basis of the reports by Nagy—“Volodya”—several groups of political émigrés, consisting of members of Hungarian, German, and other Communist parties, were sentenced. They were all accused of “anti communist,” “terrorist,” and “counterrevolutionary” activities (the cases of the “Agrarians,” “Incorrigibles,” “The Agony of the Doomed,” and so on). In one of the documents (June 1940) it is indicated that Nagy “gave material” on 15 arrested “enemies of the people,” who had worked in the International Agrarian

Institute, the Comintern, and the All Union Radio Committee. The activities of "Volodya" led to the arrest of the well known scholar E. Varga, and of a whole series of Hungarian Communist Party leaders (B. Varga Vago, G. Farkas, E. Neiman, F. Gabor, and others). A part of these were shot, a part were sentenced to various terms in prison and exile. Many in 1954 1963 were rehabilitated.

From the archival materials it does not follow that Nagy was an employee of the NKVD by force. Moreover, in the documents it is directly indicated that "Volodya" displayed considerable "interest and initiative in his work and was a qualified agent."

Taking into account the nature and direction of the wide scale propagandistic campaign in Hungary, it would probably be expedient to report to the General Secretary of the Hungarian HSWP and K. Gros about the documents that we have and advise them about their possible use.

Chairman of the KGB V. KRYUCHKOV