

DOCUMENT NO. 8

**Report by Soviet Deputy Interior Minister M. N. Holodkov
to Interior Minister N. P. Dudorov,
November 15, 1956**

The following report from the Soviet deputy interior minister to the minister provides details about the arrest, imprisonment and deportation of Hungarians during the period of the Soviet intervention. The document was eventually submitted to the CPSU CC and presents exact data about the detainees, as well as describing the difficulties facing Soviet authorities in Hungary. Interestingly, the author assumes that some of the arrests were unjustified. The enclosed letter from Hungarian officers supports his assumption.

November 15, 1956

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Minister of the Interior of the USSR
Comrade N. P. Dudorov

I report that in accordance with your instructions I, along with a group of Ministry of the Interior officials and Defense Ministry representative Colonel Berezin, arrived in the city of Mukachevo on November 6 where I established contact with representative of Soviet Forces Command General Colonel Comrade Komarov, and agreed with him on the method and site for processing participants in the counterrevolutionary uprising in Hungary who were apprehended by units of the Soviet Army. It was decided that Soviet Army units would transport all detainees to Uzhgorod prison.

On November 7, during our conversation over secure line (VCh), Comrade Serov informed me that the number of detainees would reach 4,000 to 5,000 people. In this connection, I made a decision, together with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior of the Ukrainian SSR, that in addition to the Uzhgorod prison, the prisons in Stryy, Drogobych, Chernovtsy and Stanislav would be designated for placement of detainees.

The detainees began to arrive at Uzhgorod prison on November 8. On that day, 22 persons arrived from Debrecen and Miskolc.

By November 15, 1956, 846 arrestees had arrived in the Uzhgorod prison (among them 23 women), 463 of whom were transported on to the prison at Stryy, Drogobych Province. Subsequent groups of arrivals will be dispersed to prisons in Stanislav, Chernovtsy, and Drogobych.

The inmates are being held under the same conditions as those who are under investigation.

The largest number of arrestees has come from the areas of Budapest (548), Veszprém (90), Kaposvár (45), Szombathely (55), and Miskolc (20).

Among the arrestees are a substantial number of Hungarian Workers' Party members servicemen of the Hungarian Army, and the student youth, as well as 68 underage persons born between 1939 and 1942, including 9 girls. No excesses were registered during the processing of arrestees.

It is necessary to note that we do not have properly issued documents for a large number of arrestees. The materials that we have are mostly brief notes issued by local Hungarian authorities, the counterintelligence organs of the Soviet Army, reports of the military, or lists that mention only identifying [ustanovochnykh] information about the detainees.

Many of those arrested asked us why they, Hungarian citizens, found themselves on the territory of the Soviet Union. They claimed that they did not speak out against either the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government, or the Soviet troops.

Hungarian Army servicemen Mihály Szepesi and László Szőlósi presented us with a letter (copy attached), in which they assert that they were honest Communists, and were very disappointed that they could not actively fight for the government of János Kádár at such a difficult time for Hungary.

Hungarian Army Lieutenant György Vig, brought in from Miskolc, stated that he did not take part in the uprising. In his capacity as interpreter for one of Hungarian Army units before his arrest, he maintained connections with the command of units of the Soviet Army, and on orders of his commanders assisted in their movement around the territory of Miskolc. He said that other Hungarians held in the same prison cell with him, in particular Rudolf Földvári (member of the Central Committee of the HWP), deputy of the Parliament, first secretary of the Borsod County Committee of the HWP) were supporters of János Kádár and friends of the Soviet Union, that their arrest was a mistake, and that Soviet comrades would be looking carefully at their cases and they would be rehabilitated. (Rudolf Földvári was sent to Debrecen according to Comrade I. A. Serov's instructions).

Among those brought to the Uzhgorod prison from Szolnok, there was the chief physician of the city clinic András Sebyk [Sebök], who was detained (according to the record) as an active participant in the riots, who spoke at a rebel rally with a proposal to appeal to the United States and the United Nations for help.

In a conversation with us, he reiterated his speech at the meeting, and stated that he was pursuing the sole purpose of dissuading a great crowd of agitated people gathered in the city square from mounting an armed uprising against units of the Soviet Army, which had surrounded and disarmed the Hungarian Army unit deployed in the city.

On November 13, 1956, András Sebyk was released from prison and sent back to Hungary.

Other inmates also proclaimed their innocence and asked that their cases be considered as soon as possible.

It is clear from our conversations with arrestees, and also from the fact that there are no properly prepared arrest documents for many of them--and in many cases not even lists of names--that Soviet Army units have to work in very difficult and complex conditions in locating and detaining the participants in the riots.

Stories of Soviet Army officers who have brought arrestees to Uzhgorod are evidence of that.

Having accompanied a group of arrestees from Debrecen and Miskolc, Counterintelligence officer Captain Zlygostev told us that when he personally took part in an operation to arrest rebels he had to face situations in a number of villages where there was such

an absence of authority that there was nobody to ask who, among the local residents, had taken part in the counterrevolutionary activities.

The information cited above, and also the presence of underaged persons between 14 and 17 years of age, among them girls, gives grounds to suppose that there could have been some unjustified arrests.

It seems necessary to send responsible and competent officials (maybe even Hungarian ones), who would be able to quickly consider the cases of all imprisoned persons and release those who were arrested without sufficient grounds, to locations where arrested Hungarian citizens are being held.

This is even more necessary because, as is clear from the cable addressed to you from Minister of the Interior of the Ukrainian SSR Comrade Brovkin from November 15 of this year, the arrestees are demanding that consideration of their cases be expedited and are expressing their dissatisfaction with their imprisonment, while only eight investigators of the KGB and prosecutors office are currently investigating their cases.

Many inmates appealed to us and to the prison administration with requests to inform their relatives of their fate, to bring to their notice that they are alive, because, according to the inmates' statements, at the moment of their arrest rumors were spreading among the population to the effect that arrestees were being taken to Siberia, or to be executed.

The inmates also request that they be allowed to read newspapers and listen to the radio. Some of them are expressing dissatisfaction with the food.

Upon arrival, I issued orders to switch all arrestees to food norm No. 2, i.e. the same as for inmates serving a sentence [*srochnykh zaklyuchennykh*], along with a ration of tobacco, and also to trade the Forints that were confiscated from them for Soviet currency at the established exchange rate, as well as to give arrestees an opportunity to purchase first priority items (soap, toothbrushes, tooth powder, etc.) in the prison shop.

In addition, I would consider the following to be expedient:

1. To allow arrestees to read Hungarian newspapers published under the control of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government. In this connection, to organize delivery of such newspapers to the prisons via the Soviet Forces Command in Hungary.
2. To introduce proposals to the Hungarian government that the Hungarian authorities inform relatives of arrestees that the latter were detained by the Hungarian authorities and remain in good health (without mentioning where they are being detained).
3. The organs of internal affairs should transport Hungarian citizens who have been released and are subject to return to their homeland to the border checkpoint at Chop; from there they should be transferred to representatives of the Hungarian regime, in connection with which, the Soviet Forces Command should be required to work out an agreement with the government of the Hungarian People's Republic regarding the method for processing those persons by the Hungarian authorities in Chop, and their transportation to their final destinations.

Holodkov

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