

RAJK IS "REHABILITATED"

Former Foreign Minister Laszlo Rajk of Hungary will not benefit by the decision of the Hungarian Government, announced yesterday over Radio Budapest, to "rehabilitate" him. His body, like that of John Brown of Osawatomie, lies moldering in the grave. The Government can reverse the decree by which it sent him to the gallows in October, 1949; it can declare his "confession" spurious and the charges against him forged and false; it can proclaim that he was, after all, a patriot; it can play its part in the vast and intricate mechanism by which Tito has been taken back into the orthodox Communist fold, by which the Red memory of Stalin is now being blackened, and by which communism is trying to present a more civilized face to the world.

The Hungarian Government can do this. It can do it of its own free will or because Moscow so orders. The Russian Government and the satellite Governments can "rehabilitate" all their dead victims, they can release all their live victims, they can promise with one accord to deal justly in the future and to walk with mercy.

But there is one thing they cannot do. They cannot restore life to Laszlo Rajk or to any other of the countless dead of their betrayed, distorted, merciless revolution—that dream turned into nightmare which they call communism. They cannot bring Laszlo Rajk back to life, nor, as long as they rule by blood and iron and lies, can they bring Hungary's hope and freedom, or any Communist country's hope and freedom, back to life.

Rajk is dead. Stalin is dead. Rajk is "rehabilitated." Stalin is dethroned within his ghostly palace, and the moving hand of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party has dutifully written what was written of Nebuchadnezzar, "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*"

The dead are dead and will so remain. Truth lives, but who that is subject to a Communist tyranny can know what the truth is? If Communist policy so dictates, Rajk can be condemned again and Stalin be again made a god.

The lesson strikes home to the heart of democracy. Only in freedom can we be safe from lies. Only in freedom can we be sure that the Rajks, if innocent, will not be condemned, and the Stalins, if guilty, will not be exalted. When the lights go up again in Hungary and other Communist lands, when the press and air are made free, when travelers can go and come as they desire—then and not before we may believe that there has been a real change of heart; then and not before we may believe that truth itself has been rehabilitated.

The New York Times

Published: March 30, 1956

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