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KHRUSHCHEV'S SPEECH TO THE TEACHER'S CONGRESS

The report which Khrushchev has made to the All-Russian Teacher's Congress¹ covers both the foreign and domestic field; on each subject, the Soviet leader personally made a number of important new announcements, thus giving every appearance of remaining the Kremlin's sole mouthpiece whenever a major initiative is felt necessary.

Part I: Foreign Affairs

As regards Austria, the returning traveller continued to advocate peaceful coexistence, and showed that he means business by boasting of the 5-year trade agreement which is to be concluded between the two countries. Interestingly however, he did not even hint at the really long-term trade planning for a period ranging between ten and twenty years, of the type recently discussed with a British fact-finding mission² by A. Kosygin, 1st Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, who was a member of the Soviet delegation to Austria.

Khrushchev admitted that he had made economic concessions to Austria, but was at pains to point with pride to his firmness in limiting them. He did not tell his Soviet audience that he has conceded at least \$17,500,000 from their inadequate future income,³ nor that he had failed in one of his major objectives, which was to persuade the Austrians to absorb some of the embarrassing Soviet surplus of crude oil.

Thus there was no satisfaction in this part of the speech for any advocates of a "hard line" in foreign policy. While the "left extremists" in Peking may be mollified by Khrushchev's alleged "firmness" towards Austria, they will be hard put to find much evidence of it embodied in the concrete economic results.

They may also be irritated by the Soviet leader's insistence that: "we do not drag people into the ranks of the communists. Man cannot be driven into paradise with a stick." Coming at a time when the Chinese are using most of the paraphernalia of modern war against the unfortunate Tibetans, this type of theory must strike them as both tactless and inopportune.

Discussing his reception in Austria which every Western observer agreed was cool to the point of frigidity, Khrush-

¹Tass 9 July 1960.

²See Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 6 July 1960, Daily Telegraph, 6 July 1960.

³New York Times, 9 July 1960, N.Y. edition.

shev used the excuse that 90% of the population are Catholics. Although the proportion he gave is correct (based on 1951 figures), the admission to a congress of teachers, who are supposed to be militant atheists in their own country, must have given them a sobering indication of the prospects for an atheist dogma in this part of Western Europe.

The speech was larded with routine denunciations of W. Germany, the United States and a number of countries such as Norway, Italy and Japan which provide facilities for allied aircraft. Attacks of this type may have had a more sympathetic hearing in Moscow than in Austria itself, where they were carried out in so tactless a manner that by the end of the visit, the Austrian press, which had been largely favorable at the beginning, was almost uniformly and severely critical both of Khrushchev and his more extreme interpretations of "neutrality". Indeed the Austrian Chancellor, Herr Raab, in a subsequent speech (July 10) has categorically disassociated himself from his guest's views, and said that he had found the strictures on Dr. Adenauer "personally particularly unpleasant as they were completely groundless."⁴ Khrushchev, Herr Raab said, was the chief exponent of a Party whose ideas 97% of the Austrian people rejected.

As for Cuba, Khrushchev's remarks were wild in the extreme. He said that the socialist countries would help Cuba to frustrate "the economic blockade declared by the US", apparently oblivious of the fact that his economic sallies of this type in the UAR and Iraq, for example, have brought the Communist Parties in these areas few conspicuous dividends. He also threatened to use his much-rattled rockets against the US "should the aggressive forces in the Pentagon dare to start intervention against Cuba." Clearly these verbally menacing but little used rockets do not constitute a serious military ultimatum, since no one can suppose that Khrushchev wishes to "mourir pour Castro", but it has long been a standard technique of his (ever since Suez) to issue this kind of statement in order to be able to claim to have "saved" some small country (e.g., Syria, Iraq) from "imperialism" at a later date.

In any event, as Le Monde (11 July 1960) points out, the Cuban government has not asked for Soviet aid, and is not seriously concerned about the possibility of an American invasion. Le Monde adds "this is not the first time that Khrushchev has offered a country which has not asked for it protection against a highly improbable danger." Austria is a typical case fresh in Khrushchev's memory. Herr Raab reminded him yesterday that "the definition and implementation of our neutrality is exclusively our own concern." Were Castro as close to the USSR as Austria, he would no doubt feel the same way.

⁴London Times, 11 July 1960.

Part II: Domestic Affairs

Khrushchev's report on the Soviet economy shows a small deceleration of the rate of expansion of industrial output in the first half of 1960 (+10% on the 1st half of 1959), whereas last year at this time the growth over 1958 reported by the Central Statistical Administration was 12%.⁵ However, he also claimed that the industrial production plan has been overfulfilled by 4%, and since the plan aims at an increase for the whole of 1960 of 8.1% for industrial output over 1959,⁶ there is evidence of a continuing robust growth rate. Of the major industrialized countries in the free world, only Italy and Japan have recently demonstrated such an expansive capacity.

Khrushchev indicated that the volume of industrial production in the first half of 1959 was worth almost 700 thousand million rubles (a figure not given in the C.S.A.'s announcement last year) and that the labor productivity target was overfulfilled. He did not specify the degree of overfulfillment, but it was probably not as much as four per cent, because in that case he would have boasted of the achievement. The deduction would seem to be that the manpower target has been once again exceeded.

This conclusion is also suggested by the statement that 20,000,000 people now have switched to either a seven or a six-hour working day, and that the remaining 39,000,000 in the "workers and employees" category will go over to it by the end of the year. When it is realized that the best available Western estimates suggest a farm labor population in 1970 almost as great as it is today (about 45,000,000), the magnitude of Khrushchev's underemployment problems in the years ahead can be fully appreciated. The non-agricultural labor force is growing at about 1.7 million a year, and jobs somehow have to be found for this huge number. Khrushchev's recipe is to cut hours, in order to increase the number of shifts which can be worked.

In the section devoted to education, Khrushchev introduced no new themes. He admitted that a small section of youth is nihilist in outlook and disinclined to work, blaming poor indoctrination rather than "capitalist survivals", the stock excuse in the past, for its negative attitude. He also noted the continuing opposition of some parents and teachers to his polytechnical education and amply confirmed the Djilas theory of the new class by his attack on high officials who pull strings on behalf of their children.

More important was the discussion of the emerging academic proletariat - the unfortunate secondary school graduates who, because of the lack of opportunities for white-collar workers in industry, end up nowadays on livestock breeding

⁵ Izvestia, 14 July 1959.

⁶ See Background Information, October 29, 1959, "The 1960 Soviet Plan".

farms or as skilled laborers. Here Khrushchev suggested a greater diversion of manpower to the service trades, and to "other sectors of the economy" about which he was extremely vague.

In the sphere of ideology, the Party leader seemed to argue that as long as the family remains a dominant influence in bringing up children, the "new Soviet man" is unlikely to emerge. Consequently he advocated greater Party interference with family life, since otherwise the children would take after their parents. Presumably the latter at present possess little of the communist Weltanschauung, and it seems distinctly probable that if Khrushchev succeeds in his ambitious efforts to provide better housing for them they will become still more inclined to resist the efforts of the Party to monopolize their children. After 42 years of revolution the new man is still a long way off. The new class, on the evidence of Khrushchev, is definitely here.

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