

First Reaction to Change on Soviet Attitude on Cuba

Khrushchev's message to President Kennedy broadcast by Radio Moscow on October 28 at 1500 hrs. (Hungarian time) on the withdrawal of "allegedly aggressive" weapons from Cuba caught the Hungarian regime by surprise. All through October 27 Radio Budapest and the papers of the capital had been doing their best to keep anti-US sentiment at a high pitch. Thus Radio Budapest broadcast a special feature (written by Imre Komor, a former "Stalinist" and notorious for his violently anti-American utterances) devoted to the "espionage activity of the United States.

From 1900 to 2000 hrs. the home service of Radio Budapest broadcast in three installments the message of the Soviet leader but refrained from commenting on it. Conversely, Radio Budapest's "Homeland" Program for Hungarians living abroad, was quick to add its comment to the event of the day.

On the following day both Homeland Radio and foreign policy commentaries in the home service dealt in much detail with the issue. All the commentaries of Radio Budapest stress the close link between Kennedy's October 27 message to the Soviet leader on lifting the blockade and guaranteeing Cuba against aggression provided the Soviet government was prepared to withdraw the reputedly aggressive weapons from the island satellite. The Soviet government, it was said, had decided to accept Kennedy's proposal and was expecting in turn that the United State government would live up to its promise. "Homeland" Radio pointed out on October 29 that "if the President of the United States is prepared to honor with deeds the trust advanced to him (by the Soviet Union) and fill in the present blank check with an actual commitment, that is to guarantee, in cooperation with the United Nations, that Cuba will not suffer either direct or indirect attacks from the United States, peace can be restored in the Caribbean Sea area."

On October 28, a commentary in the "Homeland" Program stressed that once and for all the threat of an invasion of Cuba should be averted. This implied not only the silencing of Cuban exiles now living in the United States who were demanding the toppling of the Castro regime but the withdrawal of United States support from the Latin American "dictatorships" which were also in favor of a military action against Cuba. In brief the

commentary stated that the United States guarantee for Cuba would be effective only if it was recognized that Cuba may live under a political system of its choice with no objection to it either from the United States or any other country supported by the United States Government."

It transpires from a commentary broadcast in the home service of Radio Budapest on October 29 that the decision of the Soviet Government on the Cuban issue might have been prompted by Soviet apprehensions of an impending invasion of Cuba. The commentary says in fact that while there was an exchange of messages between President Kennedy and Khrushchev, "extremist American circles" appeared to be ready to go as far as the ultimate catastrophe. Members of the extremist clique of generals were not satisfied with the intensification of the blockade but intended to make "tabula rasa" with an open aggression against Cuba. The new effort of the Soviet Union to save the peace was received with great relief and satisfaction by the international public opinion as Khrushchev's message to Kennedy made it possible to pull back the Pentagon from the very brink. Hence the implication would seem to be on hand that Nikita Khrushchev and the sober, level-headed, flexible policy of his Government not only saved world peace, but in doing so, virtually saved Kennedy from his own warmongers.

A dispatch from the Moscow correspondent of the Hungarian News Agency broadcast by the home service of Radio Budapest on October 29 rejected as "ridiculous" the assertion of certain western papers that the "solution" which eventually emerged from the exchange of messages between President Kennedy and Khrushchev would amount to a victory for American diplomacy operating from a position of strength. The dispatch stressed that a peaceful settlement of the issue should rest on the safety and territorial inviolability of Cuba on which President Kennedy has entered on a "solemn pledge" under the pressure of world public opinion, the intervention of the neutral countries and the stand taken by Khrushchev.

Extraordinary Subsidies to Hungarian Churches to be Continued in 1963

A Reuter report from Vienna quotes an announcement of the Hungarian Government disclosed by the Hungarian News Agency on October 29 according to which extraordinary subsidies to Hungarian churches are going to be continued also in 1963 and will amount to 80 million forints. It has already been hinted by Catholic and Jewish religious circles that subsidies in the coming year would be kept on the 1962 level. At present Hungarian churches are receiving financial support from the State of two kinds: ordinary and extraordinary subsidies. The reason is the following. It was

agreed upon in Fall 1948 between the State and the non-Catholic churches and in August 1950 between the State and the Catholic Church that state subsidies would gradually come to an end within the next 20 years. Until January 1954 subsidies should be continued unchanged. A 25 per cent cut should become effective at that date, a further cut of the same order five years later, that is in January 1959 and so on until the subsidies ceased completely. Already in the Rakosi era the leaders of the various churches succeeded in obtaining from the State the continuation of the subsidies on the unreduced level despite the formal provisions of the 1948 and 1950 agreements. This eventually led to the two kinds of subsidies. Namely, the sum of money which should have been withdrawn from the churches in 1954 had the aforesaid agreements been implemented, have been paid to the churches as extraordinary subsidies in addition to the ordinary subsidies to which the churches are entitled under these agreements. In January 1959 the time would have come for a further 25 per cent cut, leaving ordinary subsidies 50 per cent less than the pre-1948 and 1950 levels. Again the State waved its right to enforce the cut and therefore half of the subsidies are given as ordinary, the other half as extraordinary financial support. The Government has reserved itself the right to reexamine the financial situation of the churches every Fall and pass its decision on the matter accordingly. In earlier years (1958-1961) the decision on the maintaining of the overall subsidies on the previous level was made public in January. This year the Government may have been induced to disclose its decision earlier, in view of the Ecumenical Council.

As to the amount of the overall subsidies, there has been an upward trend from 1956 to 1960 while in 1961 the overall subsidies were reduced by about eight per cent in keeping, as it was officially pointed out, with the general efforts of saving in all fields of economic life. Here are the year by year figures: in 1956 the churches received 63 million forints, in 1957 75 millions, in 1958 86 millions, in 1959 87 millions. The 8 per cent cut reduced the subsidies to about 80 million forints, the sum which was maintained in 1962 and is going to be kept - as mentioned above also throughout 1963.