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CHINESE REACTIONS TO THE HUNGARIAN EVENTS

1. It appears that the Government of the Chinese People's Republic at first gave a sympathetic hearing to the movements initiated by the Polish and Hungarian peoples to press their claims to national independence and equality with the U.S.S.R. The statement issued by the Government of the C.P.R. on 1st November 1956 made it explicit that the C.P.R. supported the Soviet declaration of 30th October, that the five principles of peaceful coexistence should be applied particularly to the mutual relations between the socialist countries, that in the past mistakes had been made in the relations between the socialist countries as seen from the handling of the 1948-1949 Yugoslav situation and the recent happenings in Poland, and that neglect of the principle of equality among socialist countries, particularly the mistake of chauvinism by a big country, "inevitably" resulted in "serious damage to the solidarity and common cause of the socialist countries". It was noted that "the people of Poland and Hungary in the recent happenings have raised demands that democracy, independence and equality be strengthened and the material well-being of the people be raised on the basis of developing production. These demands are completely proper. Correct satisfaction of these demands is not only helpful to consolidation of the people's democratic system in these countries but also favourable to the unity among the socialist countries,..... We consider it absolutely necessary to differentiate between the just demands of the broadest mass of the people and the conspiratorial activities of an extremely small number of reactionary elements".
2. An editorial in Jenmin Jih Pao of 3rd November is indicative of the shift in the Chinese position with regard to the Hungarian events.

The emphasis was now on "the unity of the socialist countries headed by the great Soviet Union" and "the highest duty to do everything possible to consolidate and strengthen the unity of the socialist countries in the interests of their own peoples and in the interests of all mankind". Although it was stated that "the Chinese people are profoundly sympathetic to the Hungarian people in their plight under the recent events" and that "their hearts go out to the honest working people, the genuine patriots and the staunch socialist fighters of Hungary", it was quickly added that "Hungary can attain independence, freedom and happiness only as a socialist country. To depart from socialism is to depart from a bright future, to bring grave disaster to the Hungarian nation". Thus, in the view of the C.P.R., no freedom was conceivable for Hungary except within the framework of the "great internationalist solidarity of the socialist countries, with the Soviet Union at the centre". The following day Jenmin Jih Pao denounced outright the Nagy Government for its "betrayal of the cause of socialism in Hungary and the national interests of the country". On 5th November Jenmin Jih Pao reported on the "joyful news" that the Kadar Government had been set up in Hungary. The stand of the Soviet Union towards the Hungarian events was described as the "just stand of proletarian internationalism". Discussions of the Hungarian problem and adoption of resolutions on the subject in the U.N. General Assembly were subsequently deemed by the C.P.R. an "illegal" intervention in the internal affairs of Hungary.

3. On 23rd December it was announced that Premier Chou En-lai had accepted an invitation of the Soviet Union to visit the latter in January 1957. The next day Chou's plan to include Poland in his

itinerary was made public. In this connexion the Sydney Morning Herald expressed the view that Moscow was "bringing in the new Communist world to redress the balance of the old". Premier Chou En-lai visited the U.S.S.R. during 7 - 11 and 17 - 19 January; he was in Poland during 11 - 16 January, in Hungary during 16 - 17 of the month. A joint Soviet-Chinese declaration issued on 18th January noted "an absolutely identical viewpoint regarding the present-day international situation and important international questions" between the two governments. It further noted that "the armed uprising in Hungary was provoked by the imperialist aggressive quarters and the Hungarian counter-revolutionary elements". In view of the "subversive and provocative actions" of "imperialist aggressive circles", the further strengthening of the unity and cooperation among socialist countries was considered especially important. It should not be overlooked in this regard that the emphasis of the joint statement was as much on the "Leninist principles of national equality" as on the "principles of proletarian internationalism". In the joint Polish-Chinese statement of 16th January, support for the Kadar Government and its programme was spelled out. The joint Hungarian-Chinese statement issued on 17th January stated that the two government delegations had reached "unanimous views" regarding the Hungarian situation; they condemned instigation of the imperialist reactionary forces in the uprising; they also criticized an "illegal" interference in Hungarian internal affairs by "U.N. under U.S. manipulation".

4. On 29th December 1956 a lengthy article of momentous theoretical interest entitled "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" appeared in Jenmin Jih Pao and later reprinted in Pravda. It was evidently a product of reflections on the part of the

Chinese Communist leadership on the Stalinist abuses and especially on the recent turmoils in Eastern Europe. Though the specific Soviet action in Hungary was defended, the article was basically an attempt to forestall a further tendency towards "great-nation chauvinism" within the Communist camp by taking into account historical characteristics of each nation, national independence and equality as well as international solidarity of the socialist countries. The theme of the contradictions within a socialist system in the above article was later developed in a speech on "The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" by Mao Tse-tung made on 27th February. There was a frequent reference in the speech to the Hungarian uprising. The speech derives its significance partly from its revelation of the extent of the impact that the Hungarian events had on the minds of some of the Chinese Communists:

"Certain people in our country were delighted when the Hungarian events took place. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would demonstrate in the streets against the People's Government. Such hopes ran counter to the interests of the masses and therefore could not possibly get their support"

"If we want to evaluate correctly the results of our efforts to suppress counter-revolution here, let us see what effect the Hungarian events had in our country. These events caused some of our intellectuals to lose their balance a bit but there were no squalls in our country".

5. It is well-nigh impossible to gauge exactly how a certain international event influenced the way of thinking of a people. Obviously the difficulty of assessment is multiplied when measurement is attempted of public opinion under a totalitarian regime. That certain doubts and reservations entertained by some segments of intellectuals in mainland China regarding the nature of the Communist regime would have been intensified by the Hungarian events

seems beyond refutation. According to Peking, N.C.N.A., of 8th August, for instance, Kao Chuen-fu, member of the central committee of the Chiu San Society and vice-president of the Nanking Teachers' College, had admitted that he "organized a faction against the Communist Party in an attempt to create a 'Hungarian incident' in institutes of higher learning" in mainland China.

6. So far as the recent policy of the Government of the C.P.R. is concerned, there is no evidence that it departs to any significant extent from the Soviet policy with regard to the Hungarian question. Thus, no trace can be found in the present Chinese stand on the Hungarian question of its initial espousal of the Polish and Hungarian movement towards more independence vis-a-vis U.S.S.R. A commentary in Ta Kung Pao of 24th August, for instance, expressed its opposition to the convening on 10th September of a special U.N. General Assembly session to discuss the report on Hungary, which it considered "only serves the imperialist attempt to stage an anti-Soviet push". Such Chinese support for the Soviet stand with regard to Hungary despite its probable serious reservations about the past Soviet conduct in relation to the Eastern European Communist nations appears to stem from its awareness of the need to prevent the breakup of the Communist bloc headed by the U.S.S.R. whose assistance remains an indispensable prerequisite for the continuance of the Chinese Communist regime itself.