

June 6, 1963

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Fidel Castro's Television Report on his Trip to the Soviet Union

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Summary:

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Erzsébet Görög adds to a television report of Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union from 27 April-3 June 1963. Görög makes note of the fact that Castro uses a television interview to describe his trip instead of a standard, large speech. Görög finds a charismatic appeal in Castro.

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Havana, 6 June 1963

Subject: Some comments on
Fidel Castro's television report
on his trip to the SU

Prime Minister Fidel Castro's television report on his [27 April-3 June 1963]. trip to the SU was presented briefly in the press review of 5 June, and since then the Center has probably received it in its whole length too.

I would like to complete the speech with a few things, however, that were not shown in the press review and cannot even be felt when reading the complete text.

Fidel Castro answered the questions of the journalists on the day after his arrival [in Cuba], that is, still under the influence of his SU experience. But what always fascinates Fidel Castro's listeners during his speeches apart from his unheard of oratorical skills are his basic honesty, frankness and sincerity.

This time Fidel Castro was not an orator. He had chosen the form of a television interview because he had felt—with excellent sense of politics—that this subject was not a subject to be given an orator's speech about.

Fidel Castro is a passionate, excellent orator, but I had never heard him speak with such deep and sincere emotion. When he was talking about the Soviet nation, the Soviet people, he was almost disturbed by the journalists' questions.

Anyway, he seemed to be irritated by the journalists' questions lacking logic and sometimes being even provocative /the "dangerous" lag in agriculture/. He sharply criticized the Cuban press. When he was talking about the fact that the Cuban press had published exaggerated praising articles about his reception, in a subdued voice he said to Ithiel Leon, the interviewer of the *Revolución*: "I will talk to the *Revolución* separately!" Probably he was hinting at Juan Arcocha's disgusting reports always ranking him with Lenin, which I already reported on in the previous mail.

The keynote of the whole report was given by Fidel Castro's human modesty. There have been a lot of arguments about whether there is a personal cult in Cuba, what is meant by the special Cuban "cult of hero," whether what surrounds Fidel Castro here can be called a personal cult. Independently of the fact that the essence of a personal cult cannot be seen in the externals but in the lack of collective leadership and in unlawful acts, I would like to stress that it was not out of affected modesty on his part but out of sincere conviction that Fidel Castro, who attributes a great importance to the reaction of the masses, shifted the great celebration he received in the SU to the Cuban revolution and stressed that it had concerned rather the future than the achieved results. And in his report he rejected even more firmly the effusions addressed to his person and he raised his voice only when he was talking about the mistakes.

Fidel Castro's television interview has also shown what turn the Soviet experiences and talks will mean in Cuba's economic, internal, and foreign political life and first of all, in the question of party building and the role of the party.

Erzsébet Görög
chargé d'affaires ad interim
to Comrade Foreign Minister
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