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

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Summary:

Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Erzsébet Görög writes a preliminary assessment of Castro's state visit to the Soviet Union in 1963. Görög reports on improvements in Cuba's party organization and positive reactions from the Cuban public and media on Castro's visit. Görög notes different reactions to the visit between the economic/technical and artistic intelligentsia, adding that "Khrushchev managed to win Fidel over to his side in the Soviet-Chinese dispute." Other topics include emigration and external counter-revolutionary activities.

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The embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

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Cuba to Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union

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We still cannot assess the consequences of Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union, little time has passed since his return.

But what are the results and reactions that can already be seen and heard?

What we have to emphasize first of all are the progress in socialist competition and the definite increase in efforts made in the field of production. Party organization has accelerated remarkably, even in the country local organizations and district committees are formed one after the other. The Cuban daily press and magazines deal with the details of the visit continuously, they always publish pictures of the visit and they deal a lot more with the SU than before. It is true, however, that the Cuban press—including the party paper, HOY [TODAY] also—published the 25 points of the Chinese party and the Chinese bulletin, the Sinhua [Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency—ed], is full of anti-Tito articles based on the Chinese press and cites the news of the Albanian press a lot, but the Cuban papers have not taken over anything since Fidel's return apart from the 25 points.

Out of the photos of Fidel Castro's trip, the party's agitation [and] propaganda committee has organized an exhibition, where the masses go as on a pilgrimage.

The public opinion is satisfied with the visit. The ordinary Cubans usually emphasize two things: the question of the price of sugar and the increase in Cuba's international prestige.

In the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs the general reaction /I have talked to 5-6 higher employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the question/ is the following: the visit has proved that Fidel Castro is not the "puppet" of the Soviets, Comrade Khrushchev talked to him as to an equal. Generally the grandiose reception has calmed down the agitation of Cuban national dignity of last October.

Reactions among the writers, artists, and the intelligentsia are quite weak, except for the more serious economic and technical intelligentsia, who were happy about Fidel's statement that the economic way of looking at things should be enhanced, people should think "in an economic way."

But the majority of writers and artists were indifferent to the visit. As they have a great fear of the SU's cultural policy, they do not like socialist realism, they worry about their "artistic freedom." I have talked to Fayad Jamis about this question, who—although he did not agree with this—said it would be completely impossible today in Cuba to apply the SU's cultural political principles. Fidel does not want to do so either.

The western diplomats accredited to Cuba stress mainly the following: Khrushchev managed to win Fidel over to his side in the Soviet-Chinese dispute. This opinion is shared by the French, English, and Egyptian counselors, [and] the Indian charge d'affaires, who recorded the fact with satisfaction. I will report on the English

ambassador's opinion elsewhere.

The new Israeli charge d'affaires, who was on a first visit to me on 21 June, said that the normalization of North-American relations—despite the fact that Fidel Castro offered to do so repeatedly in his television interview—could be hardly imagined before the American presidential elections [in November 1964].

The visit stirred the Cuban anti-Communist emigration too. According to unverifiable news [reports], in the past two or three weeks there have been several attempts of landing and infiltration by small groups of 8 to 10 people without central direction. The aim of the Cuban emigration having their headquarters in Florida is to press the US government to make an official promise according to which if the Soviet army in Cuba interfered in putting down a Cuban "internal revolt similar to the Hungarian uprising of 1956," the USA would provide immediate military help.

The aim of the anti-Castro Cuban inroads is probably to provoke "Soviet interference" and to make it possible to turn to the US government with such an accusation.

I consider it unnecessary to emphasize that there is no danger of internal revolt. There are smaller active counter-revolutionary groups, but the Cuban army and militia are eliminating them one after the other.

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