

From Sir Leslie Munro, the Special Representative
of the United Nations on the Question of Hungary

16 August 1960

Sir,

The Soviet delegation voted in the Security Council for the creation of a United Nations force to enter the Congo. The Soviet delegation did this although it had vetoed action, proposed by the majority of the members of the Security Council, in Hungary, and voted against all resolutions in the General Assembly on the Hungarian question, ~~one~~ of which branded the Soviet Union as an aggressor in that country. This would appear as inconsistent to most persons capable of making an independent judgement.

My purpose in writing this letter is certainly not to increase tension at the present time, but I am bound to ask whether the recent statements of the Soviet Union's delegation in the Security Council dealing with the matter of the Congo have contributed to any reduction of tension.

For in recent weeks the Security Council has held momentous meetings on the questions of the Congo and Cuba. I cannot but reflect on the paradox between the attitude taken by the Soviet delegation during these debates and their position during the debate on Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956.

In the case of the Congo, not only did the Soviet Union recognize the competence, right and duty of the United Nations to interfere in the situation existing there: the Soviet representative did not spare any epithets in so far as the Belgians were concerned. He urged that the United Nations troops should, if necessary, force their way into the Katanga. Mr. Kuznetsov, on behalf of the Soviet Union in the Security

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Council on 8 August, even had the hardihood to urge that Mr. Tshombe and his followers should be arrested and handed over to the Government of the Congo.

On the allegation that they were carrying up but see characteristics of Foreigners -

Yet since 1956 the Soviet Union has not recognized the competence of the United Nations to investigate the situation created by its intervention in Hungary, and *the Hungarian authorities* ~~has~~ persistently refused to let the United Nations special representative of the Assembly, my predecessor, Prince Wan of Thailand, equally with myself, to enter Hungary. This, when a few days ago with astonishing naivete the Soviet representative submitted a proposal to send a commission of investigation to the Congo composed of representatives of some countries whose troops, with responsible officers, are already there under the United Nations banner and as a result of a resolution which the Soviet delegation accepted and voted for. On the other hand, the West as a whole showed in both circumstances consistency in their stand since, as far as the Congo is concerned, they finally urged the Belgians to leave the country "immediately", thus keeping in line with the position taken during the discussion of the Hungarian question and in the interest of world peace.

In the case of Cuba, the Soviet Union set itself up as the champion of the present regime against which "economic aggression" has been, according to the Soviet delegation, committed by the United States. The Soviet representative did not mince his words; he called the United States attitude "hostile", "conspiratorial" and "hypocritical". He spoke of "bandit incursions" and "terrorism". He referred repeatedly to resolution 626 of the General Assembly, stating that "the right of people freely to use and exploit their natural wealth and resources is inherent

in their sovereignty and is in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

The Soviet Union set itself up not only against economic aggression but as the champion of all small countries, and Mr. Sobolev, on behalf of the Soviet Union, proceeded to make this astonishing statement:

"... The policy of the Soviet Union towards Cuba as well as towards all other countries is clear-cut and understandable to all. It is based on the general principles which have always been followed by the Soviet Union in regard to international affairs. We adhere to these principles and we are therefore opposed to aggression, to imperialism, to monopolies, and to domination over peoples achieved by any means whatsoever. We always say that we are on the side of people who are struggling for their independence. We are on the side of those who are ~~xx~~ struggling against colonialism and foreign exploitation..."

Those who died for Hungary in 1956 and since must stir in their graves at this hypocrisy.

One cannot but wonder at the inconsistency of Mr. Sobolev's statement with Soviet actions in Hungary where the Soviet Union so brutally repressed the struggle for independence and continues to maintain its troops in that country and to control its economy. ~~Of~~ can one possibly interpret the attitude of the Soviet Union in the Congo crisis and the Cuban discussion as a change in the line of its policy, and hope that in view of recent utterances of its representatives^s in the Security Council the Soviet Union will show some intention of conforming at least to some parts of the numerous resolutions passed by overwhelming majorities in the General Assembly on the Hungarian question?

~~I confess I have no optimism on this point.~~ *unfortunately* At the beginning of April 1958, Mr. Khrushchev said in Hungary that he "recommended the imperialists not to try to put their pig snouts into the socialist orchard", Hungary being apparently ~~being~~ such an orchard. He wilfully ignores the fact that the

Assembly, by its resolution 1005 (ES-II) passed on 9 November 1956, considered "that free elections should be held in Hungary under United Nations auspices as soon as law and order have been restored, to enable the people of Hungary to determine for themselves the form of government they wish to establish in their country".

Nothing that has happened either at or since the abortive meeting in Paris encourages me to believe that the Soviet Union will observe the Assembly's resolutions on Hungary. Many of those who took part in the uprising of 1956 still languish in gaol. Certainly the Soviet Union has shown no disposition to withdraw its troops from Hungary and to allow the holding of free elections in that unfortunate country. *But we must continue in our efforts on behalf of the Hungarian people.*

Amid Soviet invective over the Congo, I make bold to quote the words of the late Albert Camus, ~~read most tellingly by the French~~

✓ Permanent Representative in the General Assembly on 12 December 1958:

X ".... If the cowardice or complacency of the world has helped the murderers to feel that their hands are free, then we must strain every nerve to ensure that they shall feel a little less free the next time. There are still men in Hungarian prisons today expecting the worst, and we must fight, so far as we are able, to wrest them from the executioners. We must not allow others to believe, however fleetingly, that the hanging of Nagy and his friends was proper. It was an atrocious crime of which even the most forgetful must retain the memory. ✓

✓ "Then let us use the disgust that fills us all in the service of a certain stubbornness. In the face of the Hungarian tragedy we have been and are still reduced to a kind of impotence. But that impotence is not total. The rejection of the fait accompli, the alert to the heart and mind, the decision to bar the lie of free passage, the refusal to abandon innocence, even after it has been strangled -- these are the lines of action we can follow. Inadequate, no doubt, but necessary in its turn, and with a necessity that answers the other, the ignoble necessity called historic, that answers ~~itx~~ it, yes, and will always answer it, that opposes it in any case, sometimes neutralizes it, in the long run destroys it and thus imperceptibly advances the real history of mankind."

There is sometimes a disposition among us to forget past wrongs and to wipe our hands of recent ills which we believe we cannot cure. The events of 1956 in Hungary have an eternal message which we forget at our peril. To forget is not to cure.