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26 May 1982

East Europe Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

(FOUO 8/82)



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HUNGARY

'THE TIMES' VIEWS PACIFIST TRENDS IN HUNGARIAN CHURCH

PM031011 London THE TIMES in English 3 May 82 p 8

[Undated dispatch by Patricia Clough from Budapest: "Why Hungary's Priest of Peace Is at War With His Bishops"]

[Text] The Christian pacifism which is fuelling anti-nuclear movements across Europe has sprung up among Catholics in Hungary, and is being bitterly fought by their church.

It is spreading among the more radically-minded of several thousand tiny Catholic groups which were formed during the long years of religious persecution, meeting secretly in one another's houses to pray, meditate, hear mass and keep the faith alive.

Although the official church, to which about 60 percent of Hungarians theoretically belong, has enjoyed relative freedom for the past 10 years or so, these groups still flourish, suspected by the hierarchy and the state alike, who feel they elude their control.

Both are alarmed above all by a growing constellation of about 100 groups inspired by Father Gyorgy Bulyani, a stocky, whitehaired priest in his early 60's, who believes Catholics should live like Christ and his disciples, poor, humble and nonviolent.

In the past 18 months the non-violence among his 1,500 or so followers has developed into demands--considered rank mutiny in a communist state--to do social work instead of compulsory military service. Several have been jailed for refusing to serve and three priests have been suspended for preaching conscientious objection.

Bishops and state have also been disturbed by the occasional sudden appearance of many thousands of young Catholics, summoned by a kind of bush telegraph, at pilgrimage places to pray, sing and discuss nonviolence.

At present the groups are mainly opposed to bearing arms. Although they object to Soviet as well as Western missiles, nuclear weapons are not an issue among Hungarians, who seem to have a greater fear of conventional war.

Radical and moderate Hungarian clergy alike are convinced that it is a spontaneous phenomenon, not influenced by the West. But at the same time they see it as the Hungarian version of a spirit which, like the 1968 student unrest, is spreading across the continent and which shows that, although militarily divided, Europe is still very much a living entity.

The mood is somewhat similar to that in the Netherlands, where religious objections have so far prevented the government from accepting NATO missiles.

In West Germany, Christians, with ecologists and left-wingers, are one of the main threads in the peace movement which is challenging the government's defence policy and souring relations with the United States. In communist East Germany young Protestants are opposing missiles in East and West and demanding an alternative to military service. "Our movement is entirely original and autochthonous," Father Bulanyi says, "but we are glad when we read that other people in the Christian world think as we do. There is such a thing as the zeitgeist, the spirit of the times, which makes the same thought crop up in different places at the same time."

Professor Tamas Nyiri, head of the Catholic Theological Academy in Budapest, says: "Thousands of years of common European history cannot be wiped out in 37 years of division."

The pacifism of Father Bulanyi and his followers has set off a tense, three-sided struggle between themselves, the conservative church hierarchy and the regime.

While the groups insist their motives are purely religious, the state sees them as clear political opposition. But cleverly, instead of cracking down and damaging its own relatively liberal image, it is exerting immense pressure on the bishops to stamp it out themselves.

Mr Imre Miklos, the state secretary for church questions, says airily: "This is an internal affair of the church." But he is believed to have warned the bishops that there will be no further improvements in the church's still very difficult existence unless they succeed.

So while the East German Protestant bishops are defending their pacifists, the Hungarian Catholic hierarchy has angrily attacked Father Bulanyi and demanded that he come to heel. It avoids mentioning nonviolence, but accuses him instead of "erroneous theological teachings." The accusation has been rejected by Rome and the bishops' efforts to get Father Bulanyi transferred abroad by his teaching order have failed.

Gently, with a charming, slightly crooked smile, Father Bulanyi says he has no intention of toeing the line. "We do what our consciences tell us."

He and many less radical Catholics accuse the church, and in particular Cardinal Laszlo Lekai, the primate, of servility to the state. They feel he should fight harder for more rights and religious freedom. Cardinal Lekai and other bishops were appointed in a compromise arrangement between the Vatican and the government and, many believe, it shows.

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Throughout Hungarian history, they say, the Catholic hierarchy has always identified with the state and been part of the establishment, enjoying power and riches. Now, they feel, it has a similar relationship with the communist regime. "The alliance of throne and altar," Father Bulanyi contemptuously calls it.

Meanwhile fewer and fewer people, he says, are going to church. "Sitting in a pew and listening to what a priest says is an activity for 60 and 70-year-olds. What irritates Cardinal Lekai is the fact that we do not want passively to accept what he says but to think with our own heads."

Caught between the two millstones is a goodhearted, lovable former parish priest who found himself heading a badly depleted church in an atheist state, desperately short of priests and nuns, its few activities strictly controlled by the state and with religious life more incense in the small groups than in the parishes.

Cardinal Lekai's colleagues suspect that his cautious line is partly prompted by memories of persecution, the years of imprisonment, threats, harassment and fear. He maintains that the church will gain nothing by fighting for everything at once and insists on progress by small steps. But they are so small and slow that even the Vatican itself has urged him to be more courageous.

Even small steps--he wants to be able to ordain more priests, to use lay catechists, to hold religious classes in vicarages instead of the churches where the secret service can keep an eye on them--may come to nothing if Father Bulanyi is not tamed.

A split in the church would evidently suit the regime, on the principle of divide and rule, and Father Bulanyi and Cardinal Lekai are clearly on a collision course. But Professor Nyiri doubts that it would come to that. "Nobody on either side wants a schism," he says.

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HUNGARY

GYULA HORN INTERVIEWED ON PCI, POLAND

PM201145 Turin LA STAMPA in Italian 13 Apr 82 p 3

[Undated interview in Budapest with Gyula Horn, deputy director of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (MSZMP) Department of International Relations by Frane Barbieri: "Kadar Pilgrimage to Warsaw"]

[Text] Budapest--Kadar will be the first of the Eastern bloc leaders to visit Jaruzelski in Warsaw, which is still under martial law. The Hungarian leader will visit the Polish capital as early as the end of this month. The news, still unofficial, prompts two kinds of consideration. The author of the most stable and contented form of socialism is bringing, with his visit, legitimization to the most unstable and saddest of the regimes of real socialism. Their contribution to the famous international solidarity is now becoming burdensome for the prudent Hungarians. Kadar, who has never been fond of traveling, would probably have preferred to miss this visit too. The tribute to Jaruzelski can also be regarded from a more attractive viewpoint, however. In other words, as the expression of the hope that Poland will succeed in releasing itself from its national tragedy in the same way as the Hungarians did. By choosing Kadar as his first guest Jaruzelski is indicating the experience that he wishes to follow: Kadarism, in the sense of redemption, from humiliation to national accord. Jaruzelski has everything to gain from presenting himself as the Polish Kadar. It remains to be seen how much Kadar will gain by approving him--if for no other reason than the uniform that sets them apart.

Perhaps in no other Eastern bloc country have the events in Poland so strongly influenced feelings and the political atmosphere and prompted such widespread fears. Furthermore, of all of them, the Hungarians have gained the most, have the most to lose. If Solidarity had won it would suddenly have revealed the discrepancy between economic and political reformism which Kadar's gradualism can conceal but not reconcile. If, however, the military regime now fails to find a political path to reformism, all the liberal-type tendencies--and Kadarism first and foremost--run the risk of being overwhelmed by an authoritarian revival, under suspicion of their destabilizing the socialist camp. Thus we find Kadar's traditionally cautious intercommunist diplomacy being employed with respect to Poland twice, exceeding customary practice. The Hungarian Trade Union was the first and only one to send a telegram establishing a dialogue to the Solidarity Congress. Now Kadar is the first Eastern bloc head of state to visit Warsaw.

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It is no coincidence that the conflict between [PCI Secretary General] Berlinguer and Moscow has also had more far-reaching effects in Budapest. Obviously there could have been no doubts about whose side Kadar would take. But this alignment was full of nuances, and sometimes even contradictions. For instance, the first article in the party newspaper seemed very possibilist toward the PCI. A second one, however, published in the same party's theoretical journal, seemed to rule out any kind of dialogue. Despite this conflicting stance, a personal envoy from Kadar left for Rome immediately. Following talks at PCI headquarters he left immediately for Moscow. It seemed that moderate Budapest was attempting to mediate between Berlinguer and Brezhnev.

However secret it might have seemed at first, we did not find it too difficult to discover the nature of the triangular mission. In the ultra-modern Central Committee building on the Danube embankment we met with the envoy himself: The Budapest-Rome-Moscow mission was performed by Gyula Horn, deputy director of the Department of International Relations, who is in charge of relations with the Western parties, a kind of Hungarian Vadim Zagladin [first deputy chief of the CPSU Central Committee International Section].

[Question] May I ask what was said in Rome and Moscow?

[Answer] Obviously, we cannot accept the stances of our PCI friends. If we did accept them we would have to abandon our principles. We expressed our stance clearly. We consider the PCI's stance unrealistic inasmuch as it takes no account of the specific circumstances that led to the Polish [imposition of martial law] 13 December. The Italian friends failed to perceive the danger of a counterrevolution and civil war, whereas we did. If the Poles had not taken this step, civil war would have broken out and the intervention of the other Pact countries would have been inevitable. Only an idealist could believe that it could have been avoided. We can see that this step was in fact carried out by the Poles alone, and that is what counts. Obviously, socialism does not imply the need to stabilize a situation by military means, but in socialism God only knows what means can be used. It is unrealistic for the Italians to maintain that a democratic dialogue which no longer had any chances of success should have been continued.

[Question] Berlinguer's assessment of Soviet policy seems more realistic, however.

[Answer] Indeed, the other matter discussed in Rome was the fact that the Italians issued a very harsh verdict on the USSR's foreign policy. To some extent the PCI equates U.S. policy and Soviet policy. We cannot accept this, not only as allies of the USSR but also because we are involved in implementing this policy.

[Question] Do you too feel directly affected by Berlinguer's criticisms?

[Answer] Yes, we also discussed the negative assessment of existing socialism issued. Nobody denies the problems and the worries--indeed, the increasing problems within the sphere of socialism--but to judge the whole of real socialism and all its associated phenomena as essentially negative seems to us frankly unrealistic. Neither we ourselves nor the socialist countries as a whole can accept it.

[Question] So was there complete disagreement during your visit to Rome?

[Answer] No, these are tough, weighty and serious matters, but it is essential that interparty contacts survive even in situations where positions contrast harshly. In practice these conversations demonstrated the desire to continue the dialogue. [Answer ends]

Next we discussed Moscow. Horn assured us that his two visits were unconnected, that he left Rome for Moscow within the framework "of regular exchanges."

[Question] Technically speaking, your triangular visit, taking place in such a short space of time and in the midst of the polemic, inevitably seemed like a mediation bid: To say in Rome and Moscow that which they could no longer tell each other directly.

[Answer] Is it possible to imagine that the Soviets need to use anyone as an intermediary or messenger?

[Question] An autonomous attempt at mediation seems consistent with Hungarian policy, since the other two sides are on such bad terms.

[Answer] I state categorically that there was no mediation and that none was needed. We did not request any preliminary advice from anyone. The Soviets are very well acquainted with the Italian position and do not need us as a source. Especially since contacts still exist and are still taking place between the PCI and the CPSU.

[Question] Even what you are telling us suggests a certain difference between the Hungarian and Soviet stances. According to the Hungarians, the Italian position, despite its harshness and erroneousness, still falls within the intercommunist dialogue. For the Soviets, the Italian position rules out any possibility of dialogue.

[Answer] No, such a Soviet stance does not exist. The PCI has already expressed its criticisms several times. The Soviets were entitled to reply, but that did not cause me to believe that they do not want contacts and dialogue.

[Question] But this time a Soviet article has stated that the PCI has isolated itself.

[Answer] But nowadays whence is it possible to expel anyone, or to expel oneself? There is no center, there is no organism; there are autonomous and independent parties. Who can be excluded, and from where?

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[Question] Nevertheless, what is being said does not seem exactly like a dialogue.

[Answer] The Soviet reactions are really strong and fiery. But you must try somewhat to put yourself in the CPSU's place. If someone else says of you that everything that you have done in your life is evil ("You are not a socialist country," "you are not a communist party"--I am saying this plainly) what can you reply: Can you issue a calm or cool response? Such charges are intolerable. [Answer ends]

So the mediation is one that did not take place but which nevertheless had an effect. It demonstrated once again that Hungary adopts the same stances in a different manner. It falls in line and distances itself at the same time. Another Central Committee member insisted to us that he rejects as incongruous Berlinger's profuse compliments regarding the successes of the Hungarian model and his simultaneous accusations against real socialism. This party intellectual assured us that there is no special model and no difference from the other socialist countries. So Berlinguer's acknowledgements are inappropriate. Having said that, the Hungarians are always trying to earn further recognition. Though with his visit to Warsaw Kadar risks not earning much.

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POLAND

SOLIDARITY COMPLAINT ON AID DISTRIBUTION CITED

LD210949 London THE OBSERVER in English 21 Feb 82 p 6

[By Neal Ascherson]

[Text] The West should stop sending food to the Polish Red Cross, according to a Solidarity group in Poland.

A message which has reached the observer from the underground Solidarity leadership in Wroclaw, Lower Silesia, complains that the local Red Cross is failing to distribute relief to those who need it.

The message alleges that the Polish Red Cross is subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior, which also commands the police, the ZOMO riot force and various army units.

"Food aid sent by the International Red Cross to the Polish Red Cross is getting into the wrong hands," it says.

"Those who really benefit are the families of top officials, and even of members of the military government, the ZOMO or the police.

"Only remnants are left for those who really need the aid, which is, in addition, badly and chaotically distributed (not always out of ill-will but partly because of lack of man-power and local problems)."

Huge queues of mothers with small children, Wroclaw Solidarity goes on, "wait for hours to receive, for example, two packets of baby food. As a rule they benefit only once from this aid, at the cost of their health, strength and time."

The message concludes: "The only institution which properly--sometimes excellently--organises aid for the interned and arrested and their families and for others in need, is the Catholic Church.

"It is, therefore, better that food aid to Poland from abroad should go to the archbishops' offices, or directly to parishes, rather than to the Polish Red Cross."

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POLAND

LONDON PAPER REPORTS ON WARSAW UNIVERSITY ATMOSPHERE

PM131051 London THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 21 Feb 82 p 9

[Charles Gans Warsaw dispatch: "Fear Keeps Polish Colleges Quiet But Only on the Surface"]

[Text] When classes resumed at Warsaw University, students found some special additions to the normal curriculum--compulsory lectures in all departments that might best be entitled: "Introduction to Martial Law." In the lectures, loyalist faculty members or army officers from the campus Military Liaison Department read out new restrictive university regulations and attempted to explain that martial law was necessary to avoid bloodshed.

A fourth-year student of Romance languages said her class was decidedly inattentive. As an army officer expounded the official line, students sat in the lecture hall knitting, reading or eating apples. When no one volunteered any questions the officer asked: "How do you imagine your future?" After a chorus of guffaws, a voice from the back said: "If you're talking about the immediate future, I'd just like to have a smoke because we've already been sitting here an hour and a half listening to you."

A graduate student in sociology said: "When there was hope you could talk about the future, but now we don't talk about it any more. I don't even know what will happen in two months' time, so I just worry about finding enough money to survive from month to month."

Although the authorities feared trouble when the universities reopened, the campus has been fairly quiet. Despite the strict martial law regulations, there have as yet been no big shakeups in the faculty or curriculum. About 50 faculty members and students have been interned or arrested, but mostly on account of off-campus activities.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is in the atmosphere on campus. Now that the 16-month-old experiment in democratizing university life has ended, the shared feeling of joy and hope among professors and students has vanished, to be replaced by an atmosphere of mistrust, uncertainty and fear.

A junior staff member who was active in Solidarity fears that she will lose her job if a verification process takes place, meaning that she will have to take some boring job just to support her child.

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Fears that at the first sign of trouble students might be drafted into military service or the universities might be closed have so far proved a more effective policing mechanism than any number of troops on campus.

Last week, Warsaw University faculty members worked hard behind the scenes to dissuade students from staging any demonstrations to mark the first anniversary of the signing of the Lodz Agreements that gave birth to the Independent Students' Association, now dissolved.

- Now faculty members and students alike complain of the "oppressive" atmosphere
- even though there are almost no police or soldiers on campus. Staff members
- take turns checking the identity of visitors to all departments. Students
cannot stay on campus after 8 pm and must be back in their dormitories before
the doors close at 9 pm.

Officials at the Ministry of Higher Education insist that such discipline is necessary just to make up for the two months lost as a result of November's student strike and the delay in reopening campuses following martial law, but a senior official added: "We want to make students work so hard that they'll forget about all political commitments which would turn the authorities against them."

This official claimed the government still intended to enact a long-discussed reform permitting limited university autonomy and other changes. "We won't be back to the situation before August 1980 (when Solidarity was born), nor will we abide by everything that was agreed to under the strike pistol a year ago in Lodz," he said. There were no immediate plans for a wideranging "verification" of faculty.

However, there are fears that Warsaw University and other institutions might become a victim of the power struggle now raging between centrists and hardliners within the party leadership. At a recent closed door meeting with party activists from local colleges, the Warsaw party chief, Stanislaw Kociolek, called for immediate dismissal of several rectors and a thorough verification of all staff. He lashed out at the academic community as enemies of the socialist system.

Kociolek singled out for particular criticism the Warsaw University rector, Henryk Samsonowicz, an internationally-known historian who led the movement to democratise university life and founded the now-suspended Conference of Rectors.

Faculty members involved in university administration are in a moral dilemma. "I have no idea how I should behave," said one. "I feel responsible for doing everything possible to protect the university against provocation."

"At the same time I feel that I'm just giving up and playing their game. By following their orders I'm just a special kind of policeman."

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