

Subimal Dutt

File No. 20

SECRET & PERSONAL

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New Delhi,
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My dear KPS,

As you must know, the recent execution of Nagy and some of his colleagues in Budapest has come as a great shock to us here. The fact of the execution itself was really bad, but the whole surrounding circumstances fill one with dismay. I am afraid that it will be very difficult for the Soviet Government to outlive this black mark. For them to say that their hands were forced by the Hungarian Government in this matter has not convinced anyone. For many years past, the Soviet Government have been gradually building up what might be called a good reputation, anxious for peace and cooperation with others. The terrible suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 came very much in the way of this good reputation and yet it could be understood to some extent, even though it could not be defended. In a moment of deep crisis, individuals and countries are apt to become rather panicky, but even this excuse cannot be put out for the execution of Imre Nagy. That was a cold blooded act done no doubt after full consideration. I cannot imagine that the Soviet leaders did not realise what the reactions of such an act would be on others. Knowing this, they showed an amazing callousness to such reactions.

The whole picture is disturbing in the extreme. The attitude of China is even worse. I am at a complete loss to understand why these amazingly foolish steps should have been taken by people who do not act unthinkingly or in a hurry. Whether internal conditions were responsible for these acts I do not know. Already there is much greater rigidity in China and you have pointed out the same trend in Russia. China's attitude to India has also somewhat stiffened in some small matters.

These tragic developments are peculiarly distressing because they have occurred at a moment in world history when there was some faint hope of an easing of the tension as a result of high-level conferences. To say that it is the fault of Western countries that such a summit conference has not already taken place is only a small part of the truth. It has undoubtedly been the fault of Western countries to

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... extent. But Soviet hands are not of a lily white complexion. But everything will be forgotten after the recent action, which almost puts an end to the idea of real peace in our generation.

The reluctance of the Soviet Government to send its experts to the technical conference at Geneva beginning early next week also appears to me to be odd and illogical. It astonishes me how a good position has been completely spoiled by a succession of foolish acts. Many people who believed in the bonafides of the Soviet Union for peace rather doubt them now. Because we restrain ourselves in our utterances, it should not be thought that we do not feel strongly on these subjects. All our moral sense has been deeply shocked.

I am writing to you so that you may appreciate how we are feeling about all this.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Jawaharlal Nehru.

Shri K.P.S. Menon,
Ambassy of India,
MOSCOW.

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