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HUNGARIAN DAILY BACKGROUND.

/Op to 1200 hrs December 13/

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1./ The General Strike

The 48 hours general strike officially ended on December 13 at 1200 hours. On the grounds of reports received from Radio Kossuth, Gavro ALTMANN /"Borka"/ and PAP it can be stated that most of the HUNGARIAN enterprises were empty. In many localities even the members of the workers' councils have gone home. The town traffic has been suspended, the production in the Csepel Ironworks has been stopped.

We have few reports from the smaller towns. ALTMANN reports there is a general strike in DEBRECEN. We were informed by radio Kossuth that work was stopped at the PÉCS enterprises too. Radio Kossuth, enumerating the mines, mentioned only a few mines in county Barad and in the PÉCS area. It omitted to mention the mining center of TATABÁNYA, presumably because it is strike-bound.

In the afternoon hours, the opinion spread in several enterprises that the strike had to be continued. In this way, the workers wanted to protest against the arrest of Editor RÁCS, president of the HUNGARIAN Central Workers' Council, and Gábor BALI, Workers' Council member. According to an AP report, the two workers leaders fell into a snare laid by the KADÁR government. They were called to a conference in the Parliament but were arrested before entering the building.

The attitude of the population was very hostile toward the strike breakers. On Radio Kossuth, Ferenc SZILVER, president of the autobus workers' council, complained that the drivers of the buses in operation were insulted and spat on by the passengers. Finally the passengers were forced by the followers of the strike to get out and the buses had to return to the garage. Demonstrators wanted to turn over one bus.

2./ Situation After Official End of the Strike.

Up to noon December 13, we have reports on HUNGARIAN only. According to the leading article of "Népszabadság", the strike was not a success.

So far, it cannot be estimated what percent of the BUDAPEST workers reported at their places of work Dec 15. AP reports that tens of thousands of BUDAPEST workers came out on strike again, a few hours after returning to their factories at the end of the two-day strike. The new walk-out was a protest against the arrest of RACE and BALI. There was a total walk-out in the industrial eleventh district of BUDAPEST, which has many textile and tool plants.

Three factors indicated the continuation of the strike:

- a./ With the arrests of RACE and BALI the government was again provoking the workers.
- b./ A great part of the workers wish to continue the strike.
- c./ The coal and raw material shortages forced the factories to be idle anyway.

The country's economy has now been paralyzed, both by strikes and also the disintegration of the centralized economic machinery. In its morning broadcast, Radio Kossuth referred to these results. "It is not a question of painting the devil on the wall," the broadcast said, "what we express the fear that as a result mass unemployment may be produced. Factories would be forced to stop work, not because people were on strike, but because there was neither electric current nor coal."

#### 3.c/ Further Information On Demonstrations.

At the beginning of the week there were demonstrations in several provincial towns. Up to now we know about demonstrations in EGSE, MISKOLC, HANTYADYAS, SALGOTARJAN, BENECSKANA and HATTONYA. According to information received by "Berbe", similar demonstrations were held at KOSCHENY, approximately 70 kilometers from BUDAPEST. The demonstrating masses were dispersed by Hungarian policemen and Soviet soldiers who shot in the air. Similarly, Soviet soldiers and Hungarian policemen on December 12 dispersed demonstrators in BUDAPEST at Herles Seignad square, Balocsi street and LITVET. From an article in "Hepistabodog" December 13, we know about demonstrations held in SOHNELOVADARHET (in the Yugoslav and Rumanian border area). Here too the police fired in the air.

In the course of demonstrations held in recent days the police and Soviet soldiers generally fired in the air to disperse the crowds. They avoided bloody provocation, evidently to avoid giving ground for an even greater mass-demonstration, or the use of arms still in the hands of the population. The government constantly fears armed clashes. Probably this explains why the

Presidential Council expanded its decree on martial law, so that if the accused is found guilty by a summary court of any of the charges triable by such a court, a verdict of guilty will carry the sentence of death.

4./ Demonstrations Of Peasants In County BAKES.

We learn from Radio Kasoveth's program "Paluradio" on December 13, that several villages in county BAKES "suddenly became more restless." Event followed an article which appeared in "Neplop", the BIKENSCHAMA newspaper, calling upon the old leaders to resume their positions. The population of Echone village was called together three times by high officials, trying to force the old leaders upon them, but the population rejected <sup>them</sup> each time. They stick to the leaders who were put on the local council during the revolution. It is evident from the article that the old county and district leaders in county Bakes returned to their positions, but this process was prevented in the villages by the population. The rejected BAKES-ists' claim that they were elected /November 1954. The reply of the county Bakes peasants, according to a message read on Radio Kasoveth, is the following: "Everybody knows that, at that time, the people elected were not those whom the people, the village, chose. They can repeat and put down in writing that all the peasants of county Bakes are against having these persons back."

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