

THE DAILY WORKER AND HUNGARY

By EUGENE DENNIS

Big changes are taking place in the world, and hence in the minds of all thinking people. Therefore it is not surprising that there have been changes in the Daily Worker's approach to many problems.

It is good that the Daily displays considerable initiative, reacts quickly to events and endeavors to make a break with the dogmatism of the past. Yet there is a growing concern among many readers and friends of the Daily Worker regarding its editorial position on certain vital questions, especially on the recent events in Hungary. What are some of the reasons for this deep apprehension which, as I indicated in a letter published in these pages on Nov. 12, I too share?

The situation in Hungary is not only regrettable, it is also extremely complex. No matter how one evaluates the turn of events in Hungary after Nov. 4, I believe all Marxists would agree that if Hungary went fascist world peace and progress would be imperilled. A new imperialist tinder box would have been created in the heart of Eastern Europe. No American or European, Asian or African home would be free from the fateful consequences.

Bearing this in mind, it is evident that Hungary is a crucible testing how best to advance the struggle for peace in a changing world situation; testing, too, how best to promote the genuine national interests of one's own country, as well as one's attitude towards the lands of socialism and proletarian internationalism.

Let us examine some of the knowable facts. Many facts remain unknown—to the Daily's editors as well as to myself. Yet there are a few hard facts on which most Marxists can agree.

It is a fact that the present situation in Hungary had its origin in grave distortions of Marxist theories and in abhorrent violations of socialist principles. Among these were the indefensible relations between the Soviet Union and Hungary established by Stalin, the apparent initial slowness with which some of these errors were tackled by the present Soviet leadership, and the resistance of Rakosi and his associates to correct their own costly mistakes even when the clock of history struck one minute to midnight.

It is a fact that the struggle in Hungary began as a popular movement for the restoration of democratic rights, an improvement in the people's living standards, and a respect for Hungary's national sovereignty based on the mutual interest of socialist nations dealing with each other as equals.

It is also a fact that remnants of the pro-Horthy regime, aided and abetted by the West, sought from the beginning to divert this popular movement into its opposite. For they strove, in conjunction with the supporters of the Dulles "liberation" policy, to convert Hungary into a fascist place d'armes for new imperialist adventures in eastern Europe.

These facts are clear to most Marxists, and to many non-Marxists.

But the Daily Worker missed the bus when the intervention of the counter-revolutionaries underwent a qualitative change. The Daily Worker did not recognize that by Nov. 4 the danger of a fascist coup d'etat, backed by the Dulles Brothers, had become clear and present, and that this in turn endangered the security of all the people's democracies and the USSR.

Prior to Nov. 4 the editors of the Daily Worker correctly noted that Horthy exiles, agents of Project X, Radio Free Europe, etc. were trying to exploit and capitalize on the Hungarian situation. But the editors underplayed the entry into Hungary of large forces

of Horthy's old Arrow Cross Division and of 60,000 diverse other fascist agents and bands which infiltrated Hungary via the Austrian border. Likewise they belittled the significance of Cardinal Mindszenty's radio speech of Nov. 3 in which he called for a return "to a system of private property" and the restoration to the Church of its former possessions, privileges and political influence—and this at the moment when Radio Free Europe urged, and Tildy and Nagy proposed to include the Cardinal in a new government coalition!

Underestimating the significance of these developments, the Daily Worker failed to draw the obvious conclusion that the threat of a fascist putsch became sufficiently menacing to require, as a matter of grim necessity, the resolute action taken by the Soviet Union on Nov. 4.

Things reached such a pass that one editorial spokesman for the paper argued thus: since Stalin falsely characterized Tito as a fascist, how are we to know whether a serious fascist danger really arose in Hungary?

But this argument did not carry any weight with Tito himself. On the contrary. For even Tito—who can hardly be considered a Soviet "apologist," and who has his own axe to grind in the present situation—saw the "hard necessity" and threat to world peace which compelled the Soviet Union to take military action.

The leaders of the USSR—like the Marxists of China, Italy, France, etc.—have admitted that they were wrong in some of their previous characterizations of Tito. But no one, and least of all those who profess to be Marxists, can conclude from this that the Soviet leadership is therefore to be brushed off as poor judges of where and when the fascist danger is real and acute. Certainly they were not wrong about Hitler, Hirohito, Mussolini, Horthy and Franco!

And might it not be understandable if the USSR—a multinational socialist state that sacrificed 20 million lives in the anti-Axis war—were exceptionally sensitive, even allergic, to the emergence of a new fascist danger in the postwar period, especially in an area which forms a bridge between Western Germany and its own borders?

Another writer for the Daily's editors has sought to justify his doubts about the reality of the acute fascist danger in Hungary in the name of "independence" from Soviet estimates. It is quite true that in the past we American Marxists were often unduly influenced by the view of Soviet Marxists. None of us wish to return to this uncritical acceptance of the opinions of others, in the Soviet Union or elsewhere.

In breaking with the old dogmatism that declared virtually everything the USSR did was above criticism, is it an improvement to disregard the fact that the USSR is the first and foremost land of socialism? Is there not something "wrong in Denmark" with the new dogmatism which insists that everything the USSR does is suspect or mistaken?

We American Communists once made the mistake of looking at the Soviet Union uncritically. But we never made the mistake of looking at it through the eyes of the American imperialists. We never failed to recognize its socialist role and achievements, its historic contributions to the struggle for peace, national liberation, and social progress.

It is my opinion that a truly independent Marxist position cannot be arrived at by declaring one's independence from working class ideology and partisanship. It must, on the contrary, be a class position—independent of the influence of American Big Business, the



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State Department, and the editorial policy of the New York Times.

It is good that the Daily Worker editorials raise the need for a new summit meeting to relax the new international tensions and end the cold war. But is not this position undermined when the paper repeatedly questions whether the Soviet Union really intends to carry out the decisions of the 20th Congress and implement its Oct. 30th declaration? Does not such speculation, especially when it continues after the recent Warsaw-Soviet pact, give aid and comfort to those in and out of the Administration who claim that the "perfidy" of the USSR makes futile a meeting at the summit, or any other East-West meeting to end the cold war?

It is good that the Daily Worker editors write about the possibility of realizing the people's hopes for a long period of peaceful co-existence between the capitalist and socialist countries. But do these hopes rest on the goodwill of the capitalist countries, including our own? Do they not rather rest on the emergence of socialism as a powerful world system whose peace policies have the support of a growing bloc of neutral nations and of tens of millions of working people in the capitalist countries themselves? And is not the continued strength of that system the best and, indeed, the chief guarantee of peaceful co-existence?

Yes, the lands of socialism have made their share of serious and harmful mistakes. But is the struggle for co-existence helped by concentrating only on the mistakes while minimizing, or even negating, the long and consistent struggle of the socialist governments for peace, and also the fact that, unlike any capitalist governments, they openly and frankly acknowledge their mistakes and evolve, progress, and grow in the course of the struggle to correct them and to solve complex problems without precedent in history?

One of the editorial writers for the Daily Worker now urges that we "de-emphasize" Hungary and concentrate on American problems. In so doing, the writer seems to consider that criticism of the Daily's Nov. 5th editorial is "a platform for apologetics" for the camp of socialism. But one may well ask what kind of an American brand of Marxism is it that would label proposals designed to advance the struggle against Wall Street's "liberation" crusade and the bipartisan NATO and Project X programs as "apologetics"?

If some columnists saw more clearly the realities of American life, they might have less difficulty in understanding what has happened in Hungary. Take, for example, the role of important sections of the Hungarian working class who were either active participants in or passive supporters of the movement whose leadership was temporarily seized by reactionary and pro-fascist forces.

Some commentators seem to think that the character of a movement is determined solely by whether or not it has a measure of working class support. Does this mean that, "coming back

home," there should be progressive support for "back to work" movements in a hard-pressed strike—on the ground that, although inspired and led by employers, these scab movements have the "support of workers"? Does it also mean that militant workers should hesitate to use firm measures against lynch mobs organized by the White Citizens Councils—when or if substantial numbers of white southern workers were misled into joining the segregationists and the lynch mob?

I have read with interest some excerpts from an article by Palmiro Togliatti entitled "The Defense of Freedom and Peace," published in L'Unita on Nov. 6th. Among other things, the Italian Communist leader writes:

"... What else but war could be the result if Hungary would have come under the rule of an open, reactionary government? Border incidents, intervention, provocation would start—all these preparatory steps for an armed conflict which we know so well. What international organizations would enter the picture to try to establish order when the great imperialist powers, or some of them, are blowing on the sparks to get the fire going?"

"At this very moment, we are called upon to condemn the Soviet Union, to demand that it should open the road in Hungary to terror, provocation of war, to condemn it if it doesn't listen to us."

"The duty of the Soviet Union is to prevent the establishment of havens of military provocation on its borders. Its duty, especially now, is to defend all the positions which are part of the peace front, to prevent the rupture or the slightest weakening of these positions. It is its duty not only to itself or the countries of Eastern Europe, but also to us and to all people. The analysis of what called forth the present tragic events in Hungary takes second place to what is happening now in the world."

Let us try to understand this. Let us try to understand that our duty here in Italy consists in this situation in remaining united for the defense of peace and throwing back the attack of reaction. We know its intentions as we know to what it will lead, if our differences in the labor movement should help it to break through. . . ."

The reality of the Horthylike fascist danger to world peace—aided and abetted by our own economic royalists—although obscure to some of the Daily's editors, should be as clear to American Communists as to Togliatti.

No matter how complex developments in other parts of the world, we shall best succeed in understanding our responsibilities if we keep our eye on the ball here at home. The fundamental Marxist concept of class antagonisms and class struggle is not obsolete, least of all here in the United States. The sometimes forgotten enemy—Monopoly—has still to be combated and shackled.

New possibilities for assuring a long period of peaceful co-existence do exist, but their realization still depends on the mass struggle, the intervention, and the unity of the peoples, not least of all the American people. The people's aspirations for a "New America" can also lead to a new democratic advance and higher standards; but this, too, requires organized popular struggle and wise, militant working class leadership—including the influence and initiatives of a Marxist vanguard—against the same enemy which threatens world peace.

Whatever else may have changed since Lincoln's day, or since the 20th Congress, it still remains true that the strongest bond outside of family kinship should be that uniting all the world's working people. True American Marxists will now more than ever do all in their power to strengthen that bond, and therefore to combat all who strive to weaken it.

FOREIGN BRIEFS

ASKS NEW COMINFORM

BERLIN, Nov. 28.—The East German Communist Party called today for revival of the Cominform to combat growing "Titoism" and the "strengthened reactionary attacks" against Soviet leadership.

The Politburo of the Party made the demand in a report by Politburo member Karl Schirdewan, who asked all Communist parties to give a "clear answer" to his proposal.

Schirdewan said Poland and Hungary were introducing "bourgeois beliefs."

BEVAN IN NEW POST

LONDON, Nov. 28.—Aneurin Bevan took over today as the Labor Party's chief spokesman on foreign affairs in Commons.

Bevan's appointment as "foreign secretary" in the Socialist shadow cabinet was announced by party leader Hugh Gaitskell last night.

PINEAU 'DISAPPOINTED'

PARIS, Nov. 28.—Foreign Minister Christian Pineau said today France was disappointed with the U.S. attitude on Suez, but "despite our bitterness we cannot renounce our American friendship or the Atlantic alliance."

Pineau hinted the Suez invasion failed of its aim because of the "premature stop which hindered us."

"We had hoped to occupy all the canal," he said.

Yesterday eight French citizens arrived in Paris from Cairo complaining of ill treatment by the Egyptians. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said France might complain to the UN.

TO AID JEWS IN EGYPT

GENEVA, Nov. 28.—The International Red Cross plans aid to Jews threatened with internment

and expulsion in Egypt, it was learned today.

In Jerusalem today, the Israeli Knesset demanded action on Egypt's alleged expulsion of Jews. The resolution said Israel would welcome the Jews of Egypt "with open arms."

CITE ALBANIA ARRESTS

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Nov. 28.—The Communist newspaper Borba today reported mass arrests in Albania and said many persons were fleeing to the hills with rifles.

Borba reported economic conditions "desperate" in the north.

MOSCOW, Nov. 28.—The Soviet press today published more details of the alleged "misconduct" of N.Y. Times correspondent Welles Hagen, who was ordered expelled Nov. 21.

The trade union organ, Trud, said I. D. Danchenko, vice-chief security officer at the Dneprogres Hydroelectric plant, accused Hagen of photographing the dam and ignoring a warning to desist.

POLISH ARMS PROPOSAL

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Nov. 28.—Poland told the UN yesterday it would not leave the Warsaw Pact as long as NATO exists.

Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Marion Nazkowski suggested as a start that European nations begin with regional agreements on limited armaments leading to a gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany.

ALGERIAN BATTLE

ALGIERS, Nov. 28.—French paratroops were rushed by air today to a rocky mountain pass near the Tunisian border where 15 Frenchmen have been killed and 30 more wounded in a 36-hour battle.