

HUNGARY'S WELFARE

RARELY HAS there been so much activity in our country presumably concerning the welfare of another country as is now going on in connection with Hungary. Rarely has there been so much organizational work, so many speeches made, so many editorials written—with even a special trip by the vice-president himself.

Certainly nothing like it was seen when the Republican government of Spain was being overthrown by Franco—or when the New Deal-type of government of Guatemala was being violently overthrown under the auspices of the United Fruit Co.—or when force and violence have been used against the Negro people in the South.

The most reactionary forces in the country are shedding tears for the very real plight of the Hungarian people. In fact, they are the ones who seem to want to “do most” for Hungary—including such proposals as Senator McCarthy’s to bomb the railway stations in that country.

Whatever one thinks of the actual situation in Hungary, it is clear that all is not what it seems in the campaign here which purports to seek to help the Hungarian people.

No doubt it was considerations like this that made 13 mainly Asian-African countries in the UN assembly abstain from the condemnation of the Soviet Union. These countries included India, Afganistan, Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi-Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen (also Yugoslavia and Finland). It was not lost on these countries that the condemnation resolution was unprecedented in Assembly history and that among its prime movers were the very invaders of Egypt.

Most Americans are entirely sincere in wanting to help the Hungarian people in their tragic situation. But it appears that this sincere desire is being drawn upon not to help Hungary but to increase the tensions of the Cold War all over again. This could be of no help either to the Hungarian people or to the American people.

The Cold Warriors are successfully exploiting a situation in Hungary which does not appear to have improved in recent weeks but, if anything, to have been deteriorating. As the Open Letter of the National Committee of the Communist Party of Nov. 20 said:

“... the use of troops by the Soviet Union in Hungary cannot, of course, solve the basic problems involved. Within Hungary the solution lies in correcting the mistakes of the past, in carrying through in practice the program announced by the Kadar government and in developing a broader government based on the needs and desires of the Hungarian people.”

These steps are even more urgent now—especially with the estrangement between the government and the Workers Councils.

It is apparent, we believe, whatever one feels about the justification or lack of justification for the Soviet intervention, that the workers of Hungary were striking against the Kadar regime because they consider it has failed not only to meet their demands, but even to carry out the professed aim of the government itself—to correct the evil legacy of Stalinist repression and violation of sovereignty.

Apart from whatever may be best for the Soviet Union and the Kadar government to do, the responsibility of all Americans sincerely concerned with the democracy and national independence of Hungary and with world peace is clear. It is not to follow in the wake of the Knowlands, Eastlands and McCarthys and other pro-war forces. On the contrary, it is to seek a quite different course of action, such as proposed in the Communist Party’s Open Letter:

- An end to such instruments of subversion and incitement as Radio Free Europe, Project X of the Central Intelligence Agency and similar agencies.

- A new summit conference to tackle afresh the root question of the cold war; the dissolution of all military blocs, the simultaneous withdrawal of all military forces from all foreign lands, as the Soviet Union has often proposed and as many here are proposing, and the closing of all military bases on foreign soil.

- Widespread support of the efforts by relief agencies cooperating with the UN and the Hungarian government to assist the people of Hungary.

Such a program of action would do most, in our opinion, to ease world tensions rather than increase them. It would bring a durable peace closer.