

# SPEAK YOUR PIECE

## Says Rodney Misjudged Situation

CHICAGO, Ill.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Les Rodney talks all around the issue but completely misjudges the situation on the night of Nov. 4: the victory of fascism in Hungary was inevitable by then unless the Soviet Union intervened.

Of course the failure of the CP to democratize Hungary and the mistakes of the Soviet Union brought Hungary to this tragic pass. Of course, the workers of Hungary should have been mobilized to defeat fascism.

But the workers were so embittered by their just grievances that they just stood by while Communists and militant trade unionists were dragged out into the streets and murdered. Fascism cannot be defeated when the workingclass is passive. The same workers who took part in the democratic demonstrations earlier in the week, remained passive in the face of armed counter-revolution.

At the same time, Horthyites were killing Jews. Nagy was publicly asking Mindzenty what kind of Cabinet was acceptable to him. Clerical fascism was already calling the shots from the driver's seat!

Perhaps Rodney, sitting at his typewriter on 13th St., could gamble on the outcome. The Soviet Union, which had lost 20 million of its people at the hands of Hitler-Horthy Europe, could not. Not only Hungarian but European socialism hung in the balance. In the unstable situation which prevailed that week in Central Europe, any weakness in the face of imperialist inspired counter-revolution would have rapidly undermined the whole system of socialist states, all of which border on Hungary.

No peace loving American can fail to see that a Hitler-Horthy Central and Southern Europe, backed by Western imperialism, aimed at the Soviet Union, would have made a third world war inevitable.

This was not only the judgment of the Soviet leaders, whose ability to judge whether a state is going fascist Rodney repudiates. It was also the judgment of Tito, Togliatti, the Chinese CP and others.

Rodney's trouble is that he views Hungary in isolation from the world plots and outlook of Imperialism. For that was "L Day" (Liberation Day) for Western imperialism and counter-revolution. In Central and Southeast Europe, they plotted through Hungary to smash the system of socialist states. In the Middle East, they attacked Egypt in order to destroy the Jordan-Syrian-Egyptian and Algerian "Zone Of Peace," hoping thereby to substitute the Baghdad Pact for the Bandung Conference. In Paris, they burned the CP headquarters, hoping to destroy the party of peace. In Viet Nam, counter-revolution struck. Syngman Rhee mobilized the move north if all went well elsewhere. Even that counter-revolutionary skeleton, Chiang Kai-shek, rattled his bones.

It was the resolute action of the Soviet Union which frustrated these plots of imperialism against socialism and peace. It was this action which opened up the possibility of a new Geneva, which will never come on a silver platter but will have to be fought for, every inch of the way, as long as Imperialism exists.—Emanuel Blum.

## Says Ed Strong Unfair to 'Daily'

Editor, Daily Worker:

Ed Strong's article on The Daily Worker and the Middle East Crisis is an excellent example of the kind of thinking which

has paralyzed a large section of our party leadership and membership.

In the main it is a well-rounded presentation of factual and theoretical considerations in this area. It has one outstanding shortcoming, but that one destroys its values. It overlooks completely the practical problem which faces our party: which is how to speak on this issue to the masses, to the people who voted Democratic and Republican on Nov. 6.

In this issue the American public as a whole has a basic interest, peace, but for the American public as a whole the Suez issue and the Arab-Israeli issue are both more or less remote. There is, however, one section of the American public, of the masses, to whom this issue is central and second to nothing else. That is, the Jewish masses, who happen to be very active politically, and whose influence in a number of trade unions helps to swing the policy of the whole labor movement.

To these masses Ed Strong's article offers a theoretically sound analysis to which they will simply not listen at the present moment, just as the American masses as a whole will not listen at the present time to the most theoretically sound exposition of why socialism is the next stage in human development.

If leaders capable of profound analyses want to make a positive contribution, they should not content themselves with jumping on some clumsy formulations (too often inevitable when editorials are written against a deadline on complex, unclear fluctuating situations). You should rather address yourselves to the problem with which the Daily Worker staff has been struggling, which is how to get the people outside the party to listen to what we have to say. (That goes also for that section committee whose letter was in the same issue. Instead of telling us that the Daily Worker is off-base in YOUR equally inexpert opinion, better tell us how you have succeeded in explaining Hungary to the millinery workers.)

And it would be helpful if participants in these present discussions stick to the issues and not pounce on each others phrases. Strong is quick to accuse the DW of a chauvinist cliché in the word "marauder." Someone else could jump on Strong for his references to "Islamic" culture and "Islamic" civilization. Islam is a religion, not a nation, not an ethnic term. Did Strong mean to praise religious culture, religious civilization? No, Strong simply used "Islamic" inaccurately. Strong is not advocating the Moslem religion, and neither was the Daily editorial chauvinist when it used the word "marauder."—T.S.F.

## Says Ed Strong Article Oversimplified

Editor, Daily Worker:

May I reply in part to Ed Strong's long article today on the DW and the Middle East? I honestly feel he makes many justified points, and that the initial reaction of the Daily to the war there was a little opportunistic as regards Israel. Yet I also feel Ed Strong has oversimplified both the Middle Eastern problems and those facing a Marxist editorial board in the U. S.

1. Anti-Semitism: Israel is more than just another small country. It symbolizes a refuge from both anti-Semitism and fascism. Like its policies or not, let's not forget this symbolism is a big factor of world politics. Marxists sensitive to the national question (and who shouldn't review his thoughts on that to-

day?) must recognize the depth and democratic origin of pro-Israel sentiment. I think we should sympathize with a lot of it, even while opposing the misuses to which it is put. Such an attitude need not detract from our anti-imperialist views, but it should caution anyone against an over-simplified outlook.

2. Russia: I feel Soviet policy toward Israel is way short of that due from a great Socialist power toward any small state, be it pro or anti-Soviet. Soviet sneers and diatribes at Israel do not make the job of beleaguered progressives there any easier. Particularly is this true when we recall what happened to Jewish culture in the S. U. in the years right after Hitler's defeat, only slowly being corrected. Nor can we forget the policy of the USSR and the Eastern European states to restrict Jews friendly to, or trying to emigrate to Israel. Conclusion: the socialist power of the USSR, though fundamentally anti-imperialist in the Middle East, has been needlessly provocative toward Israel and has in fact helped turn many Israelis (and American Jews) to U. S., West European capital for political support.

3. World peace: It is an historic 'first' for world opinion that the Middle Eastern war was, for the present at least, nipped in the bud. Soviet power was very effective in that. But I would ask both Ed Strong and the Daily this: was the method by which the S. U. exerted its power the best for world peace and creating friendship for socialism? Was it necessary to threaten Britain and France over the radio with rocket bombs, even if later the threat was modified in Government notes? Is it necessary to raise and lower the threat of "volunteers" in the Middle East? Was no other way possible to act for peace besides the threat of force (brinkmanship?)—especially on the heels of the Hungarian events? Didn't Soviet actions, by raising the spectre of S. U. starting World War III in the minds of countless Americans, in some measure confuse for them the anti-imperialist essence of the Middle Eastern struggle?

4. Egypt: Both Ed Strong and the DW have judged Egypt and its government primarily by its foreign policy. They should then consider: what are we to make of the fact that Israel offers negotiations with Egypt while Egypt refuses them? A different issue: the most fundamental imprint Nasser can make on Egypt is through his economic program at home. Could the DW find some facts to tell us how he is doing on that? If his program can lift his country out of the poverty imperialism left it in, he will be remembered for that long after his anti-Israel policy is forgotten.

P. S.—I couldn't write all this without saying a word in appreciation of Jesus Colon. His column, "Red Roses For Me," was warm, gentle humanism at its best.—D. C.

## Events Show Soviet Move Was Harmful

Editor, Daily Worker:

I think that the one basic principle by which all acts must be measured is whether such acts advance or retard the advance to socialism. Over the years, the workingclass has developed subsidiary principles based on its own experience. Some are: the necessity for party democracy, proletarian internationalism, self-determination for nations, etc. It had been shown by history that violations of these principles while possibly having a momentary expedient effect, in the long run retard socialist development. When the Soviet leaders had

to make the decision as to whether to use troops or not in Hungary, they might have faced the dilemma of not knowing whether a breach in the socialist countries was worse than the possible adverse effects of their intervention. One could be charitable and say that the decision to use troops was thus an honest mistake and not a continuation of the Stalinist tendency.

However, events have moved quickly. The general strike in Hungary has continued and there will be deep anti-Soviet feeling there for years. The British, Canadian and other parties have had important defections, the USSR has weakened (and not only in the West) its anti-imperialist position on Suez, etc., the CPUSA is wracked with conflict, anti-Soviet feeling is growing considerably and many of the gains of Geneva seem to be perishing before our eyes. Thus we, in the USA have the advantage of second-guessing Moscow in this matter. I think it must be clear that the Soviet action has done much more harm to socialism than whatever the Nagy government and Hungarian workers could have done by themselves.

To maintain in light of this basic principle that the Soviet action was justified (even if understandable) is, it seems, clearly untenable now.

—A FRIEND.

## Agrees with Open Letter

JAMAICA, N.Y.

Editor, Daily Worker:

The recent Open Letter of the CP National Committee on the Hungarian situation seems to this reader to be basically correct. The statement is clear in its criticism of the first Soviet intervention. And I think it is sound, at this time, in refusing to either justify or condemn the second Soviet intervention.

In the current discussion of Hungary there has been much raising of false issues. Some have argued that the Soviet intervention was justified because it saved socialism in Hungary, prevented the victory of a counter-revolution that would have restored capitalism. In my opinion this argument could possibly only hold water if the majority of the Hungarian people, the workers and their allies, desired and welcomed the use of Soviet troops, if the Hungarian nation, fighting a putschist minority, somehow needed armed Soviet's help. There is a great burden of proof on anyone who sets out to prove that this was true. I do not think that one has to demonstrate that there were fascist, anti-Semitic elements who were asserting themselves in the situation. Those who saw the Life magazine display on White Terror in Hungary can have little doubt of that.

It appears beyond doubt that this Terror murdered hundreds of Communists and other progressives along with its burning of books and wrecking of printing plants. But what is very open to question is the attitude of the people with regard to Soviet intervention. We should want to be shown a great deal of evidence before believing that the people wanted the action of Soviet troops. Frankly I do not think such evidence exists. If this turns out to be the situation then there cannot be much point to the contention that intervention was justified because it helped the Hungarian people's struggle against reaction, assisted in the saving of socialism. Assistance from abroad in combatting the enemies of socialism cannot have much meaning if it comes contrary to the will of those forces in the nation that must form the mass base of socialism.

Another ground should be

considered in evaluating the second Soviet intervention. Was this action necessary for the preservation of world peace? Was it necessary for safeguarding of the national security of the socialist countries, particularly of that of the Soviet Union? We should be clear that, tragic as the situation is, if the answer to these questions is yes, then the intervention was necessary. But is the answer yes? The answer to this turns on whether or not a fascist dictatorship acting as an armed imperialist base against the Soviet Union would have taken power if the Soviets had not intervened. It does not, in my opinion, turn simply on the possibility of a restoration of capitalism. The choice between capitalism and socialism lies in the hands of the Hungarian people and in the hands of no one else. One cannot also use the argument here that if capitalism was restored then eventually this would have led to fascism in Hungary. I think that for intervention to be justified there had to be a more direct danger, the Soviet Union had to be confronted with a living fascist threat in Hungary that only intervention could smash.—H.S.

## Orchids for Rodney Column

Editor, Daily Worker:

Rodney's political column today made me double my intended contribution: here is \$50. I'd send in some anyway, but I admit I'm partisan. I've been waiting weeks to see someone look behind Hungary's admitted fascist danger to see how great it really was and is, and how everybody, including Kadar, could best fight it. Recall Dimitroff's 'United Front' 21 years ago.

Rodney is a master of incisive, popular writing. Quite seriously, I'd like to see him write a regular column on politics. Like Mike Gold, he has avoided Life-Itself-Manship that drowns most left writers. Besides, he has something to say.

A final thought: Through spring and summer, many letter-writers lambasted the CP leadership for its rigid policy and bureaucracy these last ten years. All blame for the Party's isolation lay at their feet. Much of that is true. But I think today's open letter shows (especially by its modest tone) many of the leaders are seriously, if far too slowly, trying to pull out of the rut. But many of the letters the Daily prints lately make me wonder: how many of the rank and file left today are trying as hard? It's terribly easy for persecuted "Marxists" to shut themselves into a mental fortress and say "to hell with everybody else." (eg., "Are we a bunch of civil libertarians?" says one.)

Everybody knows America's radical tradition has very deep roots. But they are not nearly so obvious as those of France or Russia. Hence for our country, maybe more than any other, socialists can easily be cut off from the radical and bourgeois-democratic traditions. (Cf. IWW, SLP, SP, etc.) It takes a very subtle policy, which everybody must think through for himself, to keep hold of those roots.

—J.C.

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