

A VIEW ON HUNGARY

By LESTER RODNEY

I WOULD like to get into the discussion about Hungary. It is my opinion that the Soviet intervention is indefensible. I know this kind of statement goes against the grain of a good many of our readers who are fine fighters for progress and socialism. I could be dead wrong. But I would like the chance to spell out my reasons, in fact, I urgently feel I must, and if this article is on the long side, well, since I'm on a non-political beat, I don't do this often, and I ask that the views of one who has worked on the Daily Worker for 20 years and believes in socialism as strongly as ever, be at least considered. Here are my reasons:

I do not understand how we can condone in any way the forcible imposition of an unwanted government on a people by the armed forces of another country and still speak to our fellow Americans about each nation's own path to socialism. I have read all the letters and articles with care. I have been impressed by the overriding concern over the rebirth of fascism, a concern we all share, and the need to defend socialism from its enemies. I have not seen any answer whatever to the question posed above. I have not even seen any article or letter ADDRESS itself to this point. Yet what future is there for us if not to advocate American socialism?

FASCISM in Hungary. Those who say the Soviet Union had to do what it did say "Yes, a mistake was made at first, but then it became a question of fascism taking over the country so there was no choice."

Cited in support of this contention are the unquestioned facts of fascist emigres pouring back into Hungary during the fighting, Project X, the role such as Cherne, and lynchings of Communists.

These facts disturb me as they disturb all who hate fascism. Yet there is another body of facts which disturbs me too.

If a counter-revolutionary fascist government was certain to prevail, how is that the most tenaciously fighting mass of workers, at Csepel, included in their conditions for laying down arms elections participated in by all parties which support socialism?

There is another troubling fact. Ringed by Soviet troops in the Parliament, Minister of State Istvan Bibo, a non-Communist member of Nagy's coalition government, declared, "In this situation I state that Hungary has no intention of following an anti-Soviet policy. I reject the slander that fascist or anti-Semitic actions have stained the glorious Hungarian revolution. The entire Hungarian nation participated in it, without class or religious discrimination."

If this seems to blink the atrocities of a fascist and anti-Semitic nature which took place, it still reveals clearly that the people attacked by the Soviet army were committed AGAINST such policies. In a nation with 11 years of socialism behind it, imperfect as that socialism has been, does not such a government have to be conceded a CHANCE to rally the working class and the best people in the land and deal successfully with its own fascists?

But Nagy, it is said, capitulated to reaction. He was in a terrible position and I certainly cannot sit here in New York and defend everything he did or said. But I do know that if he took Hungary out of the Warsaw Pact in the hectic aftermath of the first insensate shooting into a peaceful demonstration for better socialism, he was taking Hungary no further than Tito took Yugoslavia, which is not a member of the Pact though a socialist country.

One must wonder, and with uneasy heartsickness, what kind of "counter-revolutionary" fas-

cism" it is where the fighting Communist widow of the framed martyred Rajk must flee to the Yugoslav Embassy for sanctuary from the Soviet attack? Where Dean Tamae Nagy of the Budapest Karl Marx Institute of Economics, and two editors of the Communist youth paper "Szabad Ifjusag" are arrested as rebels? Where a deposed member of the Nagy cabinet, Anna Kethly, tells New York reporters with horror that she wants no armed forces helping there is enough bloodshed, and is booed by fascists who try to use her when she states that the uprising was not to start another war but to win co-existence with its neighbor.

Eyewitnesses from the socialist press? I know of one, Peter Fryer of the London Daily Worker. He holed up in the British Embassy with the other English scribes when the Soviet attack came, and when he got out, cabled a story which the London Worker, an all out defender of the Soviet position, refused to print. Fryer then resigned from the paper, while remaining in the CP.

Every member of the Hungarian Olympic team, these splendid athletes of a new social order, declared for the Nagy government.

I am afraid I no longer have confidence in the ability of the Soviet leaders to decide when a nation is fascist or going fascist. Eight years ago we were told that Yugoslavia was fascist—because it determinedly took a national road to socialism, and rejected an inferior status.

I BELIEVE it is clear to all, no matter which "side" of the argument they take, that virtually the entire Hungarian people was united against the intervention. It seems that this fact, instead of forcing some readers to painfully re-think their first conclusions, instead pushed them to the conclusion that virtually the entire Hungarian nation consists of fascists! We get this in questions challenging "Is it or is it not true that Hitler had a mass base?" Are these readers then willing to say that the same kind of people result from years of Hitler's fascist, anti-human, racist rule, and from the Hungarian socialist regime of the past 11 years? I guarantee you I take second place to nobody as a critic of Rakosi and Gero, yet I am not willing to say such a thing.

Something else that bothers me greatly in the arguments of Eugene Dennis, James Allen and others is this: What happens to the class struggle, the role of the working class of a country against its own enemies, if one derogates to the Soviet Union the right to bar fascism, defend socialism, change governments, in other countries? Regardless, mind you, of whether the working class of a given country WANTS the intervention. It is only their country after all. Picture if you will the reaction of a Hungarian worker to the statement by a Daily Worker reader the other day "I for one don't want the Soviet troops withdrawn."

ANALOGY WITH SPAIN. This has been brought up in several letters and articles by supporters of the Soviet action. But isn't it a bit upside down? In Spain the "rebels" had the assistance of Hitler and Mussolini's troops against a government supported by a majority of the population. In Hungary the "rebels" are the majority of the population fighting for the government of their choice, the Nagy government, against a Hungarian minority and outside troops. (No, I am decidedly not equating the Hitler-Mussolini fascist intervention with Soviet intervention. I know the motives are entirely different, one for fascism, the other against fascism).

More important—how do those who make the analogy with

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Spain explain the fact that around Spain there was world wide unity of all anti-fascist, progressive forces, Communist and non-Communist, with the best people of each country rallying to the Loyalist cause, while today it is tragically exactly the opposite, with the non-Communist progressives of the world sharply rupturing all relations with defenders of the Soviet action. Can this fail to be the cause for sober analysis by Communists?

A QUESTION of fascism? Certainly the elements of fascism were in the Hungarian situation. How do you fight fascism? By winning unity with all democratic people who oppose fascism, and thus isolating and smashing fascism. But the line in Hungary acted to make a whole country a base for the fascists to work in! Take the vital question of friendship with the Soviet Union, the first country of socialism and world force for peace. Comulka in Poland OPPOSED Soviet pressure against independence, based himself on the Polish workers and put the party at the head of those demands for reform. He is decidedly in a position now to fight for a line of friendship with the Soviet Union. But alas, in Hungary, no matter what the splendid intentions of the Kadar government, it will be a long, long, long time before it can even fight for a line of friendship with the Soviet Union.

THE underlying fault here. This is difficult to express, because I agree that this discussion should be sharp in content but fraternal in form, and I don't want to appear to be making any sweeping damnings of those I disagree with. Yet I feel this is the nub of the matter and I don't know how not to say it. . . . It is my opinion that a wrong relationship to the Soviet Union is still in operation among many who heatedly reject any criticism of the Soviet actions.

For many years the automatic and proper response to anything controversial dealing with the USSR was "defend the Soviet Union," that beleaguered island of socialism in a hostile world. But this is a long outdated situation and necessity.

Socialism to us meant the Soviet Union. It meant the CPSU. It meant the leadership of the CPSU. Since they WERE socialism, they could do no wrong because whatever they did was in the interests of socialism.

Ah, but it turns out now that leaders of the CPSU did terrible, terrible harm to the interests of socialism. And there are other centers of socialism in a changing world. Socialism is bigger than any country, any party, any leaders. They can become distorted, corrupted, lose their bearings, but socialism remains. Believing this, one avoids the twin dangers of being seen as a Russian apologist, and losing one's faith in socialism.

Up to the events in Hungary there was much talk here of a Marxist maturity, independence of judgment and reservation of the fraternal right of criticism. But there was no actual TEST of this new independence until now. It was, as others in Speak Your Piece have aptly pointed out, easy to be critical of past Soviet errors because you were in step with the Soviet leadership in doing so. So too it was easy to be retroactively wise about the pact of 1939 with the Nazis and say how differently we as American Marxists, should have acted, because that is safely past. But it seems that when a situation comes up which requires disagreement with the present leadership of the Soviet Union, we can't get off the habit.

Will these wrong relations with the Soviet Union, which crashed us into disaster time after time when we were on the right path, be permitted to deal us the final

fatal thrust into total and permanent isolation as "Russian apologists?"

JUST suppose—Now when the students of Czechoslovakia demonstrate again, as they certainly will, for the democratizing of socialism in their land, will we unhappily oppose these students and be in favor of putting them down sternly because any unrest will carry the danger of fascism, there will be suspicions of Project X at work, etc., etc? But shouldn't a true and thoughtful international socialist solidarity be with these fighters to make socialism what it should be, against the old line Stalinists who sit on the Slansky-Clementis frameup and brandish the "iron fist?"

The thought inevitably occurs—why, if we are thinking, independent American Marxists, do we have to wait until something like that happens then join the Czech leaders themselves in admitting, yes, they made a mistake and it led to the bad, touch-and-go situation with its danger to socialism. Why not NOW give our modest fraternal opinion that the Czech leaders are storing up trouble for socialism?

A NON-TALKABLE line. Is it not thought-provoking that those who oppose the Daily Worker's editorials on Hungary will not go to any Americans outside of the Communist Party with their line? What kind of a line can this be?

No, I do not believe this is an opportunistic, popularity-contest attempt to weigh the merits of a line. Did we not speak out boldly to our fellow Americans against the Korean War, a line which was initially unpopular, but which we knew to be RIGHT and which the American people finally did overwhelmingly vote for?

GOOD FOR socialism? The main difference expressed by Eugene Dennis and others like James Allen with the "Daily" editorial was its statement that the intervention was harmful for socialism. They think otherwise, that it helped socialism.

Helped socialism? In every country in the world good relations with the finest elements are being shattered. Jean Paul Sartre must condemn the Soviet action "entirely and with no reservations," and break relations with the French Communists. So do other non-party progressives like Simone de Beauvoir (and leading party writers like Claude Roy, Roger Vailland, J. F. Rolland).

In England even that noble friend of the Soviet Union, the Dean of Canterbury, must speak against the Soviet action. Hugh Gaitskill, leader of the Labor Party, at a moment when he is playing a splendid historic role against imperialism, is thrown into union with the imperialists in condemning the Soviet action. (Leading British Communist trade union leaders resign from the party because it supports the intervention). In every non-socialist country in the world the Communist Parties are isolated as never before in their history. The moral prestige of the world's first socialist country receives a staggering blow, including in Asia.

Whatever else one may wish to argue about the intervention in Hungary, this is harmful, not helpful, to socialism.

"MORALITY"—I believe it is no accident that cropping up in letters defending the Soviet action are sneers at the words "morality," "humanism" and "general, abstract ideas of justice, democracy, right and wrong. . . ." Is this felt necessary because the world sees the action as violating these good words? There is also what seems to me a bloodless facility in granting that the first intervention was a "mistake," and moving on to the

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AT MELBOURNE

Brundage Calls on Follow Olympics' Ex

United Germans Get Along 'Fine'

MELBOURNE, Nov. 19.—Athletes from both parts of divided Germany, united in an All-German Olympic team, are getting along fine and keep out of political arguments, their Olympic chief Gerhard Stoeck said today.

The formation of an All-German team was one of the biggest headaches of the International Olympic Committee and resulted in numerous squabbles during the past few years. But an agreement was finally reached last year, and the first postwar All-German team appeared in the Winter Olympics at Cortina last January.

Stoeck said athletes from East and West Germany were not segregated but shared team billets at the Olympic Village.

U. S. COACHES IN BASKETBALL

MELBOURNE, Nov. 19.—ly predicted victory in both as the official program of the way with the solemn opening of the 52nd meeting of the International Olympic Committee.

Blaring trumpets and formal speeches opened the I.O.C. conclave with 2,000 officials present in Melbourne Town Hall, although actual competition in the games does not begin for three more days.

The officials heard Avery Brundage of the United States call on "the politicians of the world" to follow the "good example" of Olympic fair play and sportsmanship so that "there will no longer be any necessity for wars."

Meanwhile, U. S. basketball Coach Gerry Tucker of Bartlesville, Okla., and swimming coach Bob Muir of Williams College summed up their squads' chances in the

Hot Knicks See Title

It was the Knicks' best game of the season Sunday night as they routed the St. Louis Hawks 102-69, a fabulous margin for the pros, and we'll let you in on a secret. The local boys now firmly believe they are on their way and will zoom to the top and stay there.

Five of the Knicks scored in double figures, including the debuting Slater Martin, the league's smallest man, who kept the club on its toes in the second half and should help the general drive and air of class on the club. He was one slick playmaker, fitting beautifully into the Knicks' style, much faster than the old set Minneapolis style he is accustomed to.

The sparkling win brought the club to 4-4, but they expect that to change quickly for the better. "We have the most good men in the league," one veteran Knick put it, "And good balance between youngsters, like Sears and Sobie, and us did ones. "We're going to win a lot of ball games from here on in."

next point. There is little sorrow or horror, though in other circumstances we have all been horrified at the killing of unarmed demonstrators for social betterment.

I have heard in an argument the expression, "Well, sometimes you have to do something for people's own good whether they like it or not." I believe this could only come from someone who has had little real contact with people. Imagine what would happen to someone in a shop if he told his fellow workers something had to be done for their own good whether they liked it or not.

I believe this academic toughness is not Marxist at all, but another example of automatic transference of another country's totally different situation and necessities in an entirely different historical context. Certainly it is not what attracted me, and I dare say many others, to the scientific socialist movement in the '30s when we wanted to fight against the immoral, anti-humanist, unjust works of capitalism in our land.

A letter by a historian I re-

'old pro' i.r. back in front

The Giants were finally upset, so Lester Rodney got the jump on the pro prediction over Roosevelt Ward, Jr. this week with a record of three right and three wrong while Ward had two right and four wrong. It was a week which in addition to the Redskin upset of the Giants saw Pittsburgh upset the Chicago Cards, and Frisco upset Green-bay.

Rodney slipped back in front of Ward on the season's pro pix, with 17 right and 12 wrong, to Ward's 16 and 13. And who do you suppose they like Sunday when the Bears meet the Giants?

spect urges that this is a moment for "tentativeness." I believe this is profoundly wrong. I believe right now, on this issue, is the moment to rescue the fine heritage of the movement and make meaningful its future role by wrenching free once and for all from the disastrous and unnecessary wrong relationships with the Soviet Union. I believe it is high time to call an indefensible act indefensible and that this will help, not harm, socialism here and everywhere. I believe that then, paradoxically, for the first time we will be in firm position to speak about the historic accomplishments of the Soviet Union.

So long as we permit the type of fascist-minded crowd as picketed Pythian Temple to be the "defenders" of Hungary, we are abdicating.

I believe history, and soon, will show that the Daily Worker's principled and yes, correct class position, helped save the honorable future of the American Marxist left.

(More Olympic news on