

## UPHEAVALS IN POLAND AND HUNGARY

The program of de-Stalinization that followed the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the relaxation of security measures as the result of the easing of international tensions and above all the revelations concerning arbitrary bureaucratic suppressions released popular dissatisfaction and frustration within the socialist countries. In Poland and Hungary, the discontent culminated in upheavals threatening the solidarity of the socialist world.

Essentially, the popular discontent represented weariness and impatience with the long period of war economy austerity and with the failure to improve the living conditions of the people. "The six year plan," declared Wladyslaw Gomulka, Poland's new premier, on October 21, "advertised as a stage in the advancement of the living standards, disappointed the hopes of the workingclasses. The impatience of the workingclass comes from the poor living conditions. . . . The six year plan called for the building of 900,000 rooms but actually only 370,000 were built. . . . Many factories do not operate normally. . . . Their production capacity is not used to the full. The situation does not allow us to make considerable increases in pay. The string has been stretched to the breaking-point."

But the economic failures and the hardships of the people were not the only cause of the popular discontent. Despite bureaucracy and incompetence, Poland and Hungary made tremendous economic advances. According to the United Nations Economic Survey of 1953,

the increase in production in the Peoples Democracies between 1948 and 1952 surpassed the increase between 1920 and 1940. Their industrial output in 1955 was three and four times that of 1938. The reconstruction of Warsaw symbolizes the achievements of the last decade. Reduced to rubble and having suffered 800,000 casualties (more than the total losses of the United States and Great Britain in World War II), Warsaw has been rebuilt into a beautiful metropolis.

A tiny remnant of an almost annihilated underground undertook to bring order out of the chaos in Poland and Hungary. The radical changes necessary in the bankrupt feudal and fascist societies were imposed by this nucleus of revolutionaries. In neither Poland nor Hungary was there a vast popular upheaval such as in Russia and in China. The great social changes were not the immediate result of the struggles of the people themselves and were therefore not treasured as hardwon, long-sought accomplishments.

Thousands joined the Communist Party and rose to high positions in it and in the government. Many of them became blind to the will and temper of the people. Dogmatism and bureaucracy apparently were rife. How far this party degeneration had proceeded was exposed in a report by Dr. Gyula Hajdu, a professor at the University of Budapest, a man who had spent fifty years in socialist and communist movements. According to the *New York Times* (June 30, 1956), Dr. Hajdu presented a detailed report how the party leaders were shielded from reality and how party hacks developed the party line into a profitable and easy livelihood. "How can the Communist leaders know what's going on?" Dr. Hajdu asked. "They never mix with workers or ordinary people. They

don't meet them in street cars because they all ride automobiles. They don't meet them in stores or at the marketplace." He charged, further, that Communist oldtimers who maintained their integrity had been expelled from the party.

In Poland the corruption within the party was apparently similar. Gordon Cruikshank, correspondent of the London *Daily Worker*, quoted an elderly Polish worker as declaring (October 22): "Old socialists were in disgrace and were pushed around. Those who claimed to be socialist leaders wouldn't even shake hands with them. Factory directors assumed the role of lords of estates." According to Gomulka, "The party became subjugated to the main personality cult. If someone tried to go outside the bounds, he was excommunicated by his comrades."

The Krushchev revelations and the exposures of Stalinist type of excesses in each of the Peoples Democracies brought demoralization in party ranks and further lowered party prestige. Anti-party elements took advantage of the criticism of party corruption and of the popular demand for better living conditions to preach that "Socialist economy had failed indisputably and irrevocably," as Jerzy Putrament, a Polish journalist declared.

The hasty attempts to introduce changes led to a premature granting of freedom to all, including the bitterest enemies of socialism and of the Soviet Union. In Poland and Hungary there are large petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements which enjoyed influence and status under the feudal-fascist Pilsudski and Horthy regimes. The power of the Catholic clergy in both nations is immense. Many of the counterrevolutionaries had been scheming with foreign reaction for the restoration of the nationalized lands and factories to the ousted nobility and

bankers. To survive, the regime had to suppress these elements, and many of them were imprisoned. In the general revulsion that followed the exposés of injustices and crimes, all those who had been accused and condemned, including reactionaries, suddenly became popular heroes.

Hoodlum elements (the kind that joined Hitler's SS or that have formed the membership of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States) took advantage of the new wave of freedom that the people demanded in the de-Stalinization campaign. At the Poznan trial, for example, it was disclosed that among the rioters were vicious elements who used bottles of petrol to set fire to buildings. The Security Police, on the other hand, according to the governor of the city, scrupulously observed the order not to fire at the vandals. That these elements are numerous and dangerous is attested by Gomulka's special warning against "hooligan extravagances and against those who seek to kindle anti-Sovietism."

In the Hungarian revolt, these fascist spirited elements spread terror and destruction. "The servants of the Budapest regime," reported the *New York Times* (October 27), "were hanged or shot without ceremony.... Former Defense Minister Mihály Farkas and his son were taken out of jail and shot. Other Communist officials were trampled to death." These hoodlums vented special wrath at the Communist government's fostering of culture and learning. According to a Budapest radio broadcast on October 25, "The National Museum with art treasures of inestimable value was fired four times by hoodlums. The fourth time, this morning, there was no stopping the flames. The entire contents of the museum were feared burned." The *New York Times* on October 31 carried a story of the burning of every bookshop in Pest.

The general revulsion at the corruption and degeneration of many party elements within Hungary explains why many Hungarian workers did not actively defend the regime during the recent revolt. Some of them were not averse to seeing the old leadership overthrown. On the other hand, press reports note that the workers protected their factories against counterrevolutionaries. Even the counterrevolutionaries did not dare to put forth demands for returning industry to the capitalists and the land to the big landlords though their attempt to overthrow the government by force and violence involved this ultimate objective.

One of the errors of party leaders in Poland and Hungary was their dogmatic and inflexible imitation of Soviet methods and approaches and an ignoring of national peculiarities and traditions. When these weaknesses and errors were exposed to public view, many party leaders blamed the Soviet Union for providing a bad model and claimed that all mistakes were attributable to Soviet domination of their countries. The Soviet Union became their whipping boy.

Anti-socialist and anti-Soviet elements had a heyday with wilful and unprincipled attacks on the Soviet Union. Traditionally anti-Russian as a result of their long experience under Czarist oppression, the Poles have given vent to anti-Russian jingoism. "It is hard to find a Pole with a kind word for them (the Russians)," reported the *New York Times* (October 29). The arrogant nationalist elements are undoubtedly determined to achieve a full break with the Soviet Union.

Among the people, the forced rapid industrialization and collectivization and the many sacrifices of the cold war period were associated with Stalinism. The repudia-

tion of Stalinism for them meant the repudiation of socialism. Furthermore, the cynicism regarding the corrupt party practices was automatically extended to include the Soviet Union.

That Polish Marxists should echo and even promote these nationalistic sentiments is surprising and alarming. In assigning the onus for all Poland's difficulties to the Soviet Union, these disgruntled leftwingers ignore the cold war pressures and threats of atomic war from the West which compelled the diversion of a large segment of Polish industrial production to defense preparations.

The scope, urgency and cost of these preparations plus the U.S. imposed economic boycott are the principal causes for the present strains and dislocations in the economies of the European Peoples Democracies. Such, too, are the strains afflicting the economy of Peoples China. "Arms Bill Slows Red China's Rise Preventing Maximum Industrial Development" read a headline in the *New York Times* on August 23, 1956. "A breakdown of budget figures shows that about \$2,925,000,000 will be spent on heavy industry," the article reported. "The defense program although said to have been cut will cost \$2,670,000,000." These sacrifices for defense are of course related to China's desperate housing shortage described in the same article. The maintenance of an armaments race is capitalism's classic way of curbing the development of the socialist world short of actual intervention.

The *Daily Worker* nevertheless applauded the claim of some Polish Communists that "the economic dislocations were *self-imposed* by the left sectarian, Stalinist overestimation of the war danger and the underestimation of the strength of socialism and of the peace forces." But the term "self-imposed" falsifies the realities of the

international situation. "Self-imposed" indeed! As though the vast imperialist preparations for "liberating" China and the European Peoples Democracies and the Soviet Union itself, the hundreds of American bomber bases ringing these countries were simply an illusion; as though it was the desire of the imperialists for peaceful coexistence and not Soviet might (and the immense sacrifices sustained by the Soviet people in building it) that stopped the Korean holocaust from spreading to China; as though such dislocation were not inherent in the task of achieving freedom from imperialist domination!

The new slogan of the Polish leaders is for the abolition of the status of inequality between Poland and the Soviet Union. What this inequality specifically consists in has not been defined. If this demand is to be considered more than a mere nationalistic outburst, definition of the supposed inequality is essential. It is not clear to what this cry of inequality refers or what it includes. Does this inequality refer to the Polish industrial poverty which the Soviet Union has helped to overcome by shipments of machinery, tools and entire factories? Does this inequality refer to the Polish shortage of specialists which the Soviet Union has helped to overcome by training thousands of Polish technicians in its universities? Does this inequality refer to Polish imitation of Soviet promotion of cultural institutions, the building of libraries, museums, houses of culture and sports facilities? Do the Poles mean to complain of exploitation of Polish labor and resources by Soviet corporations for the profits of Moscow millionaires? Do they claim that the Soviet Union has attempted to maintain the Peoples Democracies as sources of raw materials as do the imperialist nations in colonial and semi-colonial countries?

The Polish cry of inequality feeds the slander of enemies of socialism in regard to so-called Soviet imperialism. One of the essential features of imperialism is the curbing of the industrial development of backward nations and the plundering of their wealth. Soviet policy, in sharp distinction, aims at the acceleration of industrial development not only in the Peoples Democracies but also in all industrially retarded countries. The Soviet Union did more to further Poland's industrialization in the last decade than the United States did for the Latin American nations in the last century.

[The Soviet Union in its official statement on October 30 (*New York Times*, October 31) noted that the "Socialist nations can build their relations only on the principle of full equality, respect of territorial integrity, state independence and sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of one another."]

The influence of the Voice of America in developing this anti-Soviet sentiment has certainly been considerable. For years the Voice of America has harped on one line: that the Peoples Democracies could enjoy American standards of living if not for Soviet domination. This psychological warfare tactic undoubtedly gained effectiveness after the Krushchev revelations and the exposures of crimes and economic failures in the Peoples Democracies.

The West has welcomed what seemed the apparent success of their intensive campaign of the last decade to destroy the unity among the socialist nations. "If you break up the Communists into small pieces," the *Wall Street Journal* (October 31, 1956) quoted a State Department official as declaring, "it's easier to get rid of them. . . . American policy . . . wants to keep alive the chances for more revolts in the satellites."

In past months Western spokesmen had been expressing alarm at the New Look in the East, fearing that the relaxation of controls, increasing democracy and new emphasis on raising living standards would strengthen the people's loyalty to the regimes and render the possibility of counterrevolution increasingly unlikely. It seems probable that it was recognized in the headquarters of the various Project X organizations that the current, confused transition period of the exposure of past excesses and inefficiency provided the *last opportunity* for accomplishing the overthrow of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe—the avowed purposes of these organizations. It would be naive to doubt that agents of these groups participated in the planning of the Hungarian rebellion and that they contributed generously from their enormous funds to back the uprising.

Indeed, Western spokesmen openly admit their involvement in subversive activities in the East. "London diplomats," reported the *New York Times* (October 26), "are awakening to the importance of Social Democratic forces long quiescent in swinging Poland and Hungary away from Soviet leadership. . . . They fear that the Hungarian anti-Communists have exposed themselves and that as a result all those elements in Hungary on which the West might have counted five years hence may be liquidated." *Life Magazine* (November 5) announced editorially: "We must, however, be prepared to do much more in the next phase of the liberation process which Poland and Hungary have pioneered."

On November 4, 1956, the *New York Times* reported that Leo Cherne, the chairman of the International Rescue Committee, and Angier Duke Biddle, president of the organization, "left New York by air for Hungary to set

up full-scale operations to aid the Hungarian rebels and for the arrangement of pipelines into Hungary." Mr. Cherne visited Cardinal Mindszenty and the headquarters of the "Freedom Fighters."

It is significant that the rebels controlled only that area of the country along the Austrian border. News reports spoke of "a seemingly endless line of trucks, cars, carts, motorcycles . . . from Vienna toward the Hungarian borders laden with medicines and gifts for the fighting Hungarians." The *New York Times* (October 27) went on to report that "unspecified numbers of Hungarians living in West German refugee camps have left for Hungary to help liberate their homeland." Thousands of Hungarians in these camps were monarchists and fascists who had not dared return home at the end of World War II.

Capitalist spokesmen have bitterly denounced Soviet intervention in crushing the Hungarian counterrevolution. Premiers Guy Mollet and Anthony Eden, busily engaged in massacring Egyptians and Algerians, took time off to condemn Soviet interference in Hungarian affairs. And correctly so! For the fortunes of imperialism were no less at stake in Hungary than in Egypt.

The *New York Times* expressed pique at developments in the Middle East, editorializing (November 2): "The Security Council is faced with a moral dilemma. . . . It must view the situation against the background of the whole Middle East situation. What the British, French and Israelis have done cannot be undone. We live in a dangerous world and our present concern must be to achieve the results which we all should hope." (sic) (These results, of course, are nothing but the continued plunder of the oil and other resources of the Arab countries.)

Regarding the defeat of Hungary, the *New York Times*

(November 5) fulminated: "We accuse the Soviet government of the foulest treachery and basest deceit known to man. We accuse it of having committed so monstrous a crime against the Hungarian people yesterday, that its infamy can never be forgiven or forgotten."

American Communist spokesmen have echoed the difference in attitude of the *New York Times*. Ignoring the basic class and world alignments behind the events in Hungary, Poland and Egypt, they issued lukewarm protests against the Anglo-French-Israeli assault on Egypt and expressed bitter consternation at Soviet suppression of the counterrevolutionary movement in Hungary. Evidently the "New Look," "reconstructed" Marxists are no longer concerned with such trifling matters as class struggles and clashing capitalist-socialist interests. Thus the *Daily Worker* joined the *New York Times* and anti-Soviet spokesmen in hailing the events in Poland and Hungary. It praised the uprisings as "triumphs of Marxism and democracy" and insisted that the issue is "not Soviet or anti-Soviet" but anti-Stalinism. The *Daily Worker* has found itself in the distinguished company of Chancellor Adenauer and Countess Esterhazy (formerly the chief Hungarian feudal landowner) in denouncing the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian counterrevolution.

"The action of the Soviet troops in Hungary," declared the *Daily Worker* (November 5), "does not advance but retards the development of socialism because socialism cannot be imposed on a country by force."

For these new-style Marxists, the brave new world where force no longer exists has apparently already arrived.

Even more perplexing was the statement issued on November 4, 1956 by the National Committee of the American Communist Party (Benjamin J. Davis and

Eugene Dennis abstaining and William Z. Foster absent). "The response of the Soviet authorities," the statement declared, "to the request for armed intervention also cannot be justified by the argument that they had legal right to do so under the Warsaw pact. This was not a matter of formal rights. It violated the essence of the Leninist concept of national self-determination because the call for the troops was not in accord with the wishes of the Hungarian people. The Hungarian people have now had 11 years in which to test parties and leaders. They alone have the right to decide whether to change or retain them."

The National Committee of the American Communist Party has apparently arrived at the absurd notions that peaceful coexistence implies that the struggles between the socialist and imperialists camps will be resolved by United Nations-supervised elections; that the success of the Hungarian counterrevolution would not have constituted a severe blow to the entire socialist camp and to an intensified "liberation" drive of the imperialists in the other Peoples Democracies; that regardless of consequences, the Soviet Union must observe the principle of national self-determination even though the final arbiter in the world of bourgeois freedom and democracy (whether in Guatemala, South Africa, South Korea, Cyprus, Spain, Iran or North Africa or in the "sovereign" states of Alabama and Mississippi) is the naked power of the class with the guns.

The National Committee statement also declared: "The fact that counterrevolutionaries are trying to utilize the situation cannot obscure that this is primarily a people's upheaval." But are upheavals utilized by counterrevolutionaries less reactionary and less dangerous in their

consequences because they enjoy the approval of a section of "the people"? Regardless of the errors of the Stalinist leadership and other causes of the uprisings, the rebellion in Hungary has aimed at wrenching the nation from the socialist camp and at breaking the unity of the socialist countries.

Democratization and correction of errors and abuses must be distinguished from wilful regressive nationalistic "reforms" leading to the weakening of cooperation and the encouragement of antagonisms in the socialist camp. The independence demanded by Polish and Hungarian leaders clearly reflects dangerous nationalist tendencies. Thus *Zycie Warszawy* (October 28) called for an independent Polish foreign policy based on national interests and Poland's historic traditions rather than solely on the country's alliance with the Soviet Union. What are these historic traditions in Poland but traditions of enmity and aggrandizement against the Soviet Union?

Even under the developing peaceful coexistence between the socialist and capitalist worlds, the struggle between the two camps will be bitter and protracted. Socialist security and advancement has depended and continues to depend upon the united action of the socialist nations. There is still need for an overall plan of development in the socialist world, with generally accepted priorities, mutual aid and division of labor. The industrialization of China, for example, which may prove decisive in the extension of socialism throughout Asia, has been accepted as the responsibility of all the socialist nations.

If each socialist nation now seeks to dart off on a nationalistic tangent concerned only with its own immediate and narrow interests, the accomplishment of the historic tasks undertaken by the socialist world will be jeopardized.