

# Poland, Hungary After 11 Years

By JOSEPH CLARK

A HUNGARIAN student demonstration in support of Poland's democratization upsurge helped spark the Hungarian upheaval. So it was fitting that last Monday the Polish leaders sent a dramatic appeal to Hungarians. Communist Party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka and Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz said in their message:

"In the last few days you and we, simultaneously and in solidarity, undertook the struggle for Socialist democratization in our countries and for equality and sovereignty in the relations between states."

The Polish Communists strongly supported the efforts of Premier Nagy, and Communist Party secretary, Janos Kadar, to end the Stalinist repressions which had brought on the peoples upheaval. Thus, the Polish appeal continued:

"We are acquainted with the program of Socialist democratization, of improving living standards, of setting up workers councils, a program of full national sovereignty, a program calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary and of basing friendship with the Soviet Union on the Leninist principles of equality."

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**FORMATION** of a five-party coalition Hungarian government was announced by Premier Nagy as a prelude to free elections. No more was the farce of single-slate elections to take the place of a true popular choice, Nagy explained. Thus Hungary was returning to the democratic system inaugurated after liberation by the Soviet army in 1945.

However, while the prompt Polish democratization saved socialism in that country, the delay and hesitation in Hungary jeopardized the entire socialist structure.

Among the new members of the Nagy interim government were

Bela Kovacs, leader of the Small Holder party, and Zoltan Tildy, former president of Hungary. In 1945 the Hungarian Peoples Democracy was founded on the alliance of three parties—the Communists, the Social Democrats and the Small Holders. A democratic election held in November, 1945, gave the Small Holders first place with 2,687,000 votes; the Social Democrats came second with 819,000 and the Communist third with 797,000.

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**BUT UNDER** Mathias Rakosi's leadership the Hungarian Communist Party introduced the worst features of Stalinist disregard for democracy. Kovacs and Tildy were imprisoned. The alliance which established the Peoples Democracy was thereby destroyed and police-state methods were introduced. This coincided with a coordinated drive by Stalin to replace the concept of Peoples Democracies in all the East European socialist countries.

Soon the repressions widened to include not only representatives of parties allied with the Communists but also Communists who remained true to the concept of peoples democracy and of national paths to socialism. This brought the frame-up and murder of Rajk and his comrades in Hungary, of Kostov in Bulgaria, of Slansky in Czechoslovakia. Later Nagy and Kadar were imprisoned in Hungary and Gomulka jailed in Poland.

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**AFTER THE DEATH** of Stalin a gradual process of returning to Marxist principles and re-establishing the democratic foundations of socialism was begun in the East European socialist countries. But it proceeded at an uneven rate, with the Polish Communists taking the lead in recognizing the need

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# HUNGARY

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of a more drastic break with Stalinism.

A major event in the process was the reconciliation between the Soviet and Yugoslav leaders negotiated in Belgrade in the Spring of 1955. This led to the joint Soviet-Yugoslav declaration emphasizing the principles of varied national paths to socialism. It also condemned the interference of any socialist country or Communist Party into the affairs of other countries or parties.

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**HOWEVER**, it was not till the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party that the deep significance of the Stalinist perversion of socialist principles was recognized. Poland again was first to re-examine past practices and took big steps toward democratization. For example, the national legislature, the Sejm, began to conduct honest-to-goodness debate.

Then with the workers' upheaval in Poznan the Polish Communists proceeded to blame the events on the bad economic conditions and lack of protest and grievance outlets for the workers. The Poznan trials were conducted before the eyes of the whole world as models of justice and mercy. Then when the great turbulent popular demonstrations took place the Polish Communists were in the leadership of that movement. Proof that this was strengthening socialism and preventing counter-revolutionaries from taking advantage of the Polish people's protests came with the peaceful settlement of the Polish crisis under Gomulka's leadership. Friendship with the Soviet Union was proclaimed on the basis of real equality and independence.

In Hungary the maintenance of the Stalinist Erno Gero as the Party's first secretary was a sign of delay and indecision which produced the terrible violence that followed the first peaceful demonstrations. It was Gero, partner of Rakosi, who was responsible for the actions by the Hungarian secret police in shooting at students and workers on Tuesday, Oct. 23. It was Gero who called Soviet troops into action against the demonstrators. The use of Soviet troops inflamed the situation, as the Polish Communists noted. The very next day Gero was ousted and Janos Kadar, became the Party's new first secretary.

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**IN THE UNITED NATIONS** last Sunday Britain, France and the United States took the initiative in placing the Hungarian question on the Security Council agenda. However, the hypocrisy of the colonial powers could not be obscured. While complaining about Soviet interference British troops were fighting against Cypriots and Kenya patriots seeking independence; the French were in the midst of a colonial war against Algeria; the U. S. prevented the UN from taking up the Algerian issue earlier this year and has

supported the colonial wars.

Furthermore, U. S. military establishments are located in bases on every continent of the globe.

**NEVERTHELESS** the issue of Soviet intervention in Hungary was real and the end of fighting in Budapest approached only with the pledge that Soviet troops would be withdrawn from the Hungarian capital.

Justification for the demands of the popular upheaval in Poland and Hungary came in dramatic fashion on Tuesday when the Soviet government declared it was ready to discuss the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Poland, Hungary and Romania. The Soviet statement said it had no troops in the other peoples democracies.

## Some Readers

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litical collaboration. It is that relationship which has heretofore existed between Soviet Russia and Poland, in fact among all European socialist countries, until Yugoslavia took the path of non-cooperation. . . .

Only a sound internal economic policy correlated with a policy of co-operation among all socialist states, through a common, general economic plan for the benefit of each, could insure that socialism would be as firmly established in Yugoslavia—and Poland—as it had in Russia, and at far less cost and travail.

But such a policy of socialist collaboration entailed a solemn responsibility upon the leaders of the new socialist states. Instead of going their own way, to failure, they were, one may say, obligated to take the right way, however difficult, to achieve success.

Undoubtedly friction existed among the socialist partners through the years, but friction is a natural aspect of relations between states. What matters is how the conflicts are resolved; in this instance they have been resolved as socialist collaborators. What will take place is a new relation, no different than that between the United States and Israel or between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, a relationship of a wholly different and lesser quality.

I have no doubt that the socialist collaboration between the Soviet Union and Poland placed severe burdens upon the Polish leaders: They were called upon to fulfill quota tasks in which they failed; their failure surely resulted in suffering among the people which prompted complaints against the immature government. It is not unlikely that sharp conflicts developed within the government, not over Democracy vs. foreign dictation but over the government's failures. The Pros and Cons had it out, and those who favored an end to socialist collaboration have won out, for the present.

They would make it appear that their victory was a triumph for Democracy, but . . . what transpired was a weakening of socialist