

SPEAK YOUR PIECE

Class Question In Hungary

CHICAGO

Editor, Daily Worker:

Your editorial sharply condemning the Soviet Union for the use of the Red Army in Hungary ripped through me like a jagged knife cutting away at innards. It was a terrible piece.

Lest there be those who quickly turn away with the trite expression, "There speaks another standpatter," may I hastily reassure them that I have felt that a great many of the editorials printed by the Daily, critical of the policies of the Soviet Union, have been justified. With some of them I have not agreed with the manner in which the questions have been placed. Nor have I agreed with the arrogant and know-it-all tone that has marked so many of Joe Clark's articles. But that there must be a frank and critical attitude to the errors of Marxists throughout the world is a must in my opinion.

But the publication of this editorial raises the question in my mind as to whether we are being critical because we have just cause to be, or whether for the sake of criticism.

While the Daily in past editorials has made valid and valuable contributions to the past discussion on many occasions in this instance the Daily felt flat on its face. Was this inevitable? I for one certainly hope not. It would be a terrible thing if a comradely critical approach between parties would be hurt because of the inability on the part of the Daily Worker, or our movement as a whole to maintain its good sense and keep a decent balance.

No person in his right mind, as I see it, could not help but be deeply disturbed by the immediate consequences of the Red Army's action in aiding the Kadar government. They will be sharp. They must become alarming. But is this the main guide to our reaction?

Together with the justified concern for national autonomy, it is my opinion that we must also be able to see the class question that is involved in the actions that have taken place in Hungary. It is my opinion that more was involved in Hungary than an understanding of the national question. I am convinced that as a result of years of mistakes made by the Hungarian party, which flowed out of errors on an international scale fostered by the Stalin type leadership, there were deep-seated and legitimate grievances of the Hungarian workers. I am as firmly convinced that reactionary capitalist elements seized the leadership of this movement in order to achieve the restoration of capitalism. I further am convinced on the facts as I now see them that this would have been a wide open beginning for similar actions in other people's democracies.

Some of the arguments that I hear used about "bayonet socialism" reminds of the oft-used anti-labor expression of "goon unionism." Are we becoming a bunch of civil libertarians?

Of course many unions in America have placed an administrator over local unions to bridle the militant demands of the workers. This is true in the majority of cases. But there are and can be actions by unions that take arbitrary and decisive actions because the employers have momentarily seized control of a union leadership. Is it not right for the international union to step in and create the conditions whereby the rank and file can once again take over its responsibility for changing the situation? I know it may be distasteful. I know it may be wrong by some "principles," but this

nevertheless is a fact of life that one must face.

So, too, do I believe that the good of the world workingclass, the good of Socialism demanded forceful actions in Hungary. I know that there is a great deal of difference between a local union and a nation. But each situation must be judged by its own set of circumstances. In Hungary I believe it was correct for the Red Army to step in so as to help the Kadar government create the atmosphere that is needed to reestablish a sound basis for the carrying out of the sound Socialist principles enunciated by the Hungarian government. I for one do not look upon this action of the Kadar government and the Red Army as an "occupation." Nor do I see this as a precedent.

I am certain that the maturing of the world Communist movement will bring about the kind of situation that will forever bar a duplication of the Hungarian events. It is on this score that I might add that the responsibility of the American Communists, the Daily Worker and the American people to curb the imperialists who will always have their dirty paws in every situation is a prime one. It is on this score that I think that the Daily too has erred. In its desire to avoid blaming "the enemy" for everything that was wrong, as we have done in the past so often, the paper has now gone to the other extreme and virtually fails to pin any major responsibility on the capitalists and American imperialism in particular.

One more word to add to this lengthy letter is important. Many people whom I have talked to have wrongfully drawn the conclusion that there is no sense in supporting a paper that indulges in editorials such as the one on Hungary. To them and all others who may so think, may I suggest that they are very, very wrong. Our movement needs the Daily. We must support it. In the course of time, I have full confidence that the erroneous articles and editorials will be changed. The Daily will change, I am confident.

But just as a reminder, a union member does not stop paying dues because he or she disagrees with a certain policy of the union. So, too, let it be with all supporters of our paper. For it is the voice that must be built and strengthened. And what it speaks unwisely, then let it be changed, not eliminated.

-SAM KUSHNER

Questions About Hungarian Events

Editor, Daily Worker:

A few questions to those who support the Soviet action in Hungary. Has there ever been a case before when the working class of a whole country stayed out on a general strike for two whole weeks, despite hunger and cold? As both the Nagy and Kadar governments have promised the workers to meet all their demands, can there be any explanation for the strike but that the Hungarian workers want to get rid of the foreign troops who have been shooting them down?

Have the Hungarian workers become fascists? Even if that were true, which I don't believe, who drove them to it?

If revolution cannot be exported, can counter-revolution be exported? Of course saboteurs can be sent in, and aid can be given, or a foreign interventionist army can act, but can a mass movement of workers and non-exploiting students and intellectuals be set in motion from abroad?

Premier Kadar himself said his fingernails were torn out by the orders of Farkas, another Communist, and the whole world knows the horror of the

Rajk confessions. What is surprising at the equally horrible revenge taken against those who perpetrated these things?

Of course fascists engage in pogroms under such conditions, but who has named one fascist in the Nagy government? Is Cardinal Mindszenty, who called for peaceful coexistence in his one radio speech, a fascist? Am I to believe what he "confessed" to in 1949, any more than what Rajk confessed to? With the Pope himself calling for abolition of nuclear weapons, and supporting the Soviet painless-childbirth methods, why is a Catholic Cardinal automatically a fascist?

As Moscow and Prague called Tito a fascist from 1948 to 1955, why should I believe them about Hungary now? Is it not significant that Yugoslavia, which supported Kadar and the Soviet action for the first day or two, expressed misgivings at UN a few days later when the Hungarians continued to hold out?

Is there nothing to think about that Britain's Labor Party, with all its faults, could lead a magnificent peace movement on the main issue, Suez, because no one could accuse it of silence on Hungary?

What do you think about Gomulka whom Moscow has accepted with very ill grace? Hasn't the experience of Stalin's 20-year personal dictatorship taught that Soviet socialism and the Soviet government are not necessarily the same thing? With no satisfactory statement from the USSR on the Jewish question, who will say for sure that the Times' Warsaw correspondent is lying when she says that Soviet Jews are being deported from Lithuania, Belorussia and the Ukraine on Poland's borders? Is it not possible that the men who stayed in Stalin's government during the actions against national minorities they reported, may not be making the same mistake in Hungary?—WILLIAM MANDEL.

New Situation in Hungary Emphasized

Editor, Daily Worker:

I think that the D.W. has made a bad mistake in relation to its analysis of the developments in Hungary.

The mistake is doubly unfortunate. One, in relation to Hungary itself; and two, because it strengthens the hands of those in the C.P. who have been fighting the concept of a fundamental change in the program and perspectives of that organization.

The events in Hungary stemmed primarily from the wrong politics followed by the Hungarian C.P. and the C.P.S.U.

The original protest movement was healthy, and, in the long run, designed to benefit the struggle for a better and more correct path to socialism in Hungary.

The use of Soviet troops, called for by the Gero government, and the bloodshed that followed was a terrible and unpardonable error. The statement issued by the C.P.S.U. after the bloodshed of the first few days, that it had agreed to recall its troops and that the Soviet Union was reexamining the position of its relationship to the other socialist democracies in Eastern Europe; admitting that it had erred in many important respects; led one to hope that a solution to the problem would be found, although the difficulties already created were tremendous. At the same time, this statement of the CPSU, in effect, admitted that the basis for the problem in Hungary did not stem from fascists and provocateurs.

During this period the position of the D.W. was excellent. Its approach, in my opinion, was

based on the facts, and it drew proper conclusions from these facts. In doing so, it helped provide the "left" movement in the U.S. with a correct orientation in a very difficult situation.

I am well aware of the fact that during this period, there were many who attacked the position advanced by the D.W. These people based themselves on the "feeling" that, from the outset, the developments in Hungary were fascist inspired, imperialist controlled, and counter-revolutionary, and that the initial use of Soviet troops was fortunate but necessary.

I did not, nor do I now, agree with such a viewpoint.

However, I believe that a change took place in Hungary—which necessitated a new look. Reactionary elements, who, to begin with, were in the background, and without popular support, began to play a more and more dominant role.

The popular movement was transformed into an anti-Communist, anti-Socialist movement and a "white" terror became on the order of the day.

In effect, the D.W. tended to look at the second stage much as it looked at the first, although with some reservations.

But the question was no longer one of "exporting Socialism." As a matter of fact, this question became a dead one as a result of the initial uprising. The idea of Hungary as a Socialist Democracy, as we had always conceived it, vanished within 24 hours after the first death occurred. The issue was, how much of what was good, could be saved and used to build upon for the future. The subsequent developments decided this matter with finality.

Nor does the D.W.'s emphasis on the slogan, "Remove foreign troops from all countries" point toward a solution.

Certainly, the slogan in itself is a good one. But the imperialist nations has no intention of doing so, and it would be sheer stupidity for the S.U. to do so, unilaterally. . . .—B. S.

Says Soviet Role Can't Be Justified

BOSTON, MASS.

Editor, Daily Worker:

Past habits resist changes. That is a truism especially in the limelight now. The theory that we have two kinds of people, leaders and followers, the seeing and the blind is one that produces a highhanded haughtiness among those who consider themselves the seeing. This theory which was ingrained in the principle of Democratic Centralism eventually produced Stalin in the Soviet Union and Rakosi in Hungary. This was notwithstanding the political genius of Stalin that turned Russia from a famine ridden, backward land to a mighty industrial giant. But it also inevitably developed the cult of the individual.

In Hungary everything Russian was aped, but lacking political giants of Stalin's caliber, they compensated for this by claiming that no one could question the all knowingness of their Party's leading organs under penalty of death. A small group of men became more mighty than ever. Then with the fall of "Stalinism" they were constrained to develop a new cult, the cult of the tank. And this disease has spread now to our shores.

We have people who say that the Hungarians are being shot up for their own good. That Horthy fascists were stopped in the act of pouncing on the workers and restoring fascism in the complete. That a new Hitlerite attack was in the making and without a surety of a friendly Hungary the USSR was in mortal danger.

These notions come from the

some cobwebby bins as those theories which the politicals shouted from their towers for years. That there was an armed fascist behind every bush, that war was going to be declared momentarily, that the ranks of the working class and the toiling people generally were wormeaten with provocateurs. These ideas were the legacy of Stalin.

First of all, the massacre of Hungarians flows from the belief that the ordinary person has no sense, that he must agree with those who claim to interpret Marx, and if he doesn't, he gets shot. That is a piece of cold cynicism that has nothing to do with Marxism but only with self-appointed guardians of "Marxist purity"—the would be fuhrers in our ranks.

Second, the fable of Horthy fascists.

A land where the millions welcomed the Red Army privates in 1945, where the workers did miracles of peoples construction despite the handicaps thrown in their way by the Hungarian and Russian Party bureaucracy. This land would have rejected Horthy-type fascism just as fiercely as it now rejected the lovmaking Russian armor. Were the Horthy fascists the workers who remained on general strike during this period and did not offer support to any one until Nagy promised to try to get the Soviet troops out of Hungary and make of Hungary a neutral? Was the army the place where Horthyites hid, among young men who were not even teen agers when Horthy fled? Were the fascists among the youth, who fought Russian tanks? The youth who were in their second and third grade when Horthy fled? The few fascist remnants would not have had a ghost of a chance once the provocation of Russia armor was removed. But that had to come first.

And last, of the military attack on the USSR through Hungary.

This is the argument of those who are still mentally in the year 1945. No confidence in the people, or the world peace movement, or in our American people. Those who claim that the USSR was right in insisting on a friendly Hungary, have a twisted conception of the friendship in a one hundred twenty millimeter tank gun.

As it is, it will take years to repair the damage done to the international socialist movement by the Russian tank guns.

For ourselves we must make dead sure that no small clique gets control of our Party. The monolithic structure must go and the party must be returned to our membership. The membership must decide all policy, strategy and everything else. It may delegate some authority but must retain right of review, the secret ballot, rotation in office and the absolute minimum of paid functionaries. And many other measures to safeguard the rights of our members, and to lay a base for safeguarding the individual rights of every American in the future.—A. E.

"All Armies Are Alike"

Editor, Daily Worker:

Regarding the situation in Hungary. . .

All armies are alike, and when shot at by rebels they shoot back.—JOHN SMITH.

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