

# TWO VIEWS OF THE CRISIS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Steve Nelson.

Some Readers

By ALAN MAX

Steve Nelson visited the Worker office this week, and while he came to discuss his case, remained to talk about developments in Poland and Hungary.

The Communist leader from Pittsburgh—now fighting against the government's attempt to bring him to trial for a fourth time ("three times is enough") told of his first reactions to the recent events.

NELSON feels that the Soviet leaders, instead of going further into their needed criticism of the Stalin era, found themselves "driven back into old methods." Had they been more alert to the implications of the Tito question, he went on, they would have examined their policies in relation to Hungary and Poland as well.

To insist, as they did, that Marshal Rokossovsky must be a member of the Political Bureau of the Polish Communist Party, showed a "terrible lack of understanding by the Soviet leaders of Polish national pride."

Nelson recalled the Polish-Russian war of 1920 and Lenin's criticism of it afterwards. "Lenin felt that the Soviets had made a terrible mistake to march into Poland although there were sufficient provocations. Lenin said that they should have listened to Karl Radek who had warned that the Poles would look upon the Red Army as Russians, rather than as socialists, despite the change of emblem on their uniforms."

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NELSON said with evident pain that he felt that "the Soviet comrades have forgotten this lesson drawn by Lenin."

Instead of continuing to examine past mistakes, the Soviet leaders

created a tinder box which, as in the case of Hungary, was only too easily ignited — particularly since Rajk was dead whereas Gomulka in Poland was fortunately still alive.

American Communists, he went on, have to oppose "the errors of our friends abroad while at the same time we fight against those reactionaries in our own country who would bring back the Hortys to Hungary. Our criticism of our friends is meant only to help them."

Nelson said that while the Nagy government faces grave difficulties in Hungary, it appears to have a correct policy. "This is to go back to the united front approach which prevailed up until 1947 when the Rakosi set up a dictatorial regime on a narrow basis which, while bringing some gains for people, led directly to the present events."

THE MAIN error of Stalin and Rakosi, he continued, lay in failure to realize that a people who had lived under Horthy and then Hitler, could not be pushed too fast and by repression.

"Nagy, on the other hand, instead of putting Social Democrats and peasant leaders into jail, is putting them into the government."

Those who are opposed to socialism are trying to make the most of the situation, Nelson added, and "we must insist that they stop interfering."

Nelson, a Yugoslav-American, who has worked over the years with the national group in the Communist movement, has acquired considerable familiarity with conditions in Eastern Europe.

"The Soviet party will have to take another look at its whole policy on the national question," Nelson said. He added that maybe it was here that lay the key to the "insensitivity" of the Soviet lead-



NELSON

ers on the Jewish question.

"My thoughts immediately went back to the statement of the National Committee of our party in last July," he said. That statement, Nelson went on, gave a virtual endorsement to the resolution of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party on the Stalin revelations.

"This endorsement actually created a block toward opening up deeper thinking where deeper thinking could be highly profitable," he said.

Nelson said that he "agreed thoroughly" with the Daily Worker's editorial on Poland at the outset of the Polish crisis. He noted that "it seems that old ideas die very hard among many people" and urged new thinking to meet new events.

Following are excerpts from letters to the Speak Your Piece Column in the Daily Worker which disagreed in whole or in part with the editorial viewpoint expressed on the events in Poland and Hungary.

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We wish to tell you we feel enraged about the destructive headline in the Daily Worker of Oct. 22 about the situation in Poland.

We feel that this way of handling the news is additional disruptive work amongst the Communist Party and its sympathizers. Why must we emulate the anti-Soviet, anti-socialist press?

How far do you intend to go with such discouraging work?

[Ed. Note: The headline in question said:

Eyewitness Report from Warsaw  
POLES CHEER MOVES  
TOWARD DEMOCRACY  
Demonstrate for Independence,  
Friendly Ties with USSR]

The one-paragraph brushoff in your editorial of Oct. 22, of the serious criticism of the Polish press by Pravda is a rather dubious way to express an "independent" Marxist position. Pravda was quite specific in its criticism. According to the article in the Daily, they cite as examples of anti-working class and anti-Marxist thinking the articles of Flocak and Putrament, plus a Belgian journalist Lambillute.

Flocak advances, instead of the

slogan "Workers of the world unite" a new concept "the universal human being." No matter how you study this proposition it is a negation of the class struggle.

If you agree with the idea that all who walk on two feet are human, it equates Walters, Eastland and McCarthy with the leaders of the working class. Why, we are all humans together, Ford and Bill McKie, Nixon and Bill Foster, even Hearst and Johnnie Gates.

Then there is the position of Putrament to the effect that Socialism in Poland is a failure. One would expect that in a press devoted to Socialism his first words would be a ringing call for making Socialism work. But no, it is true, as Pravda puts it, that the word Socialism got stuck in his throat. . . .

How then does it happen that the Daily Worker could brush aside so lightly the evidence cited by Pravda? It is a simple matter; more and more "freedom of criticism" means freedom to criticize the comrades in the Soviet Union and freedom from criticism by the comrades in the Soviet Union. It seems that the slogan "there are many roads to socialism" is used to hide the proposition that "there are many roads away from Marxism Leninism."

The path of socialist states must be one of economic cooperation out of which necessarily flows po-

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# 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

ity hit textile workers. The paper also estimates the loss of textile wages at \$2.5 billion.

Among shutdowns listed are six mills of American Woolens that employed 12,270 workers; Alexander Smith carpet mills of Yonkers, 5,000, and two Julliard mills, 3,000.

A cartoon shows an elephant digging a grave, with tomb stones on which the names of closed mills are inscribed.

## FLORIDA

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. . . make political promises never intended to be kept."

Jesse Woods' constitutional right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; his right to due process, was thus turned over by the President to the State of Florida and the hamlet of Wildwood. And Wildwood thought so much of Woods and other Negroes that it set aside for them a special community, Pickettsville, four miles west of town.

The President said he "earnestly tried to keep it (civil rights) from becoming a partisan matter," adding

"We are talking here about not about a political issue about justice for Americans."

If the President intended that Jesse Woods be included under his "justice" umbrella he did not indicate it in Miami.

economic collaboration. That is the heart of the weekend's events, and it is no wonder that all anti-socialist rejoice.

To prattle, as does the Daily Worker about democracy in this context is to make the word meaningless. There is not the slightest evidence of Russian interference with Polish sovereignty; and the non-exploiting collaboration of the two states, one big and powerful, the other small and weak, has been a true example of Democracy, democracy of a higher quality than we have unknown in past history, heretofore impossible because of the limitations of a capitalist society.