

# A View From West Coast on Hungary

(We reprint below from the People's World of San Francisco an article on the Hungarian developments by the paper's executive editor Al Richmond. We believe our readers will be interested in Richmond's contribution to the discussion on Hungary now going on in the ranks of progressives.)

By AL RICHMOND

SAN FRANCISCO.

The latest turn of events in Hungary poses before every supporter of socialism and all progressive-minded Americans the most profound and complex problems.

I have discussed these events with my editorial colleagues and some of the paper's closest supporters, and there was a considerable diversity of views, and on some issues a clash of opinion.

What I propose to do here is set down what seems to me an approach to an understanding of the events that have unfolded so swiftly since the armed outbreak of Oct. 23, reaching their latest

climax in the full-scale intervention by Soviet military forces over the weekend.

## POPULAR UPHEAVAL

The armed outbreak unfolded as a popular upheaval against the misdeeds and blunders of the previous regime, an expression of national resentment against policies pursued with respect to Hungary by the Soviet government under Stalin's direction.

This our paper has said before, and it should be reaffirmed now. For that matter, the Soviet government formally declared last Tuesday that it had committed "violations and mistakes which infringed upon the principles of equality in relations between States."

Once the popular armed uprising carried the issue of political power into the streets, so to speak, where it was being resolved with guns, there was inherent in the situation the peril of counter-revolution.

Many news dispatches noted that participants in the uprising were not of one political persua-

sion, that among them were those who desired to maintain socialism while eliminating some of the abuses that had developed, and others who sought a restoration of the pre-World War II capitalist regime.

The peril of counter-revolution was magnified because the working class was divided, as was the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party, which had lost the capacity to act, with unity and resoluteness.

## DEPLORABLE ACT

The situation deteriorated further when the initial intervention of Soviet troops was invited. Such intervention only fanned nationalist sentiment that was on the rise, and served to turn it ever more vehemently against the Soviet Union and against all those in Hungarian life who stood for cooperation with the Soviet Union, although on a new and different basis.

Soviet armed intervention at that time was a deplorable act that helped feed the burgeoning forces of counter-revolution.

In the chaotic situation, a government with authority resting on popular support and with a clear-cut program of action to rally the people might have established the conditions for a peaceful and democratic resolution of the crisis.

The makeshift Nagy regime strove frantically to create a combination that could command popular support, but its own vacillations and the events within the country proved its incapacity to do so, let alone chart a firm course that clearly indicated to the Hungarian people a way out of their difficulties.

## WHITE TERROR

With working-class leadership divided, with the makeshift coalition cabinet irresolute, the counter-revolutionary forces were on the ascendant. A white terror was in the making. The mass murder of Communists was begun, and the N. Y. Times correspondent in Budapest reported last Wednesday a prevalent "fear of an organized anti-Communist terror, such as followed the short-lived Communist

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regime of Bela Kun after World War I."

That terror of 1919-20 culminated in the establishment of the Horthy fascist dictatorship which later collaborated with the Nazis in World War II.

In the sphere of foreign policy last week brought the following sequence of action.

On Tuesday, the Soviet Government made its declaration, admitting past mistakes in relations with the Eastern European countries and offering to negotiate withdrawal of its troops not only from Hungary, but from Poland and Rumania as well.

## ACT OF PROVOCATION

The Soviet declaration, the New York Times reported "had a delirious reception in the streets of Budapest."

On Wednesday, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Budapest was completed.

On Thursday, Premier Nagy announced the unilateral renunciation of the Warsaw treaty. This was an act of provocation and was hardly designed to improve the atmosphere for fruitful negotiations.

It is at least a reasonable assumption that such abrupt renunciation of the Warsaw Pact was pressed upon Nagy by the forces who were not interested in a peaceful settlement of differences between Hungary and the Soviet Union.

Such a suspicion is heightened by the fact that while the Nagy regime continued to protest that it desired friendship with the Soviet Union, it simultaneously began to broadcast frantic appeals for assistance and intervention by the capitalist states of the West.

## ATTITUDE CONTRASTED

These developments in Hungary occurred against the background of a markedly increased danger of world war, occasioned by the Anglo-French aggression against Egypt. (It is interesting to note that the United Nations debate on the Anglo-French debate, was marked by diplomatic restraint and the utmost politeness, but with respect to Hungary here was heat and passion.)

It is the obligation of the Soviet Government to explain and justify its own actions before world opinion and undoubtedly it will seek to do so. At the same time American progressives must seek independently to assess Soviet motives and actions in the light of the known facts.

From the facts, it would appear that the Soviet Government decided upon the second and large-scale military intervention in the belief that by so doing it would thwart the threat of a clerical-fascist regime in Hungary and the peril of a hostile salient in Eastern Europe that would be allied with the most bellicose anti-Soviet elements throughout the world.

## HOLLOW RING

It would be shortsighted to minimize either peril. Such catchwords as "free elections" have a hollow ring in the face of the incipient white terror that was bent on resolving the issue of political power by blood and murder. Nor is it permissible to dismiss the elaborate U. S. apparatus for intervention in Hungary and all of East Europe.

Recognizing all those facts, the question still remains: Should Soviet troops have intervened to topple the Nagy government and replaced it with one headed by Janos Kadar?

The dilemma is heightened by the history of the past decade, by the pattern of relationships and politics within the socialist sector.

If Soviet misdeeds had not contributed to provoking the crisis in Hungary. If the facts revealed at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party had not contributed to diminishing Soviet prestige. If the events of the past two weeks had not placed the issue of Soviet injury and insult to Hungarian national sovereignty and pride at the very core of the struggle.

If—if all these things had not been, the question of Soviet mili-

tary intervention would be cast in a cleaner light.

But all these things were, and as a result the position of the Soviet Union is compromised. There is a grave question, therefore, whether what it lost in the political arena it can now recoup by military force.

The Kadar government was installed by Soviet military power, and it rests on that power. Can a government so instituted gain the confidence of the Hungarian people in the wake of what had gone on before? I personally doubt it.

If this government cannot win popular support, is not the prospect one of indefinite Soviet occupation to sustain it? Such an occupation, I believe, will only further discredit socialism in Hungary, and will greatly diminish its prestige on a worldwide scale.

Such an occupation, I fear, will inhibit the effectiveness of the socialist sector of the world to rally support for the independence of colonial peoples. This has emerged as a factor in the current resistance of Egypt against foreign aggression.

There are people, whose judgment and integrity I respect, who assert that given the danger of a clerical-fascist Hungary, serving as a dagger in imperialist hands and trust deep into Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union had no other recourse than to intervene.

They say the events in Hungary cannot be torn out of the context of the world scene, where the still present danger of war was signaled by the Anglo-French military action for Suez. They point to the continuing rearmament of Germany under reactionary domination, and the continuing threat to the peace of Europe.

I have given my own views,

and tried to indicate the views of others.

## UNITY ON ONE ISSUE

On one issue, I believe, there must be unity among progressives. This is resolute opposition to the shrill voices in our country with Sen. William F. Knowland and in the van that call for U. S. intervention in Hungary.

These forces, in the main, are not motivated by interests of democracy or the independence of small nations. They are, for the most part, motivated by a frenzied hatred of socialism, by a desire to bring about a capitalist restoration in Hungary, which would assume the ugly form of fascism, and by the aim of fanning anew the cold war.

## NEGOTIATIONS URGENT

U. S. intervention will not solve the problem, but it could well be the spark that sets off World War III.

A course for our country is to move swiftly for big power negotiations to bring about withdrawal of all foreign troops from European countries, to seek a solution of the German problem on the basis of peace and democracy, to seek an end to the cold war.

While the cold war continues, and a rearmed reactionary Germany remains a threat, the possibilities for true independence and freedom of European nations remains restricted.

We Americans can make our best contribution to the peace of Europe and the freedom of its peoples by pressing with greater vigor for negotiations to end the cold war, and to create thereby a political climate in which nations can truly pick their own social system and determine their own national destiny.

## Autotown Alley

### DETROIT.

**EISENHOWER "prosperity"** shows consumer debt is rising at the rate of \$257 million a month. From July, 1954, to July, 1956, the total increased from \$28 billions to \$37 billions. Automobile consumer debt alone is rising at the rate of \$150 millions a month.

★

**HERE WE GO** again, GM raises the prices of its cars from \$100 to \$644 a car. Little short of money we guess.

★

**ITEM.** The Lansing Republican run State Legislature appropriated 447 thousand dollars for control of tuberculosis in cattle and cut 300 thousand dollars from funds requested by "Soapy" Williams for control of TB in people. There are 4,000 persons with active TB who have not been located. Of this number an estimated 1,500 live in Detroit.

★

**WEEKS AGO** scientists found in West Germany that cows grazing in the Black Forest at an altitude of 4,000 feet were found to be giving milk containing a critical amount of radioactive poisons.

★

**A MILK STUDY** group in Michigan proposes that farmers should get at least \$2 an hour for their work. The commission points out that an unskilled worker gets at least \$2 an hour. Right now a dairy farmer gets about 90 cents an hour for his work.

★

**THE AFL Building Trades** here has been fighting for years for a bill providing safety building construction, covering hoists, towers, ramps, ladders, scaffolds, runways and so forth. If that bill had been passed by the Republican-controlled state Legislature, six workers' lives lost in the recent collapse of a building in Jackson, Mich., could have been saved.

★

**COST OF LIVING** in Detroit, highest of any city in the nation, went up again according to the U. S. Department of Labor. Coincidentally the same day this was announced, profit reports of Ford and GM were announced. Increases in HCL were eight percent for medical, 4.2 percent transportation, 2.5 percent apparel, 2.4 for housing, 1.8 for food.

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**EMIL MAZEY** told the Chrysler UAW conference that 21,000 workers with one year seniority or less in Detroit Chrysler plants may not be called back to work on this model.

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**HERE IS** some dope on what General Motors gave the GOP. Donaldson Brown, one executive, gave \$31,000 to the Republicans and \$3,000 to Dixiecrat Senator Harry Byrd. Twelve other GM directors gave the GOP \$107,300. These figures were released to a U. S. Senate elections sub-committee by Prof. Alexander Heard of North Carolina.

Here in Michigan ask any GM or Ford dealer what they "gave" and how it was done. GM supervision were reported shaken down for at least \$25 apiece for the GOP. By that we mean foremen and such fry.