

# TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

## Once More About The Slansky Trial

A LETTER from H. S. who was, and I hope still is, a friend of this reporter, takes sharp issue with a June 20 column of mine entitled "In Czechoslovakia They Go Slow."

H. S. quotes at great length from a report by Anton Novotny, first secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, to refute my contention that the Czech leaders have not yet told the truth about the 1952 Slansky trial. My friend quotes from the column, where I had written:

"To me the most serious shortcoming of the present Czech Communist leaders is their attempt to whitewash the execution of Slansky and other former Communist leaders. Only under considerable prodding and not till three years after Stalin died, did they review the Slansky case."

To show that I was wrong, about the three years H. S. quotes from Novotny who said:

"Immediately after the Tenth Congress of the Party (1954) the Political Bureau began to concern itself with a thorough examination of the political trials conducted in Czechoslovakia."

Now I don't know exactly what Novotny means by "began to concern itself . . ." But the fact is that it wasn't until three years and a month after Stalin died, in April, of this year, that the Czech leaders made the first public announcement that there was anything wrong with the trial of Slansky and the others condemned with him.

It was only on April 13, 1956 that Premier Viliam Siroky publicly admitted that anti-Semitism had been used against the defendants in the 1952 trial. Only then, too, did Siroky admit that the charges of a "Titoite" conspiracy were falsely concocted.

But, far more important, it wasn't until April of this year that Arthur London, who had been in the dock together with Slansky as a "co-conspirator," and who had been sentenced to life imprisonment, was released from jail. London, like Slansky had "admitted" his guilt. But

when he was released the Czech authorities said he had been falsely accused. And when he was asked why he made a false confession London said he was tortured.

THE CREAM of this horrible jest is in the "evidence" against Slansky. H. S. recalls that in my column I had cited Novotny on the Field brothers and then concluded: "How in the world can Slansky still be considered guilty under the circumstances?" Again to show how wrong I was, my friend quotes from Novotny:

" . . . In re-examining his (Slansky's) criminal activity, it was established that it is necessary to omit from the trial everything that concerned Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav comrades. . . .

"During the trial other persons were also named who in fact had nothing in common with Slansky and his unfriendly activity. Here we are concerned with the Field brothers (Noel and Herman) but also with the role of Koni Ziliacus in this trial. These persons did not participate in the criminal activity of Slansky."

Good. Now we know some of things for which Slansky was falsely accused and executed. We could add many more because we have just reviewed the fantastic trial record of 1952. Slansky was linked not only to Tito but he was condemned and executed for an alleged conspiracy with Rajk of Hungary, with Kostov of Bulgaria and with Gomulka of Poland.

SLANSKY and his co-defendants—11 were executed and three imprisoned—were found guilty of supporting a "Jewish bourgeois nationalist" conspiracy, to quote the prosecutor, which along with "Zionism" makes "two sides of the same coin, which was minted in Wall Street."

Well, now we know from Novotny and Siroky what Slansky was not guilty of. But he is dead. So Novotny adds:

"The re-examination has brought to light, that Slansky committed a whole series of additional criminal acts which

were not in the indictment."

And Novotny proceeds to list the "additional crimes" for which Slansky was never tried!

Did my friend H. S. ponder those words? Novotny is saying, if words have any meaning, that the "crimes" for which Slansky was indicted, were falsely concocted. But nevertheless he is guilty of "additional criminal acts," not in the indictment, and for which he was not tried.

MY MEMORY of H. S. is vivid and I have no doubt of his integrity. How then could he have missed the point I made in my column about the Fields? At the trial Slansky was charged with being an American spy. And the proof was that he worked with the Fields, allegedly representing American intelligence. But now Novotny says the Fields are "exonerated" and that they had nothing "in common with Slansky and his unfriendly activity."

In other words Novotny exonerates the Fields of any complicity with the villain Slansky, while the record shows that Slansky's villainy was "proved" by his "complicity" with the Fields.

Like H. S. I believe that Marxists have a lot to learn from the Czechoslovak experience. Munich was the proof that Czechoslovakia was betrayed by the Western imperialist powers. Czechoslovakia was liberated by the victorious alliance of the United States and the Soviet Union. In fair parliamentary elections the Czech C. P. was elected head of a coalition government that took the country along the path of socialism.

Czechoslovakia has made considerable industrial progress under its socialist regime. There has been remarkable educational and cultural development especially affecting the workers and the farmers. All this is true and is the big story. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia is rectifying many of the injustices of the past.

The Czechs have a motto which at least this Marxist will never renounce: Truth prevails. I have every confidence it will prevail in regard to the tragic Slansky trial.