RUSSIANS—GET OUT OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Full support for Czech workers and students

There is no possible defence for the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. It is a crude display of power politics and a complete denial of socialist principles.

What the Russians are attempting in Czechoslovakia is exactly the same as the Americans in Vietnam—preventing, by armed might, the people of these countries from controlling their own lives and destinies. It is imperialist politics at its most vicious.

Why have the Russians invaded? They have spoken of the personal isolation of the revolution and the rise of Stalin destroyed this. What the Russian ruling class fear most is the rebirth of the spirit of the revolution.

This freedom of discussion does not exist in the West. It is the preserve of a few millionaire press-owners. When they are threatened as de Gaulle was in France, they too resort to crude police measures. Their 'horror' at what the Russians are doing in Czechoslovakia is pure hypocrisy.

Real socialism will only come about when the regimes both East and West of the Iron Curtain are overthrown.
October 24: nationalization of Czechoslovakia by the eastern European countries.

1948: "Communists" take over completely in Budapest. The Secret Council elections are rigged. In one area, 50% of workers vote for the candidate voted down by the authorities. It is estimated that 23,000 workers went on strike and 2,000 were injured. Workers, managers, or 1000 people against old regime within party.

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WHY RUSSIA INVADED - FEAR THAT REVOLUTION WILL SWEEP EASTERN EUROPE

by Chris Harman

TWELVE YEARS after 15 armoured divisions of Russian troops put down the popular uprising in Hungary, the rulers of Russia have proved that their power still rests on the same resort to force. They have shown that they still fear popular discussion and debate. In order to subdue the Czech population they have massed huge concentrations of troops along the Czech borders.

Their armed forces have been engaged in the largest "exercises" in their history. With scarcely veiled threats they have offered Prague the same treatment as Budapest in 1956.

PROFESS

Once again the bosses of the Kremlin have shown how little they have in common with the socialism they profess.

The immediate pretext for the actions of the last month were alleged "terrorist attacks". But the real threat is the increasing number of workers and young people who are becoming agitated.

SHUDDER

But the mere suggestion of this sent a shudder of fear through the rulers of Russia, East Germany and Poland. Meeting in Warsaw they demanded that the Czech leaders clamp down on such activities and reimpose censorship. Brutal repression is the only answer they know to any questioning of their rule.

But it is not enough just to condemn Russian intimidation. We need to be clear about what exactly is happening in Czechoslovakia, and why it worries the Russians.

For nearly 20 years—from February 1948 until recently—Czechoslovakia was a monolithic and bureaucratically organised society, run according to orders issued from the top. All power over the state and industry lay with the Communist Party, which in turn was completely subordinate to those

dubcek problems...

KOSYGIN Problems...

reformers are really committed to democracy or free speech. After all, many of them held positions of prominence without too much difficulty under the old regime. Dubcek lived quite happily in the Soviet Union during some of the worst years of Stalin's reign.

But it does mean they could not come to power without first dismantling those structures that had kept the rest of society in chains for so long. And once such a process had begun, it was not easily kept in check. It allowed other groups to organise. This is what worries the Russians.

SWEEP

The internal convulsions in Czechoslovakia could give rise to a rush of working class activity that would sweep all the regimes of eastern Europe away.

The reaction of Russia is the same as that of the US to the threat to her dominoes in South East Asia.

The economy is not yet picking up. Before it can do so Dubcek has to accomplish two opposed sets of tasks. He has to remove the thousands of old style bureaucrats that remain, which means allowing the present "democratisation" to continue.

But he has also to begin cutting wages, increasing wage differentials, closing down plants that are unprofitable. All of which will give rise to tremendous working-class opposition if there is not a clampdown on discussion.

In 1956 Gomulka of Poland led the reforming wing of his bureaucracy to power. He was also hailed in the western press as a "democratic socialist" hero.

He used the threat of Russian intervention to keep the movement among the workers and students "moderate" and he used, too, the threat of the workers to gain a nominal independence from the Russians. This gave him time to re-establish complete control by the bureaucracy, so that today Poland is one of the least "liberal" of the state capitalist countries.

This is what Dubcek would like to do. Although the independent workers movement has not yet developed in Czechoslovakia as far as it did in Poland in 1956 there has been a virtual insurrection in Poznan. The economic crisis seems to have pushed Dubcek less room to manoeuvre.

We must hope that the Czech workers will develop their own organisations, such as workers' councils, independent of all bureaucratic groups. Meanwhile our first duty is to oppose any Russian interference aimed at preventing such a development.

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