Stalinism Unmasked

REVOLUTION and COUNTER REVOLUTION

in

HUNGARY

G. Healy

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Stalin is dead but Stalinism lives. That is the message spelt out in letters of blood by the Hungarian people.

The Labour movement of the world is rightly shocked at the brutality and ruthlessness of the Soviet Armed forces. But this fact must not permit us to be taken off guard for one moment by World Imperialism and its agents. Stalinist rule has always been associated with persecution and murder, both inside and outside the Soviet Union. Eden and Eisenhower have never protested when it was revolutionary opponents of the regime who were being smashed. They helped to whitwash and justify the Moscow trials through the book and film "Mission to Moscow" written by American exambassador Joseph E. Davies. Both the British and American governments refused asylum to the great revolutionary Leon Trotsky when he was being hounded from one country to another by Stalin's G.P.U.

If these gentlemen shed tears for Hungary today it is not for the workers and peasants who have borne the brunt of the fight against Stalinism but for their fascist and landlord friends.

What happened in Hungary, as we shall see, was a revolution for national independence and democratic rights. Connected with this was a series of demands passed by the trade unions.

1. Workers councils in every factory to establish "workers management and radically transform the system of State central planning and directing.

- 2. Wages to be raised immediately by 10 to 15 per cent. and a ceiling (about £106 a month) fixed for the highest salaries.
- 3. To abolish production norms except in factories where the workers or workers council wish to keep them.
- 4. The 4 per cent. bachelor and childless family tax to be abolished; the lowest retirement pensions to be increased; child allowances to be raised with special reference to the needs of large families.
- 5. Speed up house-building with the State, co-operatives and other organisations launching a powerful social movement to mass produce houses.
- ó. Negotiate with the Governments of the Soviet Union and other countries in order to establish economic relations "that will ensure mutual advantages by adhering to principle of equality.

(Daily Worker, October 27th).

The backbone of this movement was the demand for the withdrawal of all Soviet troops from Hungary.

The Imperialists were against this type of revolution. On the same day, October 27th, the New York Times—mouthpiece of American big business—declared: "The view prevailing among United States officials it appeared, was that 'evolution' towards freedom in Eastern Europe would be better for all concerned than 'revolution' though nobody was saying this publicly." The New York Times again returned to this theme the next day, October 28th, when it declared that the problem of Western Imperialism is "how to encourage the nationalist and libertarian spirit in the satellites without flaming it into a large scale revolt." As if not to be outdone by the New York Times the London Daily Worker echoing Moscow, declared on October 25th: "Only false friends resort to the gun..."

Five days previously (October 22nd), John Foster Dulles speaking in Washington defended the legality of the presence of Soviet troops in Poland under the Warsaw agreement. "From the standpoint of international law and violation of treaties," he said, "I do not think you claim that it would be a violation of a treaty." Mr. Dulles was fully aware at the time he made that statement that a revolution was under way in Hungary and Hungary was also a party to the Warsaw agreement.

Hot on the heels of Mr. Dulles came R. Palme Dutt of the British Communist Party. "The Soviet armed forces," he wrote, "were legally in Hungary by agreement under the Warsaw Pact." (Daily Worker, November 10th).

In a cable from Washington by its correspondent Philip Deane, the London Observer, 11.11.1956 reports that: "High Administration sources say that the United States has tried to let the Russians know, without being provocative, that Berlin and Austria will be defended by American forces, Hungary, meanwhile, has been officially and finally abandoned to its fate."

And Basil Davidson, one of the last journalists to leave Hungary, reports that of the American financed propaganda station Free Europe Radio one revolutionary said: "I wish I could shut its ugly mouth. It lied to us just as the Russians lied to us."

Neither the Soviet bureaucrats nor the Imperialists and their representatives Palme Dutt and Foster Dulles care two hoots about the working people of Hungary. They were both, for different reasons, opposed to the revolution, and in each case supported their own particular agents and not the movement of the Hungarian people as a whole.

HOW THE REVOLUTION BEGAN

On October 23rd, a large group of unarmed students gathered outside the Budapest radio station and demanded that their 17 point programme of democratic demands be broadcast. After the police opened fire the government dominated by Erno Gero, a notorious Kremlin hack, promptly called for Soviet troops.

On Wednesday, October 24th, Russian tanks and artillery fired on demonstrators in Budapest killing and wounding hundreds of men, women and children. It was these actions which sparked of the revolutionary armed resistance. During the next day, October 25th, armed rebellion broke out. Workers on Cespel island in the Danube took up weapons against the security forces. Radio Budapest announced this as a rebellion of the working people. Absolutely no mention was made at that time that this was the work of armed gangs and the counter revolution.

The spearhead of the whole struggle was a general strike. In cities and towns under their control the rebels set up Councils of workers, soldiers and students. The first to down tools were the railway workers. They were quickly followed by workers from factories

and plants. The strike was directed by a "Central Workers Committee."

At the same time Imre Nagy, who had previously been jailed, was installed as Premier to help win back popular support.

On October 29th, a parade of workers' delegations from the provinces presented its demands to the new Government. They demanded the removal of Russian troops, unconditional amnesty for revolutionists and the release of all political prisoners.

According to reports, the peasants were passive at the beginning. The New York Times on October 30th quoted some insurgent leaders who atributed the failure of the army as a whole in the early days to the fact that they were for the most part "farm boys." According to the same reports it (the army) had given them small arms. These rebel leaders declared: "The peasant is conservative by nature and therefore passive. But the workers have fought with us, even the workers form "red Cespel" which contains the biggest concentration of industry in Hungary."

By October 29 revolutionary workers' councils had taken control in several large towns. These included Gyor, Szombathely, Sopron and Papa, Kaposvar Viszprem, Pecs, Miskolc, Szolnok, Szeksbard and Magyarovar.

On October 29 Miskolc radio station broadcast in the name of the workers' councils of Borsod Province. In another industrial town, Sopron, the streets were patrolled by groups of three; one soldier, one student, one worker. The uprising is symbolised throughout by the unity between the workers, soldiers, and students—clear proof that it was a popular revolution in which the working class occupied the vanguard positions.

Finally if there is any further doubt on this point, just read over the dispatch from the Daily Worker (November 3rd) correspondent Peter Fryer, who was sent to Hungary to get the FACTS. His first job was to interview Mr. Charlie Coutts, another member of the British Communist Party, who was for three years editing "World Youth" (paper of the Stalinist dominated W.F.D.Y.) in Budapest. Here are extracts from the interview. Mr. Coutts reported as follows:—

"The Hungarian uprising—the result of eight years of pentup feeling—arose from the refusal of Communist leaders to make real changes after the 20th Congress. "The people," Mr. Coutts explained, "did not oppose everything that happened in their country since 1945. They had wanted to build Socialism in Hungary. They established the basis—but they were never allowed to build their own Socialism on it.

"After the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party everyone expected there would be a complete change.

"There were some timid changes but nothing that met the needs of the situation," said Mr. Coutts.

"In both the Communist Party and its youth organisations there were people who had not joined either on principle or because of political understanding but to advance their careers. They had joined for money and for power.

"There was no free discussion at all inside the Party. 'It follows from this,' Mr. Coutts went on, 'that in order to maintain its position the Party leadership had to use the security police which was created in 1948.'

"The Party as a whole, and Parliament of course, had no control over the security police at all. They had copied the worst features of the Soviet security police as it was under Beria."

Mr. Coutts said it was only after Soviet troops entered the fight that it became a national movement, with the two main demands "Russki go home" and "Abolish the A.V.H. (security police)."

Mr. Coutts said that from the Thursday onwards the security police became completely isolated. Everyone's hand—including honest Communists—was against them. Much of the fighting from Thursday onwards was simply to kill off the security police. "I have seen the hatred against them expressed in the most terrible scenes," said Mr. Coutts. "I saw an A.V.H. man clubbed to the ground with a rifle butt then literally kicked and torn to pieces."

THE "DAILY WORKER" STANDS BY STALINISM

It would be difficult to find an ocasion in history where there was a more discredited political tendency than the British Communist Party. Having served Stalin loyally for well nigh 30 years, and justified his most brutal crimes, the men who lead the C.P.G.B. are incapable of offering anything but a classical Stalinist answer for the events in Hungary—and as always this has led them to the most ridiculous positions. Here is their record:—

"Counter-revolution in Hungary staged an uprising in the hours of darkness on Tuesday night." (Daily Worker, Thursday,

October, 25th). The same edition carried an article entitled "The Hell that was Horthy's." Whilst factually it contained material that was accurate, its purpose was to smear the revolution that had begun in Hungary as "fascist inspired."

The Daily Worker stuck more or less to the counter-revolution theme for several days. In this it was faithfully supporting the line taken by Pravda, the Kremlin's mouthpiece, which right from the start denounced the Hungarian events as "counter-revolutionary."

Then came the formation of the Nagy Government and the repudiation of Pravda by "Szabad Nep", the Stalinist paper of the Hungarian Workers Party. In strong language it denounced a Pravda dispatch which was headed "Collapse of the anti-peoples adventure in Hungary"—a "mistake".

"What happened in Budapest," says Szabad Nep, "was neither anti-people nor an adventure, and it did not collapse."

"The slogans on Socialist democracy were the loudest, not those of the reactionaries nor of counter-revolutionaries.

"The revolutionary people of Pest and Buda want freedom, people's freedom, a life without despotism, terror and fear, more bread and national independence. Would this be 'anti-people adventure'" asks the paper.

The first point in the Hungarian revolutionary demands of 1848 was national independence. "Today also this is the first point. What has collapsed and can truly be called anti-people is the reign of the Rakosi-Gero clique."

Saying that the Hungarian nation wants independence, and that this is the first among its demands, the article continues:—

"Let Hungary be free. Let it be an independent country, and let it live with its neighbour the Soviet Union in peace and friendship on this basis."

This scared the "Daily Worker" editors, especially as it was rumoured that the Soviet Armed forces were being withdrawn. They felt that perhaps it was Moscow policy to let the Nagy government get on with things, so they began to change the line, and what was previously denounced as counter-revolutionary they now recognised as having perhaps been "revolutionary" after all. The Editorial on Tuesday, October 30th, remarked:—

"In the course of the struggle in Hungary many sections of the

working people have put forward proposals which are justfied, which arose from the bitter experiences of the past period, and which the Government, the Party and the people should work in unity to implement.

"This is not a sign that the majority of Hungarians want to return to the days of landlordism and capitalism, as the Western Press would like us to believe.

"Whatever deep resentment and burning criticism exists as a result of mistakes and wrongs since the end of the war, Communists and Socialists in Hungary and outside know that to attempt to put the clock back would be the worst possible disaster for the Hungarian people."

Diplomatic language to be sure but a decisive change from its editorial on October 25th.

If we had relied upon the Daily Worker for our news and policy of Hungary, we would be forced to reason something like this. From October 25th to somewhere in the region of October 30th the Hungarian events were counter-revolutionary; then they began to change to revolutionary. This was by implication acknowledged in the publication of the dispatch of Peter Fryer (already quoted) on November 3rd.

On Sunday, November 4th Soviet tanks in large formations opened fire on Budapest and other cities. It was now clear that the rumoured withdrawal of Soviet troops was a smokescreen behind which massive troop and tank formations for an all-out assault were mustered. Immediately these forces went into action the "Daily Worker" changed its line, and on November 5th proceeded to support the intervention of the Red Army, again denouncing the Hungarian events as "counter-revolutionary."

What is clear from all this is that the British Communist Party leadership and the "Daily Worker" have one simple guide to help them work out their policy, and that is "watch Moscow and the Red Army and support them under all conditions." When Gero called upon the Red Army to fire upon the unarmed population the "Daily Worker" denounced the Hungarian events as "counter-revolutionary;" when it appeared that the Nagy Government was being supported and the Red Army withdrawn, these same events became revolutionary, and when once more the Red Army returned to the attack they again became counter-revolutionary. Where in the world could be found a more glaring example of Stalinist reasoning?

STALINISM AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

The events in Hungary after the end of the war were similar to what took place in all Eastern-European countries with the exception of Yugoslavia. In 1945 the revolution was bureaucratically carried out through the intervention of the Red Army. The Hungarian Stalinist Party was hoisted into power not through the popular intervention of the masses but upon orders from Stalin in Moscow.

The Russian Revolution in 1917 established the complete overthrow of the Czarist regime by the democratic power of the workers and peasants through their Soviets. In the early days they defeated the internal forces of counter-revolution not so much by force of arms as by argument and policy. The Soviets were supported by the overwhelming majority of the Russian population. That is why the Russian Revolution was a comparatively peaceful affair, with only a handful of people losing their lives. The real struggle and loss of life began when Winston Churchill and his armies of intervention endeavoured to restore the old ruling class.

When Lenin died in 1924, Stalin and his bureaucracy captured power in the Bolshevik Party and destroyed all democracy and opposition. This was the beginning of Stalinism—the rule of a powerful bureaucracy safeguarding the privileged positions they had gained as a result of the revolution. Although this bureaucracy rested upon the nationalised property relations established by the revolution, its role from the start was predominately counter-revoutionary, in that its first consideration was to protect itself and its positions of power. Since it rested on the property relations of the October Revolution, it was always forced to defend this economic base from attack by the imperialists which was done not by revolutionary appeals but through typical bureaucratic and military methods. For instance, during the second world war it denounced all Germans as fascists; never once did it make a revolutionary appeal as Lenin and Trotsky did during the Russian and the war of intervention. It relied solely upon military means and the help which it received from the British and American Imperialists.

Stalin dealt ruthlessly with all those on the left such as Trotsky who sought to re-introduce Lenin's revolutionary policy. As Kruschev remarked, he (Stalin) coined the phrase "enemies of the people" and this became a substitute for all discussions. You either agreed unreservedly with Stalin or you were an Imperialist agent of Fascism. It was under those conditions that the Moscow frame up trials were

organised—the object being to direct opposition away from the bureaucracy by creating a diversion along the lines that the forces of imperialism were preparing to take over in the U.S.S.R. From all this the Soviet Workers were left with no choice but to support Stalin. Indeed we now know that the victims of the trials themselves, having become completely demoralised, actually agred to tell these monstrous lies because they felt in their demoralisation, that this was the only way they could defend the gains of the revolution.

To Stalin, Hungary was a buffer zone of military importance only—but having decided to intervene in 1945, he had to face a number of problems: the chief problem being the fact that Hungary was a capitalist state, and in order to gear its economy to that of the Soviet Union he was forced to destroy the capitalist property relations and replace them with state ownership.

Insofar as this was done, it was supported by the overwhelming majority of the working class who, directly and indirectly, participated in the event. The Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow and their Hungarian agents never for one moment relaxed their tight hold over this movement. Power in Hungary was maintained in a similar way to that maintained in Moscow. The Rajk trial was staged for similar reasons to that of the Moscow trials. The regime was propped up by the secret police.

The tragic story of 61-year-old Dr. Edith Bone, an ex-member of the British Communist Party who was jailed by the Hungarian Stalinists confirms this in most concrete form.

"I had been in the cellar cells for over two months," she says, "when the police decided to declare their real purpose, I was taken again to the third floor.

"There had been many big industrial accidents in Hungary, due to the lack of higher skilled technicians, and the workers were getting restless. The Communists needed a scapegoat. Britain was to be that scapegoat. I was to 'confess' that I was a secret agent, sent by the British Intelligence Service to organise sabotage. I was to be given a list of names, and was to say yes, these men were the sabateurs.

"I was to 'confess' all this at a public trial and in return said the police, I would get a light sentence of four years. This sentence, they promised, would be reduced to two, and I would serve them in good conditions." (I suffered and I accuse—"Daily Express" November 9th, 1956).

And if any loyal Stalinist should think that this is a pack of lies let the "Daily Worker" put him right. In its issue of November 3rd appears the editorial statement:

"The 'Daily Worker' expresses its condemnation of the inhuman treatment of Dr. Edith Bone and our deep sympathy with her in the ordeal to which she has been subjected."

This bureaucratic transfer of power had another side to it as well. In politically expropriating the Hungarian working class, it enabled the remnants of the old ruling class to find an effective cover for counter-revolutionary work amongst the masses who more and more became hostile to Stalinism.

Since the workers were not permitted to deal with the old capitalist elements through democratic organs of power such as the Soviets in Russia in 1917, the basic struggle remained unresolved. Stalinism in Hungary was like a vast repressive lid which since 1945 had clamped itself down upon the whole nation—rightist and leftist elements alike.

When the revolution finally blew the lid off, events in Hungary expressed themselves through the centre Nagy Government as a state of dual power. Right wing, capitalist inspired and peasant elements demanded recognition, as well as representatives from the revolutionary workers. This was also the case inside many of the workers councils, and it was similar to what happened in the Russian Soviets immediately prior to the revolution. This situation is also described by Peter Fryer of the London "Daily Worker" in his interview with C. Coutts, November 3rd, 1956:—

"A great number of political groups were now active in Budapest and the rest of Hungary. The air was thick with manifestoes ranging from those who wanted to defend collective ownership to those who were against it but could not say so yet, and therefore put the people's genuine national demands in an anti-socialist way.

"What the outcome was going to be nobody could say with certainty. The revolutionary committees, and in the factories, revolutionary workers' councils had no overall direction and aim, no overall basis of policy.

"I don't want to minimise the danger of the return of the emigres," said Mr. Coutts. "But if the revolutionary committees can hammer out some form of unity around basic demands for an independent, democratic and Socialist Hungary, then all attempts at counter-revolution will be defeated."

Mr. Coutts believed the working class was now without an organised leadership. "There are dangers of terrorism against individual Communists. In fact, that has begun. But in spite of everything there will be a Party that will identify itself with the Hungarian revolution and will be forced now to win the Hungarian working class for Socialism on the basis of conviction."

We can see therefore that by November 3rd the situation was crying out for genuine socialist leadership and that according to Coutts and Fryer, it was possible that this could have come from the working class. On the other hand, the centrist government of Nagy was swinging steadily to the right, thereby encouraging capitalist intervention.

At this juncture the Labour movement of the world is able to see clearly what has happened in the Soviet Union since Kruschev's speech. Stalin is dead but the bureaucracy which he personified continues to rule. They have been forced here and there to retreat by the mass pressure and hostility of the Soviet people (Kruschev's speech was one example of this) but such retreats are one thing—giving power back to the working people is quite another. Long ago in 1927 Stalin, referring to his ruling clique, explained that they could only be removed by civil war. The present bureaucracy in the Soviet Union will never liquidate or liberalise itself out of existence. It will only be removed finally by the actions and struggle of the Soviet people led by a conscious socialist leadership.

In typical bureaucratic style, the Soviet bureaucracy turned its armed might, not only against the capitalists and Cardinal Mindzenty elements in the Nagy government but against the revolutionary people as well. The usual stooge government of Janos Kadar was set up and the shooting began. No socialist programme was presented by the Russians—just giant T.34 tanks and masses of armour. The Soviet troops who were in Hungary when hostilities began and who, according to Coutts and Fryer, fraternised and discussed with the Hungarian people, appear to have been withdrawn. Fresh troops replaced them and the attempt to restore bureaucratic rule, as in 1945, commenced.

The tragedy of Hungary today is that the brutal war begun by the Soviet troops is no longer directed against the capitalist elements but against the revolutionary forces. The most stubborn resistance comes from the industrial areas; a general strike continues despite the reports that 20,000 have been killed. The Kadar regime has no

basis whatsoever, and is distrusted by everyone. This is shown by what the "Manchester Guardian" describes as the "helplessness of the regime when it was forced to admit that the Free forces may have been inspired by 'genuine and honourable motives' in taking up arms. Hitherto it had been calling the forces fascist and counter-revolutionary."—(10.11.1956).

Again on November 9th the Manchester Guardian reported:-

"The Minister of the Interior, Ferenc Muennich, today issued instructions to all Hungarian troops to remain in their barracks—thus proving that none is fighting on the Russian side. They were ordered to dissolve their revolutionary committees, which were formed during the first Hungarian crisis. Civilian revolutionary committees were told that they must eject counter-revolutionary elements. Political 'advisers' will be appointed by the Government and attached to them."

In other words, the struggle is now to take political power away from the working class, and replace it with the 'Kadar' clique.

The hirelings of the British Communist Party and the "Daily Worker" have scoured everywhere for some factual information, which would prove that Capitalist elements control the situation in Hungary, but little appears to have been found apart from the speech of Cardinal Mindzenty, and as soon as this is quoted it immediately defeats itself. For the fact remains that if the Capitalist elements have such a mass base, why did the Cardinal have to take refuge in the American Embassy? Capitalist agents there are, to be sure, but the movement right from the start was predominantly revolutionary, and it is this fact which must guide the Labour Movement.

HUNGARY AND BRITISH LABOUR

The responsibility for the emergence of capitalist elements in Hungary and for the war now being waged to crush the revolutionary workers rests entirely on Stalinism, and those who defend its policies inside and outside the Soviet Union. For an example of this type of individual, listen to Mr. D. N. Pritt. "Anyone," he says, "who joins in the shouting against the Soviet Union at the moment is helping the American ruling class and bringing the third world war nearer" (Daily Worker, Nov. 9th, 1956).

Simple, isn't it. You are either for Russia right or wrong, or with the Imperialists.

This is the line which Messrs. Pritt, Palme Dutt, Gollan, Pollitt

and the rest of them peddled in order to justify the Moscow trials and all the horrors which Kruschev revealed in his speech. The fact that Mr. Pritt, who has never publicly commented on Kruschev's speech, has now emerged from his legal hole in order to repeat the same line, illustrates how the old Stalinist hacks in Russia and elsewhere are preparing for a last ditch stand.

Fortunately, Mr. Pritt's return to the "old vomit" is not being followed by many members of the C.P. and readers of the "Daily Worker." In the same issue Gabriel, its cartoonist for twenty years, resigned over Hungary. Eric Hobsbawm, one of the leading intellectuals in the C.P., demands that the Soviet troops be withdrawn. Another reader, Ken Jones from Bristol, writes: "We owe it to our Hungarian and Polish comrades, as well as to ourselves, to settle accounts with all responsible for providing us with such a grotesque caricature of the real developments in Poland and Hungary over the past five years."

British Labour must stand by the working people of Hungary and help them defend their revolution. This can only be done provided we expose and fight any attempts by the Imperialists in the West to exploit the situation in order to restore capitalism. We must support the demand not only for the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army, but for the withdrawal of all the Imperialist armies in Western Europe as well.

There is a movement afoot by right wing Labour leaders to cover up their disagreements with the Tories on Suez and slip into national unity behind the Capitalists over Hungary. This must be pitilessly exposed and fought.

All monies, food parcels, and medical supplies which are collected by the Labour Movement should be distributed in Hungary by the representatives of our movement. They should not be left to imperialist agents who will utilise them in an effort to raise the prestige of the capitalist countries.

Labour can help Hungary only if it does its work independently of all Tory forces.

Labour must organise itself if necessary to prevent British Fascists and their Tory friends from launching a witchhunt either against members of the British Communist Party or members of the Labour Party. There is a danger of this taking place here as it has in France. We must be on guard. No matter how we detest Stalinism, we must preserve the democracy of the movement.

All members of the C.P. and Y.C.L. should immediately demand a special Congress to repudiate the leadership's line on Hungary.

STAY IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND FIGHT IT OUT.

The people of Hungary do not want to return to capitalism. They want to preserve the system of centralized planning and state ownership and get rid of Stalinism forever. This we must support with all our might.

At the same time the people of Hungary must deal with capitalist elements in their own ranks. That is their job, and we are sure they can do it. The Socialist and Communist movement in Hungary must win its right to govern not through the indulgence of the Moscow bureaucracy— its guns, planes and tanks—but by means of a socialist policy which will secure for it the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. There is no other road for Hungary—or for the working people in any country.

DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM!

DOWN WITH STALINISM!

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