

EDUCATION COLUMN

HUNGARY,

1956

What really happened in Hungary in 1956? To this day, the bourgeoisie speaks of the "freedom fighters" who struggled against "Stalinist terror" and were "crushed by Russian tanks." This is an outright lie! The events in Hungary in October-November 1956 were an attempt at a counter-revolutionary putsch by fascists sponsored by the CIA and the other imperialist spy agencies. The suppression of this fascist coup was essential not only to the continued struggle for socialism in Hungary, but also for the security of the entire socialist camp.

First the revolution in Hungary. In 1918-1919, a successful uprising of the workers and peasants brought a dictatorship of the proletariat to power under the leadership of Bela Kun. This revolution was crushed in blood by an invasion of the Rumanian army from the north, civil war in the south waged by the fascist forces under Admiral Horthy; by the combined efforts of all the imperialist powers through a total blockade of Soviet Hungary and their complete financing and arms supply to the counter-revolutionary forces; and by the treachery of the right-wing Social Democrats. This treachery went so far as to take the form of a formal agreement between these Social Democrats and the fascist government detailing which government positions they were to receive in return for their strangulation of the working class movement.

William Bohn, Minister of War in the pre-revolution of 1924, described the terror of Bourgeois, "The terrorist domination of the Horthy bands will always remain one of the most detestable and shameful chapters in our history. Hundreds of innocent people were murdered and thousands arrested, more than 5,000 revolutionaries were massacred... Unarmed people were sought, hung, castrated, blinded; women were raped and children killed... Parents were killed in front of their children; husbands in front of their wives; young girls in front of their fiancés and by means of the most inhuman and refined tortures." The head of that bourgeois republic, Michael Karolyi, says in his memoirs written in 1956, "Workers and peasants were hurled alive into burning furnaces, a proceeding jokingly called 'using them as fuel.' Innocent Jews were dragged from a train and hung on trees... Wives of Communists were raped by officers and then turned over to the ranks."

This fascist regime lasted until 1945. Throughout this period, workers, peasants, Jews and Communists were imprisoned and murdered by the thousands. This terror enforced an economic system that was one of the most backward in Europe. Hungary was a primarily agricultural country where a mere 2,000 individuals owned more than 50% of the land. The Roman Catholic Church owned 6% of all the land in the country. In all, in 1945, one-tenth of the population owned 56% of the land and the other 99.9% only 44%. There were more than 2,000,000 landless peasants in 1945. There was little industry and that was owned by foreign imperialists. Typical conditions can be seen by the fact that in 1934, a thousand coal miners in Pecs went on a desperation strike to demand a weekly wage of \$3.50 instead of the \$2.00 they were receiving. The fascist state grew to a huge size. Two out of every three persons not employed in agriculture were government employees. The Catholic Church was not only the largest landowner, but was an enormous power. The Cardinal in Hungary was by law the second cardinal officer of the state. Until 1948, the only schools in Hungary were religious schools, the Catholic Church controlled 65% of them absolutely. Textbooks used in these schools up to 1948 described the French Revolution as "that mob movement of the late 18th century in France which was designed primarily to rob the Church of its land."

Anti-semitism was endemic in fascist Hungary; it was enshrined in law and reinforced with murder. 400,000 Hungarian Jews were slaughtered during the war with the Hungarian fascists striving to out do the Germans. The Hungarian government concluded a formal alliance with Nazi Ger-

many in 1938. For their support they gained large portions of Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian fascists fought side by side with the Nazis and were defeated with them. The fascists fought for over seven weeks for Budapest in tit-for-tat street resistance against the Red Army. In the last days of WW II, the entire Nazi spy network in the East, headed by General Gehlen, was taken over by the US, this included many Hungarians. Whole armed units were reformed in the Western Zones of occupation of the fascist Hungarian army and trained and armed by the USNA and other imperialist powers. Hungary lost over 600,000 people in the war, most of them Jews slaughtered by the fascists; 800,000 of these fascists fled to the Western zones of occupation—particularly that of the USNA where they were protected. This, in a country where the total pre-war population was under 9 million! The country was devastated by the war. Factories, roads, railroads, even 60% of all the farm animals of the country were destroyed.

In 1945, the Free Hungarian Coalition Government, formed from all the anti-Nazi groups and with a minority participation of the Communist Party, took power and began a program of national reconstruction based on land reform. At this time the Communist Party, after 25 years of the most savage repression and five years of bloody war, numbered only 10,000. The first secret ballot, free election in Hungary's history was held in 1945. The Communist Party gained 17% of the vote as against 57% for the largest party, the Smallholders, which was also the most right-wing. As the struggle for reconstruction developed, it became clear that this would only be done on the basis of genuine land reform and the nationalization of the major industries, indeed in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism and to establish socialism. This brought about a deepening split within the government between the old fascist and reactionary forces, spearheaded by Cardinal Mindszenty (whose primary political goal was the restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy) and the forces for progress toward socialism, led by the Communist Party and the left-wing Social Democrats. The break occurred in 1947-48 over the issues of the establishment of the republic, the nationalization of industry and particularly banking, the enforcement of the land reform laws, and the secularizing of the schools. In the elections of 1947, the progressive forces won a victory, with the vote for the Communists increasing to 22%, but the far-right fascist forces were still strong with some 17% of the total vote. In 1948, the Communist Party united with the Social Democratic Party to form the Hungarian Workers Party. This provided the basis for the further advance toward socialism, under these difficult conditions.

The imperialist powers and particularly the USNA and its newly formed CIA, saw the Hungarian situation from 1945 as rich with possibilities for counter-revolution. As mentioned, they took over the Nazi spy network and sponsored exiled fascist politicians and military units. Joseph Harsch writing in the October 1949 Harper's Magazine stated, "In Hungary, as nowhere else, American diplomacy has associated itself in the most open and aggressive way with the most reactionary of the dispossessed elements." In 1947-49, the reactionary and fascist forces in Hungary launched a number of counter-revolutionary plots, aided by the imperialist forces. These included both an attempt outside the government, led by Cardinal Mindszenty and Prince Esterhazy and an attempt from within, aided by the traitorous Yugoslav government led by Tito, spearheaded by the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Laszlo Rajk, who as Minister of the Interior had been sabotaging the struggle against the internal fascists and now mounted a plot to overthrow the government by a military coup and unite Hungary with Yugoslavia. All of these plots were unearthed and defeated, in the Rajk case with the particular aid of the Cominform (Communist Information Bureau, central agitation and propaganda bureau of the International Communist movement). Their main perpetrators were either executed or jailed.

From 1948-1953, the struggle to build a socialist Hungary went on, overcoming all of these obstacles. But with the death of Stalin in 1953, the revisionists in the Soviet Union and throughout the People's Republics of Eastern Europe mounted their attack on Marxism-Leninism and the dictatorship

LABOR

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is over, that the economy has recovered. But industry is operating at 72% of its capacity; it operated at 84% in 1967! Since 1967, production has fallen, but prices for industrial raw materials, foodstuffs, wheat and cotton have doubled (rising 10% in the last year). Unemployment is at an "official" 8% (14% for Negroes and higher for youth), inflation continues to eat up workers' paychecks, and unemployment and welfare payments to families out of work or unable to work barely cover the cost of the basic necessities of life.

We ask—where is the economic recovery for the workers! The bourgeoisie has upped their profits drenched in the workers' sweat and blood, and call that a recovery. But workers fortunate enough to have jobs barely keep pace with the cost of living! Those unemployed or old or sick go hungry.

Throughout this year, as contracts come up for renegotiation, workers must take their stand and demand a decent standard of living. A militant defense must be waged, to raise the standard of living of the working class. The bourgeoisie has opened 1976 with Ford's veto, leveling their guns at labor. The workers must raise the banner of struggle on shop floors, in the union halls, in unemployment councils and committees, and must see that their demands are carried to the bargaining tables and all the way to the halls of Congress: demands for a decent standard of living; economic security, to organize the unorganized, for jobs and peace. Major battles must be fought for:

—full employment at the expense of the military budget; jobs with peace. Unemployment compensation commensurate with the number of children to extend to all unemployed workers, both urban and rural proletarians. Nationalization of welfare and equalization of funds to all welfare recipients commensurate with the number of children.

—An end to compulsory overtime. Strict enforcement of a 35-hour week. No speed-up.

—An end to price hikes and to all attacks on the living standards of the workers.

—Recognition, implementation and protection of the rights of women; equal pay for equal work.

It is particularly significant that on January 15, 1976, a march and rally for Full Employment is being held in Atlanta, Georgia in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, to commemorate and continue the work of Dr. King.

The Communist Labor Party supports this march and urges all workers to support it and to carry this militant spirit forward into the new year. The successful defense of the standard of living of the working class begins with the hardest blows are falling. In this way the struggle is waged to defend all sections of the working class. Dr. King marched and struggled not just for the Negro worker, but for jobs for all workers. This full employment rally embodies the spirit of unity of the working class. It is in order to make this unity a living reality that the CLP is calling for the organization of an Equal Rights Congress. This Congress will carry such work forward across the country, launch an organized defense of the minority sections of the working class and create the conditions for a united defense of the living standard of all workers and against the advancing menace of fascism.

of the proletariat so recently established. In Hungary the first sign of this was the abrupt shift in policy away from the development of heavy industry. In 1953 the annual rate of growth for heavy industry was 18%, for light industry and food processing, 4%. In 1954, the annual growth rate for heavy industry was not a growth rate at all, but a rate of decline of 6%. A growth rate of 9% was found in the light industry and food processing sectors. Along with this attack on the economic development of the socialist basis, went an all around political attack. Beginning in 1954, various criminals and imperialist agents, members of fascist gangs and reactionaries that had been jailed in 1947-50 were released. This campaign against "Stalinist terror" reached a climax in 1956, when the first secretary of the Hungarian Workers Party, Matyas Rakosi, in failing health, was forced to resign. This

NO

FORCED LABOR

In 1973, the Minnesota State Legislature passed the Minnesota General Assistance Act which was put into effect in Hennepin County in 1974. The program states "anyone receiving general assistance who is employable, is required to perform work in public agencies in return for general assistance payments to them." The law requires that "recipients shall be paid at the same wage rates as county employees doing similar work."

However, it has recently been revealed that work program recipients have been illegally underpaid by an estimated \$26 million, throughout the state. Contrary to the law, recipients in Hennepin County have been receiving credit for \$2.50 an hour rather than receiving payment at the starting wage in their job classification. In one case, a laundry room workers' rate is \$3.70 an hour!

So it can be seen that after all the talk recently about possible welfare fraud and the consequent moves to cut back or even eliminate welfare and food stamp programs, the biggest "cheater" of all is the government that administers the program.

The use of welfare recipients as a pool of reserve labor is an attack not only on those workers in the program but in fact on the rest of the working class. The men and women on GA are forced to take jobs at substandard pay and with no fringe benefits, making it more difficult for other workers on the same job to effectively wage real struggles for better conditions. In Minneapolis, there are even cut backs in the same job categories that employ the welfare recipients. What can this mean but another attempt to further divide the working class by using the unemployed to undercut the standard of living of the county workers with what amounts to "forced labor." Although now limited only to county jobs, this type of program certainly would be handy in private industry. Forced labor at substandard wages would be a perfect way to do this. As the economic crisis deepens, the capitalists will ever more squeeze us dry, using the legal force of the state to achieve their aims.

Within this forced work program exists the most blatant white chauvinism since the most menial jobs go to minorities. Already highly unemployed, underemployed and poorly paid, it is the Negro national minority and the Indian peoples who find themselves primarily on these work programs, doing the worst jobs.

The individual recipients who exposed this illegal program along with organizations such as the United Northside Organization's Employment Task Force are calling on the state legislature to halt the work program immediately and to hold public hearings on it. They are also calling for payments to recipients who have been underpaid.

The Communist Labor Party wholeheartedly supports these moves to end these grave injustices. We also raise the call for jobs for all able-bodied men and women at decent wages and at the expense of the military budget. We demand that the whole welfare system be nationalized and force the federal government to provide an adequate income for all unemployed workers.

End Forced Labor
Jobs with Peace
Nationalize Welfare

"anti-Stalinist" campaign reached every level of the party and removed hundreds of staunch bolsheviks from the Central Committee, down to the local units from party office and often from the party all together. At the same time many bourgeois elements were "rehabilitated". These bourgeois elements took control over much of the cultural institutions. In November of 1955, the Writers' Union voted a resolution that demanded a complete break from the Workers' Party. The disruption of the economy and the demoralization of the Party by the revisionists created the conditions for the attempt at counter-revolution sponsored by the CIA.

(The second part of this article which will discuss the attempted coup itself, will appear in Vol. 3 No. 3 of the People's Tribune.)