

Davis Writes on Hungary

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS

THE OPEN LETTER of the National Committee to the membership of the Communist Party, published in the Nov. 20, Daily Worker, stated that there are "different viewpoints" on the Committee concerning certain questions. I'd like to discuss some of my own viewpoints.

The first use of Soviet troops in Hungary, I consider a serious mistake as stated in the Open Letter. The second use of Soviet troops, after fascist elements had gained or were gaining the upper hand, was in my opinion a grim and painful necessity—notwithstanding the travail and misunderstanding it caused in democratic and popular circles the world over. On this question, the Open Letter took no position. However, popular misunderstanding and even anger, it seems to me, ought to be sharply differentiated from the frenzied class venom with which imperialists all over the world are confusing the situation to exploit for their own ulterior purposes the use of foreign troops on another country's soil.

Everybody knows — though that fact may be temporarily obscured—that the world enemy of freedom and independence for the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of Asia, Africa, the Near East and Latin America is American, British and French imperialism and its two-bit accomplices—and not the Soviet Union, the Republic of China, the Peoples Democracies or the Marxist Parties of the world.

The role of the socialist countries was typified in the offer of the Soviet Union and the Chinese Peoples Republic to mingle their blood with the Egyptians' in behalf Egyptian sovereignty, of the national liberation movements in the Near and Far East, and in behalf of world peace. This is something new for the colonial powers to have to face and plainly they don't like it.

HAD THE Soviet Union failed to act the second time, or had it been paralyzed with indecision, not alone would socialism been endangered in Hungary, but the fascist Horthy elements would have established a military beach-head for reactionary American imperialism, its British and other partners, in the center of Eastern Europe, notorious cock-pit of many world wars. This would have opened the floodgates of butchery of the Hungarian workers and masses, and would have gravely imperiled the Eastern Democracies, the Soviet Union — and world peace, itself. (Some members of the National Committee feel that there were other alternatives to the use of Soviet troops.)

The very fact that the British and French imperialists (who are butchering people to a fare-thee-well in Kenya and Algeria) with their Israel accomplice, seized upon the Hungarian crisis to launch the treacherous aggression against Egypt, showed to what length imperialism will go to turn the clock backwards any and everywhere, in reckless disregard of world peace and colonial independence. Such treachery doesn't inspire confidence or the dulling of vigilance. The crocodile-tears being shed over the Hungarian peoples by the imperialists, led by the fabulous capitalist propaganda machine in the U. S., is an attempt to divert attention from the brutal imperialist assault upon Egypt, in which U. S. imperialism is far from having clean hands.

All foreign troops should be withdrawn from countries. But these gentry aren't interested in that. They're apoplectic over the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe under the Warsaw pact; but under NATO, U. S. imperialism has troops all over the world, intimidating governments and peoples who breathe an anti-capitalist

thought, and it vulgarly brags about how this or that election in foreign country results in a "pro-American" government, instead of a government that serves the interest of the people of the given country. They're not even clamoring for British and French troops to get out of Egypt forthwith, to say nothing of Kenya or Algeria, where the peoples are dark, and of course, "inferior."

THE SERIOUS MISTAKES of the Soviet Union in too slowly implementing the decisions of the 20th Congress in respect to the Eastern Democracies, together with the grave injustices and errors of the Rakosi-Gero regime substantially contributed to the accumulation of grievances which led to the original legitimate popular upsurge of the Hungarian people. For ensuing developments, resulted in a monumental tragedy, tarnishing socialism's escutcheon before the world, and putting Soviet troops in the posture of taking military action against a movement supported by the majority of the Hungarian people.

American Communists, in the first instance, have both a right and a duty to critically assess these errors, as the Open Letter seeks to do, and also to point out that the 20th Congress should be implemented at a much more rapid tempo. The Soviet-Polish agreement is a positive bit an unfortunately late recognition of the fact that the policy under the latter years of Stalin's leadership of overaweing the Peoples Democracies is wrong, will not work and depart from Leninism. Only in this way can the conditions which facilitated the Hungarian debacle be prevented.

At the same time, labor and the democratic, peace-loving people of our own country—beginning with American Communists—should more energetically combat and try to reverse the sinister role of "our" own imperialists in Eastern Europe. Project X, the balloon invasions, etc. are not merely a few annoying trespasses. They are a part of a willful, highly financed and concentrated campaign of subversion, sabotage and open incitement to violent overthrow of these governments—such intervention as our country wouldn't tolerate for one moment from a country on its borders. The aim of the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, etc. is not alone to take advantage of such explosive situations as existed in Hungary, but to create them. This serves the interests of war, not peace.

Nor can one afford to underestimate the menace of the outlawing of the Communist Party of West Germany, reminiscent of Hitler's start, nor of its accomplishment at the behest of the State Department on the basis of the blueprint of the Smith Act prosecutions of the American Communists. This, too, endangered peace in both Western and Eastern Europe. These are some of the world factors entering into my own thinking on the Hungarian situation.

IT SEEMS TO ME that the National Committee statement published on Nov. 5, in the Daily, and Daily Worker editorial of the same day, were untimely, wrong in many respects and seriously disorienting. (I did not vote for the National Committee statement but abstained.) As is well known, by the time the National Committee statement and the Daily editorial were printed on Nov. 5, the situation in Hungary had already taken a new turn. This was, in my judgment, an example of going off half-cocked with final judgments on a complex situation which was fluid and where all the essential facts were not known. The Open Letter points out that even now there are no

"ready answers." Such jumping the gun can lead to harmful consequences for the paper, the Party and for the labor and popular forces of our own country.

The Open Letter published Nov. 20, has weaknesses, but it tries to answer some of the questions on the mind of Party members. I thought for example that it should have taken a more positive attitude toward the Kadar government and that its self-criticism was indeed weak.

I voted for the Open Letter and support it. For here is something new and, I submit, very important and worthwhile. It provides a comradely basis for a continuance of the debate on the issue, with full latitude for each Party member and leader to express his own point of view in the fight for correct policy.

FURTHER, it shares the thinking of the National Committee in the midst of serious and vexing differences which are no secrets. No member of our Party, it seems to me, can fail to appreciate the enormous and painful difficulties of Marxists all over the world in adjusting to new situations and new relationships in the midst of many dramatic, sudden and often confusing events. Our own Party is affected as well.

Our Party no less has to be mindful of the precarious condition of the organization, and observe mutual respect for each other's opinions among leaders and members. Every effort should be made to contain the clash of differences and the fight for correct policy within the framework of the preservation of the Party and its unity—and the preservation of the Daily Worker.

A new democracy is already emerging in our Party, and old rigid ways of doing things will have to be discarded. But we're very much amateurs at the new. As time goes on, I'm sure our Party will improve. A good bit of coolness and mutual respect for differences is needed in such situations. It is in this spirit that the Open Letter was written and, I think, makes a positive contribution. That our Party will adopt a united correct policy and program and implement it, I haven't the slightest doubt. In doing this, we have to drop all our previous attitudes of self-righteousness, without losing our ability to see things clearly and in their totality.

French Oil Rationing to Start Tomorrow

PARIS, Nov. 27.—The cabinet tonight ordered gasoline rationing throughout the nation effective Thursday noon as a result of the Middle East oil stoppage.

Gasoline stations were ordered closed until Thursday to preserve stocks on hand.

The British government has ordered rationing to start Dec. 17.

Announcement of rationing followed the dismal failure of a volunteer program which urged motorists to cut driving 30 percent to avoid rationing, instead, motorists went on a hoarding spree.

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