

EDUCATION COLUMN

HUNGARY, 1956

SECOND OF TWO PARTS

The first half of this article, which appeared in the Jan. 15, 1976 edition of the People's Tribune, briefly reviewed the history of the revolution in Hungary from defeat in 1919, through the long struggle under fascism to the establishment of the People's Republic in 1948. Hungarian fascists, Hitler's first and most loyal allies, were supported and preserved from destruction by the US and Britain at the end of World War 2. Well armed and financed schemes of the CIA and other imperialist intelligence networks in Hungary plotted sabotage, assassination and counter-revolution. These "noble efforts for freedom" included the plot of Cardinal Mindszenty and Prince Esterhazy to restore the Hapsburg monarchy.

After Stalin's death in 1953, revisionists in Hungary carried out an all around disruption of the economy, the state and the Party. This reached a climax in 1956, with the expulsion of "Stalinists" from leading positions in the Party.

In 1952, General Eisenhower, then a candidate for President, stated: "The U.S. government should use every political, every economic, every psychological tactic to see that the liberating spirit in the nations conquered by communism shall never perish. Thus we shall help each captive nation to maintain on outward strain against its Moscow bond. The lands closed in behind the Iron Curtain will seethe with discontent; their peoples, not servants docile under a Soviet master, but ardent patriots yearning to be free again."

This openly announced and never forsaken program for counterrevolution became a slogan for action in Hungary in October, 1956. The entire network of spies, saboteurs and fascist thugs and politicians built up and trained since the last days of World War 2 swung into action in the wake of the disruption caused by the revisionists.

On the night of October 23, amidst student demonstrations, gangs of counter-revolutionaries instructed by USNA sponsored radio stations in Austria and West Germany, moved to occupy key positions such as radio stations, newspapers, telephone exchanges and armories. That night the Hungarian government declared martial law to help contain the fascist uprising. At the same time Imre Nagy, an extreme right-wing revisionist who had been jailed, expelled from the party and later readmitted, was named head of state.

Nagy declared a program of the "realization of a Hungarian road corresponding to our own national characteristics in the building of socialism." The government asked the Soviet troops stationed in Hungary as part of the Warsaw defense pact to assist in restoring order. On October 25, a UPI dispatch from Budapest stated, "The rebels were well armed. It was this that provided the first indication that an apparently well trained, well equipped underground had chosen this mounting ferment in Hungary as the moment to strike against Communist rule."

On October 25, the new General Secretary of the Hungarian Party, Erno Gero, the only remaining leader from the Rakosi period, was forcibly replaced by Janos Kadar. The majority of the Political Bureau were people who had been in jail or expelled for anti-party activity.

Later that day, thugs set fire to the national museum in Budapest; they fired on the fire department and individual citizens who tried to halt the destruction of the nation's heritage. Reactionaries launched an attack against the Soviet forces protecting the government buildings in Budapest. The CIA, through its "Radio Free Europe" called this fighting a "massacre of thousands of innocent children by brutal Soviet tanks" when in reality the Soviet forces were answering organized machine gun fire and the total casualties were around 50.

By October 26, the western border with Austria had been thrown open and thousands of fascists, waiting for "their turn" since 1945, fled back into the country and seized most of the towns in western Hungary. The Hungarian government did not take effective measures to control these fascists who launched a terror campaign

against both communists and Jews, marking their houses for assassination squads.

The London Daily Express of October 31, described an attack upon the Party headquarters in Budapest: "[The attackers] have strung up every man and woman they found inside the building including some good [sic] communists and supporters of Prime Minister Nagy's rebellion against Moscow. . . . These men are hanging from windows, from trees, from lamp posts, anywhere you can hang men from. The trouble is that ordinary citizens are being strung up at the same time."

On October 27 the Hungarian government was reorganized to include representatives of former bourgeois parties. The reins of the Party were handed over to a Presidium of six formerly expelled revisionists. The government then demanded the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. As the Soviet forces withdrew from Budapest fascist terror raged in the streets. On October 30, the cabinet of Hungary was placed in the hands of non-Communists.

The US government announced a grant of \$20 million to this New Hungarian government. Cardinal Mindszenty was released from house arrest and Prime Minister Nagy stated that his prosecution in 1948 was "lacking all legal basis." The Cardinal immediately announced the formation of a "Christian Democratic" party whose aims included the restoration of all church land and the reestablishment of church schools. On October 31 the Hungarian Air Defense Command demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Hungary and the renouncing of the Warsaw Pact, threatening to bomb the Soviet forces if they remained.

On November 1, repudiating the Warsaw Pact, Nagy declared Hungary neutral and requested UN intervention. He renounced the goal of socialism. The Hungarian Party was totally disrupted, its loyal members under fierce attack by fascist gangs. Janos Kadar dissolved the old party and called for the formation of a new "anti-Stalinist" party.

Another new government was formed on November 3, even further to the right. Cardinal Mindszenty called for the restoration of all private property. The fascist reign of terror continued to rage throughout the country. But finally, on November 4, the tide began to turn. The fascists had moved too quickly and openly. A government was formed by the anti-Nagy forces, which requested Soviet aid to smash the counter-revolution. The Khrushchev gang was forced to grant this request by the universal demand of the Soviet people and the entire Socialist camp. China declared that she would send in troops if the Soviet Union did not.

Within two weeks the fighting ended. Hungary remained within the socialist camp, although controlled by revisionists. The threat of direct imperialist intervention was eliminated and the reign of fascist terror stopped. In this battle not only the future of socialism in Hungary, but the security of the entire socialist camp was at stake. The defeat of the counter revolution in Hungary was a victory for the socialist camp, but a victory narrowly won. Only those who today welcome the fascist coup in Chile or consider South Africa a "democratic" state can call the Hungarian counter-revolution in 1956 a "fight for freedom."

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