

# **SOCIALIST WORKERS 1968 NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

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## NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SOCIALIST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CONDEMNS AGGRESSION AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Fred Halstead, Socialist Workers Party candidate for President, today issued the following statement of his views on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Full text follows:

As the presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, I unequivocally condemn the brutal occupation of Czechoslovakia and the suppression of its reforms by the Kremlin and its stooges.

The invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armed forces of Moscow and its four accomplices -- East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria -- is a criminal and indefensible deed. It deserves the severest condemnation on both socialist and democratic grounds.

The action violates the independence of a small nation and tramples on its right to self-determination. This second Hungary deals severe blows to the cause of world socialism.

It is aimed to crush and reverse the strides toward socialist democracy taken since Novotny was ousted last January with enthusiastic backing from the overwhelming majority of the Czechoslovak masses. It is designed to halt the further disintegration of Stalinist monolithism which has

already enabled one satellite regime after another to gain greater national autonomy from the Kremlin. It seeks to prevent the example of Czechoslovakia's repudiation of unrestrained bureaucratic domination from spreading to their own domains and jeopardizing their continued rule.

The assault not only damages and discredits socialism in the eyes of world opinion. It likewise undermines the security of the Soviet Union and the other workers states by disrupting and weakening the fraternity and solidarity of the forces for socialism in East Europe and on an international scale. Moscow's military interference can no more be justified by false claims of defending the interests of socialism than Washington's intervention in Vietnam is justified by its pretext of protecting "freedom."

Indeed, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia directly injures the Vietnamese revolution since it is being exploited by the U.S. imperialists and their allies to sanction the continuation of their war against the Vietnamese people. It serves to dishearten the anti-war forces within the United States. A call for the invading Warsaw Pact armies to get out of Czechoslovakia must be coupled with an equally vigorous demand for U.S. troops to withdraw immediately from Vietnam.

Since early July the Soviet leaders and their stooges have been conducting a furious campaign against the Dubcek government and its supporters, accusing them of counter-revolutionary complicity with West German Nazis, U.S. imperialists, the CIA and other ultra-reactionary elements. By military maneuvers, diplomatic pressures and a barrage of press attacks they hoped to bring Dubcek and his associates to their knees, force them to scrap the liberal reforms and revert to the Stalinist practices of the deposed Novotny gang.

Dubcek explained to them in his response on July 18 that "any indication of a return to these methods would evoke the resistance of the overwhelming majority of party members and the resistance of the working class, the workers, the cooperative farmers and the intelligentsia." When, despite minor concessions,

his government refused to comply with their demands, the Kremlin and its agents moved to take over Czechoslovakia and install a subservient regime, as was done in Hungary in 1956.

The pretext of "counter-revolutionary danger" invoked by the Kremlin to cover its intervention is utterly hypocritical and baseless. As their declarations and deeds demonstrated, the Czechoslovak masses were not sliding backward to restore capitalism and landlordism, but going forward to the formation of a genuine socialist democracy. The Soviet, East German, Polish and other bureaucrats were thrown into panic fear by the precedent the Czechoslovaks' progress toward that goal was setting for their own peoples.

The real promoters of counter-revolution in this situation are those Stalinist bureaucrats around the world who have plotted, executed and approved the rape of Czechoslovakia. World imperialism and capitalist reaction are the greatest beneficiaries, and the socialist working class the greatest losers, from the brutal violation of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. The example of destalinization and democratization in Czechoslovakia was the most telling refutation of the anti-Communist hysteria and the arguments of reaction that socialism and communism are inherently totalitarian.

Once again the bureaucratic rulers of the Soviet Union have shown themselves to be betrayers of the ideals of socialism, obstacles to its advancement, and sworn foes of the workers democracy that was cornerstone of Lenin's program.

**Hands Off the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic!**

**Immediate Withdrawal of All Occupying Forces from the Country!**

**Defend the Right of Self-Determination of the Czechoslovak Peoples!**