

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA

## THE ISSUES INVOLVED

By TED GRANT

For weeks the capitalist class of the world has been whimpering about the measures taken against the capitalists in Czechoslovakia. The methods used by the Stalinists have been compared to the technique of Hitler. Their propaganda is saturated through and through with capitalist hypocrisy. It is not the forcible methods of the Stalinists to which they object. They not only condone, but actively assist the terror of the Greek reaction which aims to establish a semi-fascist regime, as they condoned and assisted Hitler and Mussolini against the working class.

### STALINISTS' REPLY — "CONSTITUTIONALISM"

In reply to the capitalists, the Stalinists do not, and cannot give a Marxist answer. They pretend that the changes were carried through "in accordance with the Constitution." This has further added to the confusion of labour workers, who understand that these statements are not in accordance with the facts. The change was accomplished with the aid and the participation of the armed workers on the streets convinced the capitalist elements of the uselessness of resistance. It was this threat of force which ensured the peaceful change.

### What The Masses Supported

The workers and peasants in Czechoslovakia undoubtedly gave wholehearted support to the change because of its progressive features. The workers could not but support the measures: nationalisation of all important plants that remained in private hands since the mass movement in 1945; 70% of the printing establishments, the whole of the chemical industry, all refrigerator plants, and all building concerns employing more than 50 persons, all big hotels and the wholesale trade. No firm employ-

ing more than 50 people in any trade or industry is now allowed to be privately owned.

The monopoly of foreign trade has been formally instituted. The peasants were solidly behind the reforms. Although the Stalinists did not do as the Russian Bolsheviks did, namely nationalise the land and then hand it to the peasants, they divided the land and gave it to the peasants as their own private property.

### Trotsky On Occupied Territories

These are the progressive features supported by the Trotskyists despite the failure to nationalise the land. They are a necessary economic foundation for a workers' state. In order to carry through these measures the Stalinists were compelled to call on the initiative and pressure of the masses. As Trotsky pointed out in 1939, when dealing with the likely developments if Stalin invaded Poland: "It is more likely, however, that in the territories scheduled to become a part of the U.S.S.R., the Moscow government will carry through the expropriation of the large land-owners and statification of the means of production. This variant is the most probable not because the bureaucracy remains true to the socialist programme but because it is neither desirous nor capable

of sharing the power, and the privileges the latter entails, with the old ruling classes in the occupied territories. Here an analogy literally offers itself: The first Bonaparte halted the revolution by means of a military dictatorship. However, when the French troops invaded Poland, Napoleon signed a decree: 'Serfdom is abolished.' This measure was dictated not by Napoleon's sympathies for the peasants, nor by democratic principles, but rather by the fact that the Bonapartist dictatorship based itself not on feudal, but on bourgeois property relations. Inasmuch as Stalin's Bonapartist dictatorship bases itself not on private property, but state property, the invasion of Poland by the Red Army should, in the nature of the case, result in the abolition of private capitalist property, so as thus to bring the regime of the occupied territories into accord with the regime of the U.S.S.R. This measure, revolutionary in character—the expropriation of the expropriators—is in this case achieved in a military-bureaucratic fashion. The appeal to independent activity on the part of the masses in the new territories—and without such an appeal, even if worded with extreme caution it is impossible to constitute a new regime—will on

the morrow undoubtedly be suppressed by ruthless police measures in order to assure the preponderance of the bureaucracy over the awakened revolutionary masses. . . . ("U.S.S.R. in War," Sept, 1939.)

### Stalinism and Democracy

Having used the pressure of the workers against the capitalist class, the Stalinists will dispense with all the elements of workers' control. The speed with which this is accomplished will depend on the resistance of the Czech working class, whose level of culture, because of the industrialisation of the country, far exceeds that of the Russian workers. The Stalinists cannot afford to allow a workers' democracy in Czechoslovakia because of the inevitable repercussions on the Russian regime in the Soviet Union.

This was clearly brought out by Douglas Hyde, former news editor of the "Daily Worker", in an interview with the "Daily Mail." He said: ". . . At the first meeting of the Cominform, held in a hunting-lodge in Silesia, Gottwald was charged with 'petit-bourgeois Communism' because he had tried to work out a policy which took into account Czechoslovakia's traditions of Western culture and freedom. Gottwald's idea was to mould Communism to suit the needs of his country—so different from

Russia. But with Russia at his back there was no point in arguing, and recent events in Prague revealed how thoroughly he was brought to heel." Feeling the pressure of the workers, Gottwald is afraid of the future results of such a course.

### Future Of Action Committees

Shortly after the Czech election, the government officials issued statements about the limited role of the Action Committees. The "Telegraph", of March 6th, reported: "There are indications of some concern at H.Q. regarding the unhampered activities of local Action Committees. The Central Action Committee has ordered all other committees to refrain from interfering in the cleansing of the army. Henceforth all 'purge cases' will have to be referred directly to the Ministry of National Defence."

Cepik, the Communist Minister of Justice in the new Gottwald Government, declared: "The Action Committees are not a second power. It is their task to facilitate the defence of the State by giving a popular base to Government action." The Czech authorities have made a fundamental distinction between the Action Committees set up by the workers and peasants and those appointed by the political parties (Continued on Page 4.)

# PALESTINE TROTSKYISTS

## Swim Against the Stream

We publish here extracts from a statement by our Palestine comrades which appeared in "Kol Hama'mad", Hebrew organ of the Revolutionary League of Palestine. Our comrades are heroically struggling against the tide of chauvinism and hatred, holding aloft the banner of international communism.—Ed.

Politicians and diplomats are still trying to find a formula for the disastrous situation into which Palestine has been plunged by the U.N.O. decision on partition. Is this a "breach of international peace" or are we dealing with merely "hostile acts"? As far as we are concerned, there is no point in this distinction. We are daily witnessing the killing or maiming of men, women, old and young, Jew and Arab. As always, the working masses and the poor suffer most.

Not so very long ago the Arab and Jewish workers were united in strikes against a foreign oppressor. This common struggle has been put to an end. Today the workers are being incited to kill each other. The inciters have succeeded.

### What Do The Jews Stand To Gain By Partition?

The Zionists were overcome with a sense of triumph when offered the bone by the U.N.O. cooks. "Our work, our righteous cause have won . . . before the forum of the nations."

The Zionists have been in the habit of asking "justice" from the enemies of the Jewish people ever since the time of Hertzl: from the Tsar, German Kaiserism, from the British Imperialists, from Wall Street. The dwarf of a state which is too small to absorb the Jewish masses, cannot even solve the problem of its citizens. The Hebrew state can only infect the Arab East with anti-Semitism and may well turn out—as Trotsky said—to be a death-trap for hundreds of thousands of Jews.

The leaders of the Arab league reacted to the decision on partition with speeches full of threats. A Zionist state is to them a godsend from Allah. Calling up the workers and the fellah for the "holy war to save Palestine" is supposed to stifle their cries for bread, land and freedom. Another time-honoured method of diverting an embittered people against the Jewish and Communist danger!

In Palestine the feudal rulers had of late begun to lose ground. During the war the Arab working class has grown in numbers and political consciousness. Jewish and Arab workers stood together against the foreign oppressor. A strong leftist Trade Union had come into existence, and the "Workers' Association of the Arabs of Palestine" had been well on the way to freeing itself from the influence of the Husseinis. The murder of its leader, Sami Tahay, committed by hirelings of the Arab High Committee, could not hold back this development. But where the Husseinis failed, the decision of the imperialist agency, U.N.O. succeeded. The partition decision stifled the class struggles of the Palestinian workers. The prospect of being in the hands of the Zionist "conquerors of soil and labour" aroused fear and anxiety among the Arab workers and fellahs. Nationalist war slogans fall on fertile soil—And Feudal murderers see their chance. Thus, the policy of partition enables the feudalists to turn back the wheels of history. The early crop of partition policy: Jews and Arabs are drowned in a sea of chauvinist

enthusiasm. Triumph on the one hand, rage and exasperation on the other. Communists are being murdered. Pogroms among Jews instigated. A tit for tat of murder and provocation. The "strafing expeditions" of the Hagana are oil for the propaganda machine of the Arab patriots in their campaign to enlist the masses for more bloodshed. The military conflict and the snatching to pieces of the workers' movements are a boon to the chauvinist extremists in both camps.

### What About The Jewish Communist Party?

The patriotic wave makes sitting on the fence very uncomfortable. The Zionist "Socialist" Parties soon "corrected" their anti-imperialist phrases and their stubborn "resistance" against "cutting up the country in pieces" and gave way to full and enthusiastic support to the imperialist partition policy. That was a trifling matter, a question of merely changing Zionist tactics.

Yet the Communist Party of Palestine might have been expected to take a different position. Have they not repeatedly warned against the fatal results bound to come with the establishment of a Jewish state? "Partition must needs be disastrous for Jew and Arab alike . . . partition is an imperialist scheme intended to give the British rule a new lease of life."

(Evidence given by the P.C.P. before the Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry on 25.3.46.)

The Secretary of the Party loyally stuck to this attitude as late as July 1947, when he said before the U.N.O. Commission: "We refuse the partition scheme point blank, as this scheme is detrimental to the interests of the two peoples."

However, after this scheme had been pulled off with the support of the Russian representatives, Kol Ha'am hastened to declare that "democracy and justice have won the day" (!) And overnight there appeared a newly baptised Party of Eretz Israel (Communist Party of the Hebrew Land). Thus, even the last vestige of contact with the Arab population was broken off. The gap that still separated them from Zionism was finally bridged. Instead of being the vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab and Jewish masses, the Palestine Communist Party became the "Communist" tail of the "left" Zionists. This, precisely in the hour when Zionism shows to everyone its counter-revolutionary face, its blatant (Continued on Page 4.)

# DEPORTATION ARRESTS INCREASE IN THE U.S.A.

The witch-hunt in America continues to gather speed. In Washington, hearings are being held by a House Sub-Committee on the latest "anti-red" Cole Bill. This Bill proposes to bar all "un-American" parties from the election ballots and is aimed not only against the Stalinist Party of America, but against any party "which is directly or indirectly by any means whatsoever" connected with "any foreign agency, political party, organisation or government."

Such a broadly worded law could be used, and undoubtedly will be used, to rule off the ballot any Left wing party, or for that matter, any minority party.

Another "red purge" Bill introduced into Congress would compel all ex-servicemen seeking government benefits to give a loyalty oath. Thus, ex-servicemen disabled in war action, who hold even the mildest of left-wing opinions, would be cheated, and denied the meagre pensions to which they are entitled.

In the New York State legislature, Bills were introduced to bar "reds" from government employment and prohibit them from holding office. Another Bill proposes that all organisations listed by the Attorney General as "subversive" be barred from using public buildings or halls. In Massachusetts, similar anti-working class Bills are now before the legislature. One Bill calls for a purge of teachers and public employees, the height of unconstitutionality is reached by yet another Bill which would make it illegal to rent or let any hall or building to any organisation or person who believes in or advocates "overthrow" of the Government.

### "Treason" And "Foreign Agents"

The notorious anti-democratic set-up, the Un-American Committee, now meeting in Washington, continues its venomous attacks upon workers' organisations, including radical and democratic movements. Hearings are on two Bills. One, the McDonough Bill would make communists guilty of treason and provides that they "should be dealt with accordingly." Under U.S. law, treason is punishable by death. The other is the Mundt Bill, which would enforce members of "subversive" organisations to register with the Department of Justice as foreign agents.

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### 68 More To be Deported

The Attorney General Clark, vicious red-baiter, told the Un-American Committee to tighten up existing legislation against "reds." Clark announced that his department was about to launch 68 more deportation arrests. Already large numbers of leading trade union officials and members of the Stalinist party, have been arrested and held for deportation on the most flimsy pretexts.

One of the slickest tricks pulled by the authorities in the present deportation wave was against Charles Doyle, National Vice-President of the C.I.O. United Gas, Coke and Chemical Workers. Born in Scotland, Doyle has lived in the U.S.A. for 23 years. His wife and children are American born. Doyle was leading a strike in Niagara when he visited Canada for 3 days to attend an executive board meeting of the union. At the border he was issued the normal re-entry permit. While he was in Canada, however, his re-entry permit was secretly cancelled and when he attempted to re-enter the U.S.A. he was arrested, jailed and then released on Canadian soil.

Another victim of the deportation frame-ups, John Williamson, Labour Secretary of the Stalinist Party, was arrested by the F.B.I. (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and is held without bail for deportation. The F.B.I. claims that Williamson illegally entered the United States from Scotland (when he was 10 years old) in order to overthrow the Government by force and violence.

### Prelude To General Attack

The aim of these American reactionaries and their Labour-baiting press and organisations is quite clearly to victimise leaders and militants of the workers' trade union and political organisations, as a prelude to a general attack on the standards of life and democratic freedoms of the workers in America. This is underlined by the testimony given before the Un-American Committee by one of the big brass hats in the U.S., retired Admiral W. H. Standley, U.S. Ambassador to Russia in 1942-43. Standley declared: "The demands of Labour for higher pay since the war have been due to the influence of its Communist leaders." But neither Standley nor his ilk mention the fact that while the American capitalists today are reaping record profits from the post-war boom, the American working class, in the face of a rapidly rising cost of living, are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their standard of living. While in Britain, the present red-baiting campaign and purge among Government employees "suspected" of left-wing sympathies, has not reached the fantastic hysteria of the anti-red campaign conducted by the U.S. Government, press and capitalists

organisations, the aim is substantially the same: To hamstring militant workers and their leaders as a prelude to attacks on the conditions and standards of the working class generally.

### All Left Parties Threatened

Today, in Britain, as in America, it is the Stalinist Party that is the present main target of the red-baiting. But if the Labour Government and the capitalists can get away with attacks on the Stalinists, it will be the turn of all left-wing organisations, trade union, cultural and political. In America, despite the wide differences that separate the Trotskyist from the Stalinist Party, on this issue, the idea of a united struggle against reaction and red-baiting is the key-note of our fellow-Trotskyist Party's campaign.

# AJIT ROY ON THE UNITY AGREEMENT WITH THE C.P.



AJIT ROY

"The new Left turn of the Communist Party does not represent a return to Marxism. While denouncing the Governments in India and Pakistan, the Communist Party leaders have no real alternative to place before the masses.

The basic question facing the Socialist movement in India is the question of power. It is not enough to lay down a radical programme, one has to answer the question of how this programme is to be realised. The Bolshevik-Leninists, together with the Marxist elements in the RSP, the RCP, the Forward Bloc, the Bolshevik Party and other groups hold basically to the view that only the socialist revolution, by transferring power from out of the hands of the capitalist landlords to the working class can guarantee real democracy to the masses and lay the foundation of a progressive economy. The Communist Party on the other hand, under the new-fangled name of 'New Democracy' and 'Democratic Front' has resurrected the stinking corpse of the Popular Front as the alternative to the present regime. Thus, whether C.P. propaganda swings to the Right or to the Left, it is incapable of fighting for a clear and consistent socialist policy.

Nevertheless, it would be entirely wrong to draw from the above analysis of the Communist Party the conclusion that it is not permissible for a Marxist Party to enter into an agreement with the Communist Party on an agreed militant programme. A considerable section of the working class and middle class follows and supports the Communist Party in the belief that it represents a revolutionary force. These elements can be drawn to Marxism only to the extent that the Marxists can get close to them in the course of a joint struggle. The Marxists must strive

to prove to all militant elements, whether they are in the ranks of the C.P. or other Left organisations, the superiority of Marxist theory and tactics. Will that task be made easier or more difficult by the entry of the revolutionary elements into the united front with the C.P. and other elements, and by taking the responsibility of counterposing concrete revolutionary proposals to the policies of other parties? In discussing how to put the programme of Left Unity into practice, differences will undoubtedly arise. This unity can work only to the extent that the parties are prepared to conduct an effective struggle against the forces of land-lordism and capitalism in India. This unity can work only to the extent that the rank and file of all the parties are able to compel their leadership to pursue a consistent socialist policy. The "Left Unity Front" formed at Patna can serve the Indian Socialist movement in two ways. On the one hand, it can bring together the divided forces of the Left parties into a common front and thus increase enormously the capacity for resistance of the working class movement to the onslaught of capitalist reaction. On the other hand, by creating the possibilities for discussion and examination of the different policies inside the working class movement, it will help to concretise the real difference between the parties in a manner which the masses can understand. In this way it will help also towards drawing together all Marxist elements, scattered as they are today, in a number of small parties, round a common platform, as a necessary preliminary towards building the mass party of the socialist revolution."

## INDIAN LEFT UNITY

At a Conference held in Patna, January 21-25, representatives of 12 left parties and also of other working class and peasant mass organisations decided to build a United Left Front, and issued a joint statement of programme, subject to subsequent ratification by the respective parties.

This programme includes complete independence, severance from the British Empire, confiscation of all British and foreign interests including banks, insurances, factories, plantations, mines, etc., repeal of all repressive laws, release of all political prisoners, right of free speech, press and association, abolition of the princely order and nationalisation of all key and basic industries and principal national resources without compensation. The statement also declares that the A.I.T.U.C. should be made the only trade union centre, that there should be a single Kisan Sabha and a single Students' Organisation.

On the insistence of the B.L.P.I. (Trotskyist) representative, Comrade Ajit Roy, the right of one party to criticise other parties was safeguarded, save on joint platforms of the front. Although most of the parties were in favour of including the aim of a Workers' and Peasants' Government in the programme of the front, this could not be secured on account of the opposition of the Communist Party. Finally, a compromise formula, "Government standing for the rights of the exploited people" which could be interpreted either as a "Workers' and Peasants' Government" or as a "Democratic Peoples Government", was adopted.

In addition to the B.L.P.I., the other parties represented at the Conference included the Communist Party of India, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India, the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India, the All-India Forward Bloc and the Bolshevik Party. The Socialist Party was conspicuous by its absence.

See Statement by Ajit Roy below.

# Stalinism in Poland : Socialist Minister Forced to Resign

As the Stalinists in Poland establish firm control over the country, they reveal their reactionary features. Without the check of democratic working class control, they follow in the footsteps of the Russian bureaucrats.

### POLAND

According to the Warsaw Correspondent of the "Financial Times" (issue of March 27th), the Socialist head of planning Czeslaw Bobrowski, has been forced to resign after a dispute with the Communist Minister of Industry, Hilary Minc.

The dispute was over the question of the proportion of the national income to be devoted to raising the standard of living as against that to be devoted to investment.

Bobrowski argued that "investments should swallow no more than 20% of the national income and that the rest should be devoted to immediate improvements in the standard of living. . . ." 20% capital investment is far higher than in capitalist countries. This shows the potentialities of state ownership.

Strikes against the speed-up system have taken place in Lodz and elsewhere but were repressed by the regime.

The standard of living of the working class in Poland is extremely low and fell catastrophic-

ally as a result of the war. To consolidate their hold and as a necessary incentive for reconstruction, the Stalinists made promises of improvements. As the "Financial Times" comments: "According to the three-year plan which began in 1947, the Government pledged increases in specific quantities of food, clothing, furniture and other items to be consumed by each Pole. Instead, the 1948 plan omits these figures and generally suggests that there should be more consumers' goods."

"It gives the detailed production figures for industry, however, with concentration on the heavy industries—coal, iron and steel, and electrical." Thus, without consultation with the workers the Stalinists violate their promises. Because Bobrowski shows concern for the conditions of the workers, Stalinist Minc denounced his "un-Marxist, reactionary London economics."

As they successfully totalitarise the countries of Eastern Europe, the Stalinists turn to the methods of capitalist slave-driving. Their last concern becomes the standards and conditions of the workers.