

The October Revolution and after

The information service and the radio service for Western Europe put out summaries of a lecture entitled "The Hungarian people on the road of the great October Socialist Revolution", delivered by Dr. Ferenc Muennich at the Political Academy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. The following version has been compounded from the texts of these summaries:

It will be 40 years on 7th November that the Russian Communist Party, led by the great Lenin, guided to victory the Great Socialist October Revolution. Thus began the real history of human society which the genius of Marx, Engels and Lenin foresaw.

The ideas of October provided the answer to the burning problems of Hungarian society. In the Hungarian society of the beginning of the century innumerable unsolved problems had accumulated as a result of which the economic and political situation of the Hungarian workers was extremely grave. Even graver was the lot of the national minorities. Dependence on Austria aggravated the exploitation and oppression of the workers, and the position was made even more intolerable by the imperialist war of robbery. The great socialist revolution of October and Lenin's doctrines provided the answer to the long unsolved problems of Hungarian society. The Hungarian workers and soldiers wanted to follow the Russian example.

On 31st October 1918, the bourgeois democratic revolution had emerged victorious under the leadership of the working class. The Hungarian proletariat wanted to carry this revolution further. It was therefore a historic necessity of the time that the Communist Party should be formed. On 20th November 1918 the revolutionary vanguard, the Hungarian Communist Party, came into being, rallied to its side the workers and won the sympathy of the poor peasants. It was the work of Hungarian Communists which prepared the working class and the poor peasantry for the struggle as a result of which the Hungarian Republic of Councils was born. The Hungarian proletarian rule proved that the proletarian revolution is not a Russian peculiarity. The socialist order proved its vitality and invincibility.

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Twenty years after the October victory socialism was built up in the Soviet Union. Peaceful socialist construction was, however, soon interrupted by the perfidious attack of fascist Germany. The same quarter century was, for the Hungarian workers, an era of increasing exploitation. The bestial cruelty of the white terror had shown that the exploiting class, once they regain power, know no mercy.

In 1933, of the industrial labour corps about 700,000-strong, 354,000 people, or over 50 per cent, were unemployed. In 1935 there were about 180,000 unemployed workers in Budapest. Those employed in the manufacturing industry received 63.5 per cent of the annual wage of 1928. In the 1930s on an average 90,000 people had no accommodation in Budapest while at the same time an average of 10,000 flats stood vacant owing to high rents. Rents consumed on an average 35-40 per cent of wages. According to the 1930 census, there were 735,076 illiterates among the adult population. Poor peasants made up 35 per cent of the population, yet less than 1.5 per cent of the children of poor peasants were allowed to enter secondary schools and universities. The regime persecuted the Party with reckless hatred, but could not achieve its aim.

### "Serious", but not "Fundamental", Mistakes Committed

It is the historic merit of the Communist Party that throughout the 25 years of Horthy's fascism it nurtured the ideals of the October Revolution and stood firm in favour of solidarity with the Soviet Union. Our sorely tried country owes its independence and freedom to the Soviet army. The October-November counter-revolution in 1956 heaped slanders upon the Soviet Union. In the past we have omitted to analyse the true significance of our liberation; yet before the liberation Hungary was threatened in her national existence. The Soviet Army saved the country from a national catastrophe. The history of the Hungarian people's democracy to date has proved that our people owes its freedom to the fact that the Communist Party stood at the helm in our battles - a Party raised on the ideas of October. Ever greater masses were adopting the objectives of the Hungarian Communist Party. It was a heroic period for the Hungarian people and the Communist Party alike. It was a period about which we can also say that in it the Communists committed no fundamental mistakes.

During this first chapter of the revolutionary transformation the Hungarian Communists enlisted the co-operation of the majority of the working class. They initiated the land reform and with it successfully laid down the foundation of the alliance between workers and working peasants. At the turn of 1947/48 conditions were ripe for the creation of a second Hungarian proletarian dictatorship.

The dictatorship of the proletariat acquired power in hard battles, in a democratic manner, by winning over the majority of the workers. Both the working class and the working peasantry were satisfied with the results of the Three-Year Plan. We launched industrialisation. Although we have meanwhile committed serious faults, it is undeniable that our people's democracy had in 12 years done far more towards our country's industrial development than was done during the 25 years of bourgeois rule under the Horthy regime. By the end of the first Five-Year Plan industrial output was 3.5 times as great as in 1938. Between 1950 and 1955 the tempo of industrial development was eight times as great as between 1929 and 1938.

We also started building socialism in agriculture. The counter-revolution received an eloquent reply to the contention that our producer co-operatives were held together merely by force. On 21st March 1957 the number of producer co-operatives had already risen to 3,410.

As for the development of our cultural life, the truth is that whereas in 1938 only 8,152 works were published in 17,212,000 editions, in 1953 were published 18,787 works in 51,079,000 editions. The number of radio listeners rose from 500,000 in 1938 to 1,100,000.

The revisionists and counter-revolutionaries attacked, perhaps most strongly, the cultural policy of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They implied that in this field, too, we copied the cultural policy of the Soviet Union. One result of this was



that the man in the street in Budapest witnessed the destruction of treasures of world literature in book-pyres reminiscent of Hitlerite times. It is an undoubted fact that our Party has committed faults in the direction of the cultural life, too, but these faults did not lie in the neglect of our progressive traditions; on the contrary, it was we, the Communists, who resuscitated them.

### Faults of Party Leadership Exaggerated

The counter-revolution exaggerated the faults of the Party leadership and tried to make it appear that the causes of these faults lay in the socialist system. From the events of the counter-revolution of October-November 1956 it clearly emerges that the fight was not against the faults but against the system. It is the inalienable merit of our Party that it led our people on to the path of the Great Socialist October Revolution. We made a mistake when we deviated from the path of October, when, with the spread of the personality cult, the role of the Party was relegated to the background.

One of Lenin's most important tenets was the need to combat both Rightist and Leftist erroneous views for the sake of the purity of principles. The leadership of the Hungarian Workers' Party departed from this doctrine of the Great October Revolution. The CPSU, with comradely helpfulness, revealed the faults discernible in the Party's policy; the sectarian leadership grouped around Rakosi and Gerö, however, was unable to combat these faults in a manner befitting the Party.

From the very moment of liberation the imperialists and their allies at home sought to prevent our people from embarking on the road of socialism inspired by the ideals of the Great Socialist October Revolution. The temporary success of the imperialists was due to the fact that, owing to the grave sectarian faults committed by the old Party leadership and later the hesitancy and procrastination in remedying these faults, relations between the Party and the masses deteriorated. The other fundamental reason behind the imperialist success can be traced to the disruptive activity of the Rightist revisionist group within the Party, the group of Imre Nagy.

From the spring of 1956 onwards the imperialists intensified their nationalist and primarily anti-Soviet propaganda. The revisionists, on the other hand, by laying undue emphasis on Hungarian national characteristics, did a good service to the imperialists and gradually went so far as to deny the general idea of proletarian dictatorship.

### "Slandering" of Soviet-Hungarian Relations

In recent years our Party had been accused of mechanically copying every step of the Soviet Union. There was some truth in that: following the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, we had, indeed, in many fields mechanically copied the example of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the revisionists failed to mention that our Party had not availed itself sufficiently of some of the fundamental experiences of the Soviet Union; they forgot, for instance, that Party unity is a fundamental condition for the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The imperialists were angry that we had made any use at all of these positive experiences.

It is our international and also national duty to destroy ideologically the slanders spread by the counter-revolution about Soviet-Hungarian relations, which despite certain shortcomings, were from the start to the advantage of Hungary. After the liberation the USSR's manifold assistance assured our looted country's food supplies and the consolidation of her economic and social system. The Soviet Union sold us raw materials and bought from us mainly industrial goods. The Soviet Union supplied 35-40 per cent of our raw material requirements, but bought about 60 per cent of our machinery exports. The slanderous allegation has often been made that a large proportion of our agricultural products was sent to the Soviet Union, but the Soviet share of these exports amounted to no more than 11 per cent. The prices charged in the exchange of goods have always been adapted to world market prices.



At the request of the Hungarian Government the Government of the Soviet Union in 1952 transferred to us at a very advantageous price German property in Hungary that had passed into Soviet possession under the Potsdam Agreement. In 1954 we were also able to buy up the Soviet share in the Hungarian-Soviet mixed enterprises, and since then the Soviet Government has cancelled the major part of the purchase price.

It was primarily the Soviet long-term credit extended in the form of 875,000,000 roubles' worth of goods and capitalist currency that enabled us to make good the damage caused by the counter-revolution. There were, of course, also shortcomings in economic relations but their significance was dwarfed by the continuous flow of tremendous help. The old Party leadership tolerated without a word the unprecedented, country-wide campaign of lies launched by the counter-revolutionaries in connection with the fate of Hungarian uranium. The fault sprang from the fact that the time which elapsed between the end of the second world war and the development of the socialist camp is, historically speaking, an extremely short time for the perfect functioning of the entirely new type of relations between socialist countries.

#### "Betrayal" of Communists the Reason for Soviet Intervention

Besides slander the revisionist counter-revolutionaries pulling the imperialist band-wagon also exploited the idea of neutrality. Neutrality was merely a temporary tactical slogan. The aim of the imperialists and of reaction at home was gradually to tear Hungary away from the socialist camp through neutrality. Under the cloak of neutrality diplomats in the legations of certain Western countries established close contact with the armed forces. We have not yet known any neutral counter-revolution which failed to oppose sharply the international forces of progress or to ally itself with international reaction.

The events of last October vindicated the tremendous importance of the Warsaw Treaty from the point of view of the entire socialist camp, including our nation. We can safely claim that had the Party leadership been master of the situation, had it organised and led the masses, the Hungarian working class, the Hungarian working people, would have been able with its own strength to defend the power of the proletariat along its sector of the socialist camp. This is borne out, not only by the incredibly quick political and economic consolidation, but also by the fact that during the counter-revolution masses of Communists were clamouring for arms but, owing to shameful betrayal, were the very people to receive none.

Unfortunately, our Party was unable during the first phase of the counter-revolution to turn into (an effective force) the revolutionary forces' fidelity and devotion to socialism. At the decisive moment the revolutionary and democratic forces were left without leadership. Thus it happened that, to rescue the power of the proletariat, it became urgently necessary to avail ourselves of the fraternal assistance of Soviet troops.

#### No Mercy for Opponents of the Regime

Having ended the first chapter of the defeat of the counter-revolution we continue our advance along the road of Socialist construction. Militantly and at the same time patiently we profess the righteousness of our cause and ideals, while unmasking the counter-revolutionary character of the various bourgeois revisionist views. We are prepared to argue with people who disagree with us on one thing or another but are faithful to our People's Republic. At the same time, we stand up mercilessly against those who raise their hands against the workers' power. We defend socialist property and make demands in the field of labour discipline.

It is our national and also internationalist duty to do all we can to draw less and less on the fraternal socialist countries' readiness for sacrifice. We must resist every form of speculation, acquisition of income without work, and wastefulness.

We shall proceed further with the socialist construction of the countryside; without resorting to harmful means of coercion, we shall further develop our producer co-operative movement.



Following the example of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the directives of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, we shall further develop the democratisation of our State, socialist democratisation, and extend the responsibility of the councils.

We shall enhance our vigilance and guard like the apple of our eye the unity, discipline and comradeship in arms of the defensive forces of our State, the army, police, frontier-guards and workers' guards.

#### Relations with Yugoslavia to be Strengthened

On the basis of the principles of peaceful co-existence we shall settle our relations with every country willing to respect those principles. We shall further strengthen our good neighbourly, friendly relations with the Yugoslav People's Republic which is building socialism. We shall knit even closer the ties of friendship with the countries of the socialist camp and, first of all, with the leading force of that camp, the Soviet Union. (Hungarian information service and Budapest in Hungarian for W Europe 25.10.57)