

Hungary and Suez--Hope Amidst Tragedy

The Governments of Israel, Britain, France and Russia, when they resorted to war in October 1956 in pursuit of their own separate objectives, have at the same time struck a decisive blow to achieve something they never sought and are hardly aware of. The tanks and bombers in a few days of destruction have helped to shatter the most hampering illusion of our generation, an illusion that has held back multitudes from taking the first step towards a real understanding of the problems facing the human race.

This illusion was the belief, held with equal fervour by democrats and Communists, and on both sides of the Iron Curtain, that there are "two worlds", essentially different in aims and conduct.

On the one side the democrats and Labourites of the Western world believed that they and their rulers are guided by a superior moral code, are inherently against brutality, are committed to "law not war", and to the United Nations, and are incapable of naked aggression to further their interests.

On the other side were the Communists and their followers, who believed with equal sincerity that Russia, by virtue of being a "Socialist" country, is free from and superior to the sordid imperialism and colonialism of the West, and utterly incapable of opposing the aspirations of ordinary workers.

Now the foundations of both beliefs have been smashed into fragments. Sincere men and women in both camps are horrified and heartbroken to discover in one revealing flash that the men they reviled behave in exactly the same criminal way; that the Edens and the Khrushchevs are blood brothers after all, worshippers of the same capitalist god of violence and war. The sickening dismay of those who trusted Eden, "the friend of the United Nations", is only equalled by that of Communists who see Russian tanks smashing down Hungarian workers. For both groups the one thing that could not happen has happened.

This sudden and dramatic exposure of the sham on both sides of the Iron Curtain provides a splendid opportunity for Socialists, who alone can give a valid explanation to the bewildered adherents of the rival ideologies. Only the Socialist can explain that it is not a failure of men, but the unavoidable results of the workings of the social system. The division of the world into separate capitalist states, each seeking to achieve its own commercial ends amid the international rivalries, compels each government again and again to make a choice between using military force to achieve some gain and enduring some weakening and loss by not using military force; the ideals and temperaments of the men who make up the governments is of minor, indeed negligible importance; they all have to use the same methods or get out.

The Socialist, too, and only the Socialist, can deal with the difficulty of the admirers of Russia. At the core of their admiration is the belief that Russia is "Socialist", and only the Socialist can deny this fraud and explain the truth. State capitalism, the conduct of financial, commercial and trading operations by a government in place of a private company is not Socialism and has no relationship to Socialism. It is not the

manner in which these operations are controlled, but the nature of the operations that constitutes them capitalist. The efforts of a government, Russian, British, Indian, or any other, to control sources of raw materials, protect frontiers and trade routes and capture markets for its exports—these activities are the cause of war no matter how or under what flag they are conducted. The worker in every country in the world should take to heart the elementary truth that wars are not made by wicked foreigners, but at home, in the land he lives in: through the everyday activities, seemingly peaceful and innocent, of those who employ him and make profit out of him, and who seek to sell the products of his labour in world markets against the similar activities of other employers under other governments. This is the factor common to all the countries: the factor that drives governments into war and workers to their death in fratricidal combat with their fellows. But this factor is the capitalist organisation of society, and only Socialists know the remedy, the introduction on a world-wide basis of a different social system Socialism.

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