

Platform for Blind Apologetics

By MAX GORDON

FOR THE PAST few weeks, the Marxist movement in our land has been in sharp conflict over events in Eastern Europe.

I believe it is highly unfortunate that these events abroad should have this divisive effect on our American movement. Developments in socialist lands of necessity have their impact everywhere, and particularly on socialist movements.

But the nature of the impact, the dissensions developed, the claim to almost our entire attention, reveal how far we are from a movement grounded on the American workingclass, one which makes its central concern the struggles of this workingclass and its development toward socialism in America.

Yet our sole reason for existence is as an American workingclass movement. If we permit differences over Soviet actions to isolate, weaken, preoccupy and divide us, there is something profoundly wrong in our orientation.

SOME ARGUE that international workingclass solidarity de-

mands this preoccupation with Soviet policy and action; that it is our own imperialist rulers who organize and inspire anti-Soviet activity. But does international workingclass solidarity mean solidarity between a tiny, isolated Left and the workers of the USSR? Or does it mean solidarity between the workers of America, or at least a meaningful segment, and the people of the USSR?

How much solidarity can the current Marxist movement generate between the American worker and those of the USSR? How much genuine opposition can we actually develop to the undoubted anti-Soviet activity by our ruling circles?

If the Marxist movement here is to help generate any real international workingclass solidarity, does it not have to hurdle the barriers between itself and America's workers?

I RAISE these questions because, in my opinion, there is in some of the current discussion on Hungarian events a resurgence of the blind, uncritical apologetics regarding Soviet actions which has helped to impose such deadly isolation on

our movement.

We learned, with the Khrushchev revelations regarding Stalin how terribly wrong was our uncritical acceptance of every Soviet policy and action. And we learned - or should have learned - how we can become separated from America's workers when we depart from truth to serve apologetics.

While our American Marxist movement must certainly discuss and debate great questions, affecting world socialism, I feel a proper orientation would dictate that this discussion be carried on in a spirit of objectivity and detachment, quite different from the emotional and impassioned way it is going now. If our emotions are so deeply involved, it is because we are still basically Soviet-oriented. I will try to develop my own view in an objective spirit.

THE PARTICULAR ISSUE which has caused the sharpest division in U.S. Marxist ranks is whether or not the Soviet troop intervention of Nov. 3 was justified in Hungary. I believe the verdict of history will probably be that this intervention
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knowing about it until we saw it in some metropolitan newspapers on Monday. At our regular Monday morning editorial staff meeting, we decided to run the story in the following day's paper, and we did.

But during Monday, we received several angry calls from very good people, supporters of our paper, who wanted to know why we had "suppressed" Togliatti's speech. They insisted the Jewish Morning Freiheit had that speech that morning, so why had we not obtained it.

We checked with the Freiheit, and found it had not received the Togliatti address. It had, two days earlier, published an article by Togliatti translated from the Soviet paper, Pravda, of Nov. 7, which had, in turn, culled it from the Italian Communist paper, L'Unita.

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On Nov. 8, the D.W. ran a story, culled from the London Daily Worker by foreign editor Joe Clark, which reported that since last April when the Austrian - Hungarian border was opened to tourist traffic, an estimated 60,000 counter-revolutionaries had entered Hungary. As far as we've been able to discover, no other English-language daily paper published this news item. Yet several people have demanded to know why we've "suppressed" it.

We can cite several similar examples. We raise this problem because in the passions aroused by the situation and debate, there is danger that some people may lose perspective. The result of this may well be the loss of this newspaper, which must depend on its readers for wholehearted support.

Should this happen—and we're close to that danger now it will be too late to regret. Those most critical of our viewpoint, as well as all others on the Left,—will find no place where they can present their own positions, and there will be no forum for debating out this, and other, major issues facing us.

We ask all readers, all supporters, to close ranks now—tomorrow will be too late—in support of our paper.