

French, Russian Authors Exchange Opposing Views on Hungary Events

(A statement critical of the role of Soviet troops in Hungary was published early in November in the periodical "France Observateur." The statement was signed by Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Roger Vailland, and other prominent French intellectuals. On Nov. 22, a group of Soviet writers replied with an open letter in the newspaper "Literaturnaya Gazeta." The Soviet letter follows the French. —Ed.)

"THE undersigned, who have never expressed sentiments unfriendly to the USSR or socialism, believe they have the right today to protest to the Soviet Government against the employment of guns and tanks to crush the revolt of the Hungarian people and their will for independence, even though reactionary elements joined in the revolt and used the radio of the insurgents for their appeal.

"We consider, and always shall consider, that socialism, like liberty, cannot be brought on the point of the bayonet, and we fear that a government imposed by force may itself be obliged soon, in order to maintain itself in power, to employ coercion, with its consequent injustices, against its own people.

"In particular, while we are certain that nothing at present is being premediated against the liberty of Hungarian writers, we cannot be free of all concern for them as regards the future, and we raise our voice in advance against any persecution to which they may be subjected.

"Having said this, we raise our voice no less forcefully

against the hypocrites who today profess to be indignant at what they accepted yesterday without a murmur. We deny the right to protest against the Soviet intervention in Hungary to those who were silent, or even applauded, when the United States stifled in blood the liberty won in Guatemala.

"We deny this right to all who dare speak of a 'Prague coup' at a time when they loudly applaud the 'Suez coup.' We deny this right to a minister who, at the moment when his paratroops have invaded Egyptian soil, dares cary cynicism so far as to talk of the liberty of nations and to stigmatize with pathos those who raise their hand against it.

"The first thing we demand of the Soviet government, as of the French government, is the truth. Wherever it triumphs, crime is impossible, wherever it succumbs, there can be no justice, nor peace, nor liberty."

"The reference is to the reactionary attempt in Czechoslovakia, in February 1948, to seize power and reestablish the pre-Munich bourgeois republic. It was resolutely foiled by the people. —Ed.

presented their demands to their leaders, this was received with sympathy in our country. On Oct. 30, the Soviet government published its Declaration on the principles for further strengthening friendship and cooperation between the USSR and other socialist countries. The Soviet forces stationed in Hungary by virtue of the Warsaw Treaty were withdrawn from Budapest the moment this was requested by the Imre Nagy government, which before that had itself insisted that the Soviet forces come to its assistance.

You will remember what happened after that. Counter-revolution decided that its hour had come.

But, apparently, you are not yet familiar with all the facts, though some of them probably have come to your knowledge. Yet you decided to protest, "even though reactionary elements joined in the revolt and used the radio of the insurgents for their appeals." ?

If they had only "joined in!"
If they had only "used the radio for their appeals!"

MUST weeks and months pass before you see the whole truth about the fascist White Terror which raged in Hungary, before you correlate all the facts and their consequences?

Why it is now no secret to anyone that hundreds of army officers, former Horthyites who had served in Hitler's forces, were sent from the West to Budapest in airplanes bearing the insignia of the German Federal Republic and Great Britain.

We might remind you of the American - operated "Salzburg Center," from which spies and saboteurs, balloons carrying leaflets, mobile transmitters and so on had been sent into Hungary in advance.

Recall the open appeals for revolt in Hungary which many West-European and American broadcasting stations had been transmitting daily and hourly long before the events.

You are no doubt aware that even West German newspapers have accused the "Free Europe



JEAN PAUL SARTRE

(Signed) Jean-Paul Sartre, Verchel Leiri, Jacques-Francis Rorcors, Claude Roy, Roger Vailland, Simon de Beauvoir, Miland, Louis de Villefosse, Janine Bouissounouse, Jacques Prevert,

Colette Audry, Jean Aurénche, Pierre Bost, Jean Cau, Claude Lanzmann, Marcel Peju, Promides, Jean Rebeyrolle, Andre Spire, Laurent Schwartz, Claude Morgan.

broadcasting station in particular of inciting to revolt in Hungary and promising outside assistance.

Have you ever heard similar appeals to Western countries coming from broadcasting stations in socialist lands? And what would you have said if you had heard such appeals? What conclusions would you have drawn?

Some of the signatories to the present letter know what White Terror means, have seen it themselves.

During the civil war in the Ukraine, when we entered towns and villages, we saw the corpses of young people, women and old folk who had been tortured to death by the Whiteguard butchers: among them were not only Komsomols and Communists, but ordinary Soviet office employes and workers in nationalized factories. All this took place in the Ukraine in 1919, the very year in which the Hungarian counter-revolution drowned the Hungarian Republic in blood.

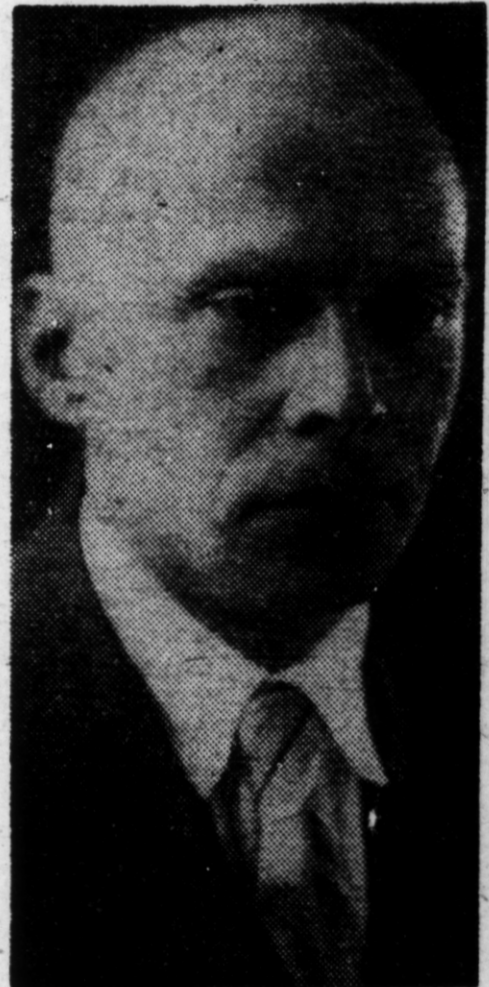
Some of the signatories to this letter fought in World War II. They have not forgotten the Voronezh front and know what Horthy's officers—Hitler's Hungarian allies—are capable of: they were in no way inferior to the Gestapo in cold-blooded ferocity.

You know that reaction and counter-revolution never stop half-way. We can find historical examples of this whatever country we turn to, whether it be Hungary, Russia or France. . . .

IN WHAT way do the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries and the Nazis differ? Only in one thing: the Nazis seized power in France; the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries failed to seize power in Hungary.

It seems to us that in these difficult days you have given credence to the calumnies, lies and hostile information showered upon the friends of our country in France. And precisely at the time when you published your statement against us and appealed for the "triumph of truth," Soviet soldiers were sacrificing their lives and saving tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives from the fascist terror.

If they had not done so, we are certain that within a little while you would have been com-



V. SMIRNOV

posing a statement of another kind — a protest against the frenzied and bloody orgy of counter-revolution in Hungary.

It has long been known that fascists are not disposed to employ methods of persuasion. They begin with speeches in the Reichstag, and end with ovens in Oswiecim. As to the Hungarian fascists, they began right away with erecting gallows in the streets of Budapest and putting St. Bartholomew crosses on the house doors of Communists. They began with the slaying of thousands in order to pass to the slaying of tens of thousands.

They did not ignore any of the attributes of fascism, from book bonfires to Jewish pogroms. Is it accidental, do you think, that in Budapest the fascists destroyed the monument to Dimitrov, whose name we associate primarily, with the historic Leipzig trial, with the fearless rebuff that this courageous and then defenseless man gave to fascism which had come to power in Germany? You can tell fascists by their "handwriting," and when they burned down the National

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MIKHAIL SHOLOKOV

"YES, what has happened in Hungary is distressing and tragic. But you see only one side of the matter. You speak only of the part played by Soviet troops in these events, although this has blinded you to other events now taking place in the world. You want to see the truth, and you therefore dissociate yourself from the political speculators who now protest against the part played by the Soviet troops in the Hungarian events, but who "were silent, or even applauded, when the United States stifled in blood the liberty won by Guatemala." And you deny the right to protest to those who "loudly applaud the 'Suez coup.'"

We repeat, we regard these words as proof that you want to see the truth.

But reverting to the Hungarian events and your attitude to them, we must say: "You are mistaken! You do not see the whole truth.

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THE Hungarian people were dissatisfied with the situation in their country. They were dissatisfied with that even after the 20th Congress decisions, which were approved by all Communist and Workers' parties, including the Hungarian, the Hungarian leaders displayed no desire to put an end once and for all to the intolerable violations of social democracy and socialist legality, and to pay greater heed to the needs of the working people. . . . When the Hungarian people

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Museum in Budapest and fired upon people who tried to extinguish the flames, one can easily see where the Hungarian disciples of Hitler and lieutenants of Horthy got their schooling in fascist "calligraphy."

It was in these circumstances that our government, on the appeal of the Hungarian Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' government, decided to lend military aid to Hungary in combating counter-revolution. . . .

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WE SHOULD like to know: what price for the mistakes formerly committed in Hungary, including those which were connected with our own past mistakes — we who once before barred the road to fascism, when it had already conquered all Europe, are not afraid to say this — what price, we ask, would you consider right to pay for these mistakes?

The price of non-intervention when counter-revolutionary terror was raging? The price of the blood of Hungarian workers, all the blood the fascists had shed and would have shed if Soviet tanks had not barred their way?

Is there no other way of correcting mistakes than allowing a free hand to the fascist counter-revolutionary elements who were seeking to put an end to the people's democratic system and to create a breeding ground of war in Hungary?

We ask you to recall the events in Spain in 1936. At that time you shared the opinion held by all honest-minded men and women that there must not be "non-intervention" when fascists are rehearsing for a world war, when people are slain, hanged, buried alive for the sake of triumph of fascism.

Just think: was not that which

DEBATE

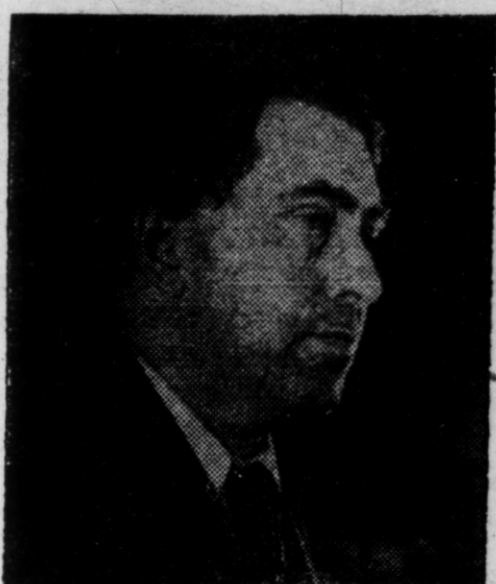
in an equal regard for our Party.

This National Committee meeting, attempting to assess the views and conclusions of the membership, feels that a fundamental basis for unity of the Party and the work of the Convention lies in the general agreement with the main propositions in the first three sections of the Resolution. These sections project a policy on such vital questions as an estimate of the present situation in which we now live and work, the path of struggle toward a labor and people's anti-monopoly coalition, and our views regarding an American Road to Socialism. We feel these will undoubtedly be further strengthened by amendments, bringing the Resolution up to date.

We note the largest amount of discussion and controversy has revolved around Section Four dealing most directly with our Party. In order to bring the debate more into focus and to fix attention on a number of issues that have proved most controversial, this National Committee meeting has adopted and now presents for discussion three further additions to the Resolution. We feel these help to make clear also the views of the National Committee upon these important matters. (Party Name and Form, Democratic Centralism, and the Vanguard Role of the Party.)

The National Committee is also making public the Agenda of the Convention.

We urge that these closing weeks of debate be conducted with a view to bringing the discussion to a successful conclusion, in a spirit of free debate, free also of acrimony, based upon the basic unity of purpose that binds us together and the fraternity of our Party.



ILYA EHRENBURG

happened in Hungary the result of long preparation made by reaction outside that country? When fascists torture men and women in Hungary and reactionaries in France attempt to wreck the offices of L'Humanite—is this not like two links in one and the same chain?

Many of us have met you personally, Vercors, Roger Vailland, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Claude Morgan—in Paris, Moscow and other cities of the world.

Many of you displayed courage in difficult times, resisted fascism arms in hand. In those days you saw the truth. Look it in the face now!

If fascism, if reaction should endeavor to take revenge—and the attempt of the Horthyites to exploit the events in Hungary for their own ends is a dangerous symptom—we believe that in that event you will be fighting in the end in the same camp as ourselves. And, meanwhile, we want to tell you this:

We do not want that evil year, 1933, when fascism came to power, to occur again. Neither in Hungary, nor anywhere else!

We want you to know this and to think it over.

M. Sholokhov, K. Fedin, M. Bazhan, L. Leonov, V. Ivanov, V. Katayev, V. Azhayev, V. Ovechkin, S. Sergeev-Tsensky, O. Forsh, P. Brookka, F. Gladkov, A. Surkov, V. Panova, A. Tvardovsky, N. Tikhonov, K. Simonov, V. Inber, N. Pogodin, G. Markov, E. Dolmatovskiy, N. Nikulin, S. Mikhalkov, A. Chakovskiy, A. Prokofiev, A. Korneichuk, M. Isakovskiy, S. Marshak, V. Smirnov, V. Kochetov.

Editor's Note—The above letter appeared in Literaturnaya Gazeta on Nov. 22. On Nov. 24, the following Soviet writers wrote to the paper requesting to have their signatures added:

M. Shaginyan, P. Antokolsky, I. Ehrenburg, V. Yermilov, M. V. Kozhevnikov, V. Lugovskoy, Rylsky, M. Aliger, N. Atarov, G. Gulia, A. Ventslova, G. Nikvayeva, M. Khrapchenko, A. Olayeva, N. Chukovskiy, A. Karabek, S. Antonov, L. Martynov, G. Fish, Y. Libedinsky, S. Shchepachov, V. Sayanov, P. Zam-oisky, B. Polevoy, A. Shtein, D. Yeryomin, B. Agapov, S. Kir-sanov, A. Dementyev, O. Berg-holtz.

