

came at 10 p.m. and begged them to leave for the sake of their health. But they stayed till they got the promise of an interview next morning. At the interview they got nothing from Sir Arthur except—when it was over—a Parliamentary lunch at his expense. But this kind of activity carried on in this spirit year after year did force some concessions. The pensioners became a fighting force and Marj's name became a legend even during her lifetime.

Marj's funeral early in 1963 was one of the largest in Melbourne for many years. A dense crowd blocked the footpaths on both sides of Sydney Road, Brunswick (her home suburb), as the cars drove off from the funeral parlor. Pensioners attended in their hundreds. Union officials, councillors, churchmen, peace movement leaders and others came to pay tribute to a real hero of the people.

THE 20th CONGRESS AND HUNGARY

In February, 1956, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held its 20th Congress, and at a closed session of this Congress Khrushchev delivered his trenchant exposure of the cult of Stalin and of the misdeeds and excesses of the Stalin regime. There followed the painful and difficult months in which we were trying, in the absence at first of much news from the Soviet Union, to get a correct and balanced picture of all that had taken place. Then in October, 1956, came the events in Hungary—a further shock to us because we had never fully realised the big problems of growth facing Socialist countries, particularly when they had imperialist countries alongside them.

What were the elements of the Hungarian crisis?

(1) Serious errors by the government, including needless repressions, in carrying out its colossal job of building socialism in Hungary (a country only recently emerged from 25 years of fascist yoke).

(2) Wide discontent among the people who, however, certainly did not want to overthrow the new social system which had socialised industry and brought land to the peasants. There is little doubt that the crisis

would have been solved peacefully as in Poland had it not been for

(3) the agents, money, arms, and underground radio propaganda of the USA which in five years had devoted over 500 million dollars under its Mutual Security Act to organising subversion in Socialist countries (apart from probably greater sums spent by the Central Intelligence Agency). It was undoubtedly the USA that was responsible for the armed uprising as distinct from the big protest demonstrations.

(4) The quick rise to the top in this situation of the old Hungarian ruling classes and their agents—the great ex-landlord Esterhazy, the German-born Cardinal Mindszenty who led the reactionary forces within the Church, and the Hitler-decorated ex-fascist army officer Maleter who was raised to the post of Minister for Defence. These men in power would have rebuilt Hungarian fascism and created a veritable powder keg in the heart of Europe.

(5) The presence of Soviet troops in Hungary by the mutually-signed Warsaw Pact, which was the Eastern countries' answer to the re-armament of Germany. These troops acted to foil the armed uprising and to create the conditions in which the Kadar Government was able to take over.

The Kadar Government is undoubtedly the most popular government that Hungary has had. Its ability to overcome the aftermath of 1956, to ensure an economic recovery, wider liberties and the absence of further disturbance, has been little short of a miracle.

The 1956 events had, of course, big repercussions in Australia. The daily press was working full blast to misrepresent the picture, and the events in themselves required much patient explanatory work even among members and sympathisers of the Party. We were greatly aided in this work by the general world popularity of the home and foreign policies of the Soviet Union as they developed in the Khrushchev period and also by the favourable course of later events in Hungary. But we faced heavy going for a time.

About 100 members withdrew from the Commun-

ist Party in Victoria. They were mainly middle-class people, largely intellectuals. I write of them here with feelings of respect and friendship, because in their majority they have remained progressive and have not sought to undermine or disrupt the Party. They have, in fact, much common ground with the Party on many questions. Their differences with the Communist Party centred, I would say, partly on questions relating to socialist democracy, and partly on the theory and practice of democratic centralism within the Party.

PATH TO HUMAN FREEDOM

In 1957 I wrote a pamphlet "Socialism—The Path to Human Freedom" under the stress of the arguments within the Party at that time.

In that pamphlet I defended the Marxist view that the majority of the people, on taking power to build socialism, must defend themselves against any attempt by the dispossessed classes to overthrow the new regime by force. This meant dictatorship against a small minority for a time. But for the mass of the people, I pointed out, the new order provided a real and living democracy impossible in our society, which was under the open or veiled rule of the wealthy monopolists.

I spoke of the way in which a peaceful transition to socialism might become possible—not by a peaceful merging of capitalism and socialism but by the strength of the working class paralysing capitalist resistance. "Today we are hopeful that the wealthy class may be unable to wage violent resistance in many countries—such has been the sharp tipping of the world scales in favor of socialism and the common people. We want a peaceful change, we work for it, and we believe that in many countries it may prove possible, including, we hope, this country. But this depends on how strongly we can develop the revolutionary movement of the people, how successfully we can guard and strengthen democratic liberties, and how far we can weaken and cripple the power of monopoly capital so that it will refrain from the violence it would like to use."

I defended also in this pamphlet the need for a strong Communist Party. "The people," I wrote, "can-

not achieve the biggest social change in all history without the leadership of a united Party, trained in the knowledge of where to go and how to get there.

"Some people drew the wrong conclusions from the 1956 revelations about the events of the later years of the life of Stalin. They felt we should guard against such events by having a less closely-knit Party, with less power of direction in its own ranks and less power of leadership of the people. What the events really showed was the need for a more thoroughly collective leadership—that is, for a Party more closely knit in the right way, and for a more thorough understanding of the needs and wishes of the people which would make the Party more decisive in its public influence."

REFLECTIONS ON 1956

Since 1956 the world has seen new forms of State, new parties and new coalitions of the working class and progressive forces. New possible paths of approach to the winning of socialism have been discussed and pursued. But in their essence the above extracts are still correct. They are the logic of the class struggle, carried to the point of the taking and exercising of power by the workers.

It would be for those who diverged from the path of the Communist Party—who are far from a uniform body of people—to say how far and in what respects each one of them differed from the Party on these crucial political questions. But they did differ, for the most part very substantially. They were not influenced only by the fact that certain wrong paths had been followed by socialist States in the Soviet Union and Hungary. Some of them, influenced by the prolonged post-war economic boom, had lost sight of the deep contradictions within the capitalist system that doom it to final defeat, and some of the less deeply convinced had been a good deal affected by the long cold war propaganda.

For our own part we must frankly admit that the withdrawals of 1956 pointed to faults in the Party's leadership in intellectual circles. In my own case I know that in these circles I have often displayed too

much rigidity and shown too little regard for the independent thinking, the careers and reputations of university people. Intellectuals have an important part to play in the communist movement, a part that increases with the technological developments of capitalist society. Their specialised knowledge and training in research, study and the thinking out of problems can be of great importance, and a fully-developed working class movement, while firmly maintaining its class stand and socialist objective, will find an abundance of free scope for large numbers of intellectually-trained people in the great work of transforming society.

OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS

Despite all I have said, the year 1956 was in some respects a red letter year for internationalism in Victoria. This was due to the holding of the Olympic Games in Melbourne towards the end of the year. It was the irony of history that the largest group of Soviet citizens ever to come to Australia came during the very weeks when anti-Soviet political propaganda had reached a new high peak. It was also a tremendous tribute to the depth of the traditional Australian sentiment of democracy and fair play that the Soviet Olympic teams were received almost as heartily as if none of the propaganda had been taking place. The star Soviet champion, Vladimir Kuts, got big ovations. Moscow radio said after the Games: "No Olympic review would be complete without mention of the friendly and truly sporting atmosphere at the Games. Much credit in this respect is due to the Australians who have done so much to make the Games a festival of unity of sportsmen of all five continents."

For the first time in history the Soviet Olympic team emerged as winner in the gold medal race and as decisive winner on the unofficial points table. Other socialist countries all ranked high on the list. Australia's position as fifth in the gold medal race after the Soviet Union, USA, Germany and Italy, was exceedingly creditable.

It was hard for highly-trained sportsmen with the eyes of the world on their performances to be at the

same time universally available ambassadors for meetings and social functions, but the Soviet team in particular made a fine effort to combine the two functions, and their presence in Melbourne at the time of the Hungarian crisis was of inestimable value. One incident—the disappearance of a Soviet stewardess on a visit to Royal Park Zoo—and some provocations by local Hungarian reactionaries, did little to mar the happy event. When the 15,000-ton Soviet liner Gruzia first berthed at Victoria Dock with the athletes from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, these athletes received the heartiest of welcomes, songs being sung from the wharf and the ship in many languages well into the night.

EMIL ZATOPEK

Melbourne had the honor to be host city to the world-renowned Czech athlete Emil Zatopek, breaker of many Olympic records, the friendliest of men and one always ready to encourage and help his fellow athletes (he set our own "Flying Milko" Dave Stephens on his road to success as long distance champion by teaching him his training methods when they met overseas in 1953, to take one example). It was in one way sad to see the great runner past his prime and he was certainly far from the front in the Marathon as it sped along the Princes Highway. But as an ambassador of peace and friendship he was greater than ever. He and his wife were entertained as chief guests of honor at a reception organised by the Peace Council and attended by 500 people. To this reception came also Vladimir Kuts and three other Soviet athletes, members from the Italian and Rumanian teams and two American athletes, one of whom said: "I don't know if there are any politicians in the house, but they can certainly take a lesson from what has gone on here." Australian Marathon runner Les Perry attended the reception and in a moving speech returned to Zatopek the red singlet and white shorts he wore when winning three gold medals at the Helsinki Games in 1952. At Helsinki, Zatopek had given his uniform to Perry as a memento for his club, Williamstown; but Perry on behalf of the Wil-