

# What is Happening in Hungary?

by *Josef Pogany.*

The Hungarian counter-revolution has fallen into a decisive crisis because its ruling classes which until now fought upon common ground are now driven to war against one another by the Trianon Peace Treaty.

This inner struggle reached the stage of open civil war at the time of the Karlist putsch. At first glance it seemed that with the disarming of the royalist Ostenburg troops and the extradition of Karl Habsburg, the counter-revolution was personified and found strength in the figure of Horthy. But the truth of the matter is that for the second time the inner conflicts between the counter-revolutionary classes resulted in open civil war. Budapest became one large barracks. Various points of the city are occupied by gendarmes, police-guards and military formations. Horthy troops are disarming the Hejjas troops just returning from Western Hungary in nightly raids. An armed insurrection is planned for the liberation of the royalist leaders Rakovszky and Andrassy. At night the streets resound with progroms against Jews and with the tumult of the "Awakening Magyars". And at the bottom of all this are the disarmed royalist Ostenburg troops which the royalists are supposedly able and willing to turn against Horthy.

This time the Hungarian counter-revolution is actually in a decisively critical situation. No matter what the outcome of the crisis may be, and no matter whether Horthy remains or not, one thing is certain, that this crisis will lead to absolutely new political formations and that it will smoothen the road of the class-struggle of the Hungarian proletariat.

The Karl coup and the armed civil war which followed it brought the inner conflict among the various counter-revolutionary classes to a head. "Az Ujsag", the organ of the liberal bourgeoisie which has now lost power, makes the following frank statement: "The King question is 'settled' and will no more disappear from the order of the day. Like Banquo's ghost it will appear at every meal."

This organ of the bourgeoisie is right. It was in vain that the national assembly disposed of the Throne question by means of law, the Little Entente by means of mobilization and the Allies by means of diplomacy. This question cannot be stricken from the order of the day in Hungary. The question of the Crown is nothing more than an ideological weapon in the hands of the counter-revolutionary parties. Karl Habsburg is driven out of the country and the royalist party is beaten. But the powerful classes of the royalist party, the large land owning magnates and the bourgeoisie are still alive. These royalist classes are now fighting not for Habsburg but against Horthy. Until now the Throne problem was presented in a positive form: "Power to the Habsburgs, for with them, the large land owners and the higher bourgeoisie acquire power!" At present this problem is presented negatively: "Down with Horthy because he bases his power more and more upon the fat peasantry of the 'Small Farmers' party" and upon the subaltern dictatorship of the officer corps."

The organ of the nobility, "Magyarsag" speaks of the rich peasant as of "The Small Farmers' Party which is rising with the mud of the gutter."

Where did the beautiful honeymoon weeks of the counter-revolution go to; where are those pleasant times in which the barons and the bishops vied with each other in the songs of praise which they sang to the "healthy mind" of the peasant, the "anti-communistic Hungarian peasant"! At the same time the organ of Horthy's officer detachments, "Szozat", is bewailing the fact that the clergy is carrying on a passionate royalist propaganda in the churches. The Horthy party arranges a burial celebration in honor of the "heroes" who fell in the civil war. And in a heartrending tone of melancholy the press of the royalist party asks where the fallen heroes of Ostenburg will find their graves of honor?

The "Szozat" is quite right in asking the following surprising question: "Will the civil war go on?" The civil war of the counter-revolutionary classes in Hungary is going on. Yesterday the Hejjas troops seized Ostenburg, to-day the troops of General von Soos are attacking the Hejjas troops, and tomorrow or the day after tomorrow the troops of Lukasich and Ostenburg may attack Horthy's Ofener Burg.

The Hungarian civil war is again raging and is even beginning to spread. In its first phase it meant solely the inner struggle of the ruling counter-revolutionary classes. To-day however, when the counter-revolutionary classes are weakening each other in the struggle, those social classes which could not participate in the government of the counter-revolution or which are groaning under the counter-revolutionary suppression, are beginning to be heard.

Once more the "National Octobrists" suddenly appear in the political arena. They constitute the Gentry wing of the Karolyi revolution and although they displayed a counter-revolutionary attitude even in the first stages of the Karolyi revolution, they were doomed to silence by the Christian-National counter-revolution. The parliamentary opposition group which until now was considered a small group of insignificant noise-makers, suddenly becomes a political factor. The "citizens' and workers' coalition" is quite openly striving for power.

Horthy and his camarilla are beginning to feel the frightful crisis which threatens their power and is spreading in all directions. He is making every attempt to base his power upon a broader social foundation. On the one hand he is negotiating the forming of a "bourgeois government", which is to unite the various divisions of the bourgeoisie. First of all he seeks to establish friendly relations with the liberal bourgeoisie which is not on the best of terms with Parliament and which was forced out of power. It is thereby intended to revive the former labor party, the followers of Tisza. Horthy also attempts to bring certain elements of the *comitatji gentry*, a part of the large landowning class and of the bank-owning bourgeoisie into the government. On the other hand he is also courting the "democratic" elements. He is striving to transform the hitherto concealed support given to his government by the Social-Democratic Party into open and official support. It is seriously being considered that the Vanczak-Payer bureaucratic trade-union group should officially take over the government together with the Hejjas group.

The broadening of the social basis of the government is a life and death question for Horthy. Because the Karl coup was

repressed the large landowning magnates and the industrial bourgeoisie were against him. But the counter-revolutionary intellectuals and a large part of the city petty-bourgeoisie, which until now acted as his main support and shouted most loudly for the counter-revolution, have now also turned against him. Horthy lost not only the support of certain definite classes, but also the entire counter-revolutionary ideology which until now constituted a considerable prop of his rule. One of these props was the idea of the dynasty, of legitimacy. In the battle of Budaörs Horthy himself defeated the idea of legitimacy. The second ideological pillar of his rule was the idea of territorial integrity. The ultimatum of the Little Entente, the yielding of Horthy and the National Assembly proved to the fanatics of territorial integrity, as well as to the counter-revolutionary intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie, that the fantastic picture of a Greater Hungary under the rule of Horthy would always remain an empty dream. A third pillar of the Horthy regime was the idea of a national army. The national army must now be disarmed. A fourth one was anti-semitism. But under the pressure of the international and Hungarian Jewish banking capitalists Horthy is compelled to flirt with the Jews and to arrest the pogrom heroes. A fifth factor in the ideological structure of Horthy's regime was the traditional Polish-Hungarian friendship. The Czecho-Polish agreement destroyed this illusion as well. Poland recognized its disinterestedness and neutrality in Slovakia and thus delivered a fatal blow to the chauvinistic dreams of a Greater Hungary. The sixth counter-revolutionary ideological factor was the freedom and independence of Hungary. This illusion collapsed in extreme humiliation. Horthy and his government were not only compelled legally to recognize the loss of the throne by the Habsburgs, but by making Hungary the vassal of the Entente, Horthy put the free choice of a king in a form which obligates Hungary to count with the opinion of the Allies in its choice; this means that the Hungarian throne can be occupied only with the express approval of the Allies.

There is no system of government which can survive civil war going on among its classes, and opposition by its most powerful factors and by the entire intellectual class which, outside of armed force, constitutes its main defense against the masses, and justifies it and makes it holy and inviolable in the eyes of the large peasant and petty-bourgeois classes.

In hopeless despair Horthy is now looking for new supports for his regime. He is attempting to draw into his service not only new social groups and classes but new ideologies as well. It thus happens that he is approaching the liberalism of the former Tisza Party as well as of the Social Democratic Party. He also wishes to draw Jewish banking capital and the Social Democracy into his service and to make them the future supports of his regime.

The Horthy press is beginning to prate about Democracy, Liberalism and spiritual toleration. In his attempt to broaden the basis of his regime, Horthy goes so far that he lands upon foreign and unreal ground. In his pursuit of the favor of the Jewish bankers and the Social-Democratic trade-union leaders, he stakes the only actual basis of his rule by consenting to the partial or complete disarming of the Hejjas troops.

Of course not only Horthy but also the royalist opposition of the large landowners is attempting to reinforce its positions by attracting new masses. The Karlists long ago allied themselves with the Jewish petty-bourgeoisie led by Vaszonvi. And to-day when the class conflict is becoming more and more intense, they are ready to ally themselves with the devil himself. Apponyi declares that "all of us, legitimists and anti-legitimists must stand together". Karl Huszar, the leader of the Christian petty-bourgeoisie wing of the royalists is already negotiating with the Social Democratic trade-union bureaucrats, and Wilhelm Vaszonvi, the leader of the Jewish petty-bourgeois wing of the royalists went as far as to call the workers "his proletarian brothers" . . . In other words there is a continual race for the favor of the working-class. The Christian Party puts forward far-reaching social and political demands. "Szozat", Horthy's organ prints an article under the caption: "The government is approaching a solution to the labor question".

And how does the proletariat fare under these circumstances?

The proletariat is living under complete oppression. Its only organizations adapted to the class-struggle, the trade-unions, are in the hands of a traitorous trade-union bureaucracy, which sells the organized working-class in the open market and with a most disgraceful shamelessness. Its organ "Nepszava", writes quite openly that in the struggle between the Karlists and Horthy, it will side with those who promise it the most.

The organized working-class, the proletariat, can today become an actual and mighty power in Hungary. The number of organized workers reaches 300,000. Under revolutionary Communist leadership this mass would in the midst of the counter-revolutionary chaos become a overwhelming force. But this great, organized mass is to-day led by Social-Democratic traitors, who like street walkers are willing to sell themselves to any one. They are ready to support Horthy if he revives the "historical tradition" of handing out portfolios to the trade-union bureaucrats; they are also ready to aid the royalists to power if they only take the first step and give the Payer-Peidl-Vanczak clique parliamentary seats and ministerial portfolios.

The Communists know that the time is not yet ripe for the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary, but they also know, that the time has come for serious proletarian fights. At this time definite measures for reinforcing the working-class can be undertaken. Now we can and must fight for and win amnesty for the political prisoners, general liberty, freedom of the labor press, unemployment benefit and a 100% wage increase.