

# Ludwig Haas is Free

LUDWIG HASS, one of the five ex-communist Poles imprisoned after two separate trials during the last year for opposition by organisation and document to the Polish State and Communist Party, has been freed during the last week. This is partly due to the fear of embarrassment to the Government if he died in jail, since it is thought that he is in poor health. It is also partly due to the demonstrations in England and in America which singled out Haas as the main figure.

Haas is an old Trotskyist who in pre-war Poland associated with a group round Isaac Deutscher. Haas subsequently spent 18 years in Siberia at the concentration camp of Vorkuta, being released in 1957. (See *Solidarity*, Vol. 4, No. 3.)

Why should this interest take up space in an anarchist journal? Why indeed should it call for demonstrations by 'The United Libertarian and Socialist Defence Committee'? I must confess that libertarians, myself among them, were prevailed upon (more by an uneasy conscience than by knowledge) to demonstrate and sit-in at the Polish Embassy. On the one hand could we not say that this was an example of Communists falling out among themselves. 'More power to their elbow!', this is what some of the right-wing Polish emigres have said. Should we rather declare a liberal concern for all prisoners of conscience, for the five in Poland, for Sinyavsky and Daniel starving to death in Russia for lack of food parcels, the current crop in Yugoslavia, the prisoners in Mexico, jailed anarchists in Cuba, Stuart Christie in Spain, the possibility of someone here for the hoax on Heath, and many others in jail East, West and the third world war? Our involvement as libertarians must be neither the 'more blood' attitude of the right nor the quakerly 'concern' of the liberal.

Our reason is that we, with our revolt against this society, its bomb and its philosophers, are part of the same doubting and challenging as those imprisoned in Poland. As East and West draw ever closer together and become much the same society, we must support those who are the real revolutionaries as part of our witness.

Ludwig Haas is not the typical figure of these men. He is still hung up on the Trotskyism that kept him intellectually alive in the camps and is rather the intellectual mentor than idealogue. The two younger men, Kuron and Modzelewski, who wrote the group's important document 'Open Letter to the Party' came to their political consciousness in the years since 1956, during the period of the return of confidence, and therefore repression, of the Stalinoid apparatus, which coincided with Gomulka's old age. The year 1956 however was a point at which 'A threshold has been reached past which everything is easy'. The young Poles (sure they were careful) in some of their actions transcended that state of mind which feared the terrible accounting for every small thought and action, that was present in Poland from 1939 to 1953. These Poles no longer feared the knock in the night, no longer did the spectre of terrible consequences haunt their speech and action.

They have taken literally the themes implicit in communism, which have been dreamed and talked of but not acted on in Poland. Those themes have been discussed since the watershed of '56 and generally call for a greater humanitarianism, specifically workers' control in industry, freedom of speech and publication, and a release from the 'New Class' of bureaucrats and managers. Is this not us then in a Polish situation?

The conduct of the five men imprisoned, in the courtroom and during the interrogation, bears out their revolutionary position and its shocking surprise to their political 'elders and betters'.

The activities of the group are not known before they published their 'Open Letter to the Party'. It is known that they were a group of young communists at Warsaw University having contact with others elsewhere in Poland. While still in the Party, though their position was a little precarious, they wrote the document which analysed and criticised the state which society had reached in Poland. They saw the new class of bureaucrats in the administration and managers in industry robbing them of their communism. This is not however an article on that long and largely untranslated document which is now in our possession.

The police raided the homes of the group after they had sent it to the Party and seized their duplicator. They realised

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PATRIOTISM, as all political demagogues know, is a highly exploitable emotion. In its name, violence is rewarded if one kills the right people at the right time; unpopular government measures are acceptable in the 'interests of the nation'; inconsequential men feel important when responding to the slogan 'your country needs you'.

Love of country which at its best means appreciation of the landscape or buildings and streets, when interwoven with the customs and habits of a lifetime, can harden into the concept 'my country right or wrong'. To anarchists the mystique which shrouds the idea of the nation is ridiculous and dangerous.

The fanatical nationalism of the thirties which inspired the Germans to fall in behind Hitler in support of his crusade and which gave the British and the Russians their impetus to fight, far from creating the promised peaceful world 21 years after that war which was to scourge tyranny from the face of the earth, finds the powerful nations snarling at each other from behind their mushroom clouds and bloody flags.

The little nations are aping the big ones. On the African continent the fight for 'national independence' is developing as we predicted. With certain notorious exceptions like South Africa, black rule has replaced white. From the point of view of the dispossessed African the difference is only one of colour (although like most irrational people it probably is an important difference—they are being ruled by one of their 'own kind'). In some areas of Africa, European educated black leaders are knocking each other off at a rate which must make the Western politicians quite envious, bound as they are by the ballot box. White rule and Christianity have left their marks on the African people, they are now just as aggressive and mercenary as the Europeans who exploited them.

But whatever the country, the colour or

# Red Squares in China

HOW TO KEEP the revolutionary fervour of a nation after the revolution has been defeated is the second major test of a revolutionary leader. There is no doubt that when communism took over in China, a revolution took place that incorporated a great feeling of land-hunger and class aspiration of the Chinese people. Mao Tse-tung was able to rise to power by passing the first major test of the revolutionary politician: how to make it appear that he is granting the people what they are taking for themselves. Now he faces, in his old age, the second test, which comes in the 'post-Thermidor' period of the Chinese revolution—the period when reaction has established itself but still has need of popular support against the outside world.

The upsurge of the young 'guards' in the 'cultural revolt of 1966' is Mao's answer. He has fallen back on the oldest trick in the book of the politician: he has called on the young, clean-living, respectable, conforming elements to rout the 'rabble'. It is not even fascism in the Hitlerian sense; more the early English fascism of the 'Bulldog Drummond' type, the Imperial Fascism of 1926 strike-breaking, the fascism associated with castor-oil doses to liberal professors in Italy rather than the mass movements of Germany. The moves and slogans of these clean-limbed Chinese are depressingly familiar. Doctors who have treated foreigners (there is no doubt an ideogram for 'low swine, what?') are made to crawl in public humiliation. Chinese and foreigners who have passed slightly by the portrait of the Leader are made to bow before his

portrait. Most of all, the attack is directed against the decadent youths with long hair and fancy clothing whom everybody knows to be subversive of the ideals of the nation, in any nation, irrespective of its ideals. Shave their heads, rip their clothes—let them learn the folly of their ways at detention centres—if in the early days of the revolution they had got rid of the execution block (they did not) the Young Guards would now be petitioning to have it brought back.

The Decent Citizens in China are having it very much their own way, with Father Figure Mao beaming in the background, and the police standing by paternally in the manner of the Czarist police during a pogrom, ready to step in and arrest the victims if they resist, and shriek conspiracy and murder if at any moment the victims get the upper hand.

It is noticeable that at the moment the Chinese communists strike hard at their 'provo(?)' element, the Russian press beams for the first time at English youth fashions (which need not give too much hope to their own *stilyagi*). The Russians can, however, afford to relax a little—they answered the post-Thermidorian test of how to keep up the people's fervour, by falling back on patriotism—the fervent Russianism of the 'Great Patriotic War' and its subsequent reflection in space travel enthusiasm. The Chinese have no similar patriotic tradition (their attachment is traditionally to the soil itself, and to their ancestors in the land, but not to the mythical State). The Bulldog Drummond stage of Mao's

cultural revolution can be seen as his equivalent to Stalin's 'Patriotic War'.

In moving against all the anti-party elements, and arousing the licensed hooliganism of the Young Guards against people suspected of anti-State activity, Mao has revealed for the first time the truth about the schisms in the Chinese political scene. For too long the farce of Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa has led the world to assume that opposition was confined to the offshore island that imagined itself to be China. On the contrary, although bourgeois politics have almost disappeared from China for want of support, there are many popular organisations standing in opposition to the totalitarian state, including the Anarchists. The harshness of measures taken against individuals suspected of supporting such underground movements is Mao's public testament to their effectiveness. In simultaneously hitting out at the rebellious section of the young generation, and exposing them to the attacks of the conformists, Mao has indicated which way he assumes they are heading. Of course he will get a lot of support as a result. The sight of a government getting tough with its rebels arouses a type of sadistic-masochistic joy in every country—heads on pikes were always a popular spectacle in this country and probably still would be if they did it. But if Mao has read half as much as he is reputed to have written, he will know that it is not a type of popularity that lasts, or upon which much reliance can be placed in time of social upheaval. INTERNATIONALIST.

# Damn the Country!

the creed of the politician, the language he uses in his struggle for power is the same—sacrifice, surrender, kill, be killed—it's all for the good of the nation!

The pattern varies but not the principle—wherever we look, wherever there is government. In Vietnam American bombs are terrorising the people, in defence of 'National freedom'. If you happen to support the Vietcong or have to fight for them, the bullets being fired are in defence of what? 'National freedom' of course!

Supporters of the democratic system will argue that the ballot box ensures that people get the form of government they want and it is true that the mediocrities in government often reflect the notions of the majority, but ultimately real power lies with the minority who control the military, the police, communications and the 'rule of law'. Politicians are fond of the latter slogan but they rarely point out that all governments can change legislation by a simple act of parliament, or as in Nazi Germany by the simple act of writing new laws; so the farcical situation exists that an act which is legal one day may be illegal the next.

The question which has to be answered is this: if there were no governments, would the people act differently? The quick answer is—probably not. It is not part of this writer's case that the majority of people are basically universally-minded and are pressed into a nationalistic mould by villainous leaders. It is part of the case, however, that primitive feelings of group identity are cynically exploited for political purposes. Even the socialists and the communists, who claim to be internationalists, when in power are as jingoistic as the most rabid nationalists. The recent appearance of the British Prime Minister on television, with his appeal to the collective sense of patriotism and vanity (how strong are the British people when their backs are to the wall, etc.), is an example of the nauseating nonsense churned out by politicians when pushing policies which may be unpopular.

In spite of the talk about easier forms of travel breaking down national barriers, the trend seems to be towards a greater consciousness of nationhood. The slogan 'national independence' has become respectable to the left and right, and no doubt has its roots in fine principles but it has in no way furthered the cause of internationalism.

## 'PUT SCOTLAND FIRST'

Even Scotland, whose territory might reasonably be supposed to be part of Britain after all those years of union, is, judging by the Scottish Nationalists' propaganda, hoping to create more government, not less—and yet another frontier. Propaganda apart, the idea seems to be spreading that a Scottish Parliament would be better for Scotland than control by the English one.

The economic argument is founded on a different interpretation of treasury figures, namely that the contribution that Scotland makes to the English economy is excessive in relation to the returns for housing, education, social services and investment per head of the population that she receives compared to England and Wales. Therefore, Scotland helps to subsidise English industrial growth and development while her own economy stagnates.

How do they propose to get 'freedom' for Scotland and a bigger slice of the cake; by a wider view of men in relation to each other and their environment? Not at all, but by a return to Nationalism. There will be many Scots who justifiably do not want to be governed from England, but who will read real social change into the proposals for decentralisation; but this is no revolutionary movement as can be seen from a reading of the National Party's aims; they change nothing except the nationality of the government. For example:

'When a majority of the Scottish Parliamentary Seats (36 out of 71 is the minimum) is held by SNP MPs will ask the UK Parliament to set up a Scottish Legislature with full control over all the affairs

of Scotland. Failing such agreement in London, the SNP MPs and any other Scottish MPs who care to join them, will form a provisional Scottish government, loyal to the crown.

SNP policy is based on the rule of law; freedom of conscience, expression and worship; collective defence; and positive measures to remove the poverty and injustice which threaten the peace of the world.'

Loyalty to the Crown means loyalty to the Queen of England as well as Scotland and there is nothing to stop Her Majesty's Ministers from ordering 'Scotland's Sons' to defend the Crown against dissident Scots if necessary.

## To be fair they claim:

'SNP Democrats are against Scotland possessing nuclear weapons, and against other countries having nuclear weapon bases or stores in Scotland. Scotland has no aspirations to be a great power.'

But 'the total cost to be raised by taxation for defence need not exceed £75m, compared with £190m, which is our present (1964) share of UK Defence taxation levied. (Scotland's estimated share of Defence taxation spent is only a quarter of the sum raised in Scotland. This results in a subsidy of England by Scotland of £142.5m. per year on defence alone.)

Seventy-five million is still a sizeable sum for a country with no territorial ambitions to spend on destructive weapons—even uniquely Scottish weapons!

Anarchists have always advocated freedom of the individual to organise with his fellows at all levels and to have a meaningful say in making decisions which affect their lives. But the aim is to widen the scope of human activity and experience without interfering with healthy customs. We stand little chance of support against the chauvinistic outpourings of politicians and the rallying shouts of the mob. But we can resist individually by refusing to bolster up the national state and by encouraging people to get off their knees before their masters—the State, the Nation, the Government, the Crown and the race (not forgetting God and the church!).

When someone comes at us with a slogan like 'Put Scotland First'—we should reply: put humans first and damn Scotland. R.M.

# ANARCHY 67 discusses AMERICA

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