

Editorial

UNREST IN CAPTIVE STATES

THE TRUE significance of the recent events in Eastern Europe cannot be fully established at this moment. It is still unknown what steps the Soviets will take or will be able to take in the trouble areas of Eastern Europe. Judging, however, from what has already taken place, one can hardly overemphasize the importance of the developments and their implications.

Some of the political scientists of our day conceived the present world as consisting fundamentally of two blocs with a number of second and third rate powers aligned more or less with either one or the other such power at the center of each bloc. Some went even further and actually advocated the acceptance of this status quo as permanent and even as a desirable balance for the preservation of a lasting peace. They closed their eyes to the fact that they were advocating peace at the expense of millions of people suppressed by the Soviets during and after World War II — at the expense of the Baltic States, once members of the League of Nations. In support of their infamous generosity they advanced arguments which often appealed to emotions and not to reason. It was argued that power at the disposal of the Soviet state is far too great to permit even the possibility of resistance within the occupied territories. It was furthermore maintained that any attempt to offend the Soviet Union would undoubtedly result in a total war which would mean the end of Western civilization. Thus it logically followed that in order to survive we must coexist with the Soviets, that coexistence meant the acceptance of the status quo in Europe, and that those who sought the liberation of the subjugated peoples were advocates of war.

But there were people who took the opposite view. They argued that possibly the Soviet armed might was overestimated by the West; that total war might be as disastrous to Soviet Union and to United States and, consequently, that Soviets would be as eager as the Americans to avoid such an occurrence; that people behind the Iron Curtain bore the Communist rule but never accepted it; that, finally, peace is never unconditional and that on the scale of human values freedom and independence could never be ignored. But then, there was hardly any contact with the Iron Curtain countries, Soviet power seemed to be impressive, and a period of ten years stood in between. Some began to doubt.

Then came the news of Poland and Hungary. Out of the tragedy that was Hungary, there again appeared a hope. For events in Eastern Europe clearly demonstrated that the alleged basis of Soviet strength — the workers' class — was not as firm as was believed, to say the least, that workers themselves were not a passive mass but, on the contrary, could, without any leadership, stage such an uprising as it did; that youth in Eastern Europe is not yet fully indoctrinated; that in case of emergency Soviets cannot rely on their satellites and would even have to protect themselves against possible outbursts in the future; and that the myth of the invincibility of the Soviet might could well be questioned.

It is our view that the stand of the United States on this particular question was firm only in the halls of the United Nations — in an auditorium where indeed little was at stake. We believe that United States was avoiding responsibility and lacking in imagination in the whole approach to Eastern Europe in this time of crisis.

And yet, we are still hopeful. For if the Soviets have not succeeded in their efforts during the ten years of occupation, then there is hope that they will never succeed. Experience has proved time and again that enslavement of peoples can only be temporary and that those who once were free will rather die than continue to live in chains.