

REDS OF BRITAIN SPLIT ON HUNGARY

Revolt Against Party Heads' Backing of Soviet Action Stirs Annual Conference

By DREW MIDDLETON

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LONDON, April 19 — Rebellion against endorsement of the Soviet Union's policy in Hungary dominated today's opening session of the annual conference of the British Communist party.

A series of bitter attacks upon the party's official leadership by speakers from the floor dispersed the aura of unity in which the conference began.

John Gollan, the party's general secretary and current strong man, drew a picture of the rewards to be won by stirring up industrial strife and attacking authority in the Labor party of its right-wing leadership.

But his assertion that the Communist executive committee's support for the Soviet repression of the Hungarian revolt was "correct", evoked a storm of criticism.

John McLoughlin, the shop steward who was largely responsible for the strike at Briggs Motor Bodies works earlier this year, made the principal attack upon the party leadership.

"It is no good digging our heads in the sand and ignoring Hungary," Mr. McLoughlin said. "Terrible things were done in Hungary. We lost the support of masses of people."

'Unbalanced' Views Charged

Other speakers, including one member of the executive committee, emphasized the mistakes that had been made by the Russians in their handling of the Hungarian rebellion. From this they progressed to attack what Brian Behan, a member of the executive committee, called Mr. Gollan's "unbalanced" views on Hungary.

Even before the criticism erupted in the conference hall in Hammersmith, the London Communists conceded that the party was in trouble.

During the last year it has continued with a fair share of success to win control, or at least influence, in key labor unions. But politically its prestige is near zero.

"Far be it from us to minimize the loss in membership from 33,960 at the last congress to 27,000 now," Mr. Gollan said.

The general secretary also demanded "a renewed drive to the factories" and acknowledged that the "recent industrial struggles show the vital importance of the work of our factory branches."

No representative of the Communist party sits in the House of Commons. But the dream of electing a dozen or so Communist members animated many of the delegates at Hammersmith.

This result is not obtainable, they conceded, while the party's name is sullied by support for the Soviet actions in Hungary. But Hungary is not the only problem facing the party.

Ideological Dictation

The revelations about Stalin and Stalinism, made by Nikita S. Khrushchev, chief of the Soviet Communist party, at the Twentieth Party Conference in Moscow last year, have made it impossible for many British Communists to swallow, without question, the ideological dictation of Moscow.

The leaders of the party tried hard to divert the delegates from criticisms to support. The opening address of William Gallacher, the party president, read for him in his absence because of his wife's illness, appealed for "unshakable and unbreakable loyalty" to the Communist cause in Britain.

"It is not enough that we should proclaim ourselves as the loyal ally of the Soviet Union in this all-decisive struggle," Mr. Gallacher asserted. "The more we impress the workers with the British character of our policy and program, the more effectively we serve them, the greater will be our service to our allies in the Soviet Union, liberated China, the peoples' democracies, colonial comrades and comrades in the capitalist countries."