

Bulletin | Supplement

A DISCUSSION OF

WASHINGTON'S GRAND DESIGN FOR WORLD DOMINATION

WHAT LIES BEHIND KHRUSHCHEVITE REVISIONISM?

A Discussion of the Important Theoretical Questions Raised
By Progressive Labor's Latest International Statement*

The building of a new revolutionary movement in the United States requires more than organizational work, demonstrations, street meetings, picketing and all the determination and hard work that makes such efforts possible. Certainly such concrete struggles are a basic necessity for serious revolutionaries and the older groups like the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party have no chance of playing any role in the future revolutionary developments as long as they continue to abstain from such actions. But all the revolutionary determination and militancy in the world will not bring down the capitalist government in the world's most powerful imperialist nation. To accomplish this task the working class must be guided in its struggle by a conscious understanding of reality, the reality of the world rule of capitalism and the character of the forces struggling against capitalism. This is the purpose of Marxist theory for reality cannot be changed unless it is understood. "There is no revolutionary action without revolutionary theory," Lenin once said.

We hold this is as true today as it was in 1917. Those who sneer at theory, who are uninterested in history, who castigate Marxism as dogma--such people are helping the bourgeoisie keep from the working class the one essential weapon they need to overturn capitalism. We do not care if they have been banged on the head a hundred times and jailed fifty times. Their efforts will no more bring the working class to power than did the heroic struggles of the Narodnik terrorists in early Revolutionary Russia. We agree that you

* "Washington's 'Grand Design' for World Domination," a Statement by the National Coordinating Committee of the Progressive Labor Movement. Marxist Leninist Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 2

cannot expect to build a revolutionary party without getting a few bumps on the head, but there must be something in the head that gets the bumps.

It is within this framework that we wish to seriously discuss the current statement of the Progressive Labor Movement on international questions: "Washington's 'Grand Design' For World Domination." Certainly Progressive Labor, more than any other radical group in the United States, has turned its back on abstentionism and seriously sought to intervene in the meaningful struggles of the American masses. Particularly its efforts to build a base in Harlem among the Negroes and in the Lower East Side among the Puerto Ricans has restored the faith of thousands of American socialists in the ability of revolutionists to give leadership to the masses in their concrete struggles. Today these efforts have brought forth the wrath of the capitalists who seek to crush Progressive Labor through legal actions precisely because of its efforts in behalf of the working masses.

These efforts make the theoretical development of Progressive Labor a matter of deep concern, not only to PL members, but to all socialists in the United States who are at all serious about revolutionary politics. It is in this spirit of fraternal communist theoretical interchange that we approach a discussion of Progressive Labor's theoretical positions. We know that the comrades of Progressive Labor will want from us an honest and straightforward presentation of the differences we have with them as well as what binds us together.

The strength of the Progressive Labor statement lies in its understanding of the real role of American Imperialism in the world and the role of Khrushchev and his supporters within the world Communist Parties in relation to this role of American imperialism. These are no minor questions for the very future of the working class in its struggles against capitalism all over the world -- including our own struggle in this country. Progressive Labor correctly sees the struggles in the United States as part of the worldwide struggle and not as an isolated national phenomenon. Thus they begin theoretically from an international point of view. This is the only way Marxists can begin, but it also has a danger within it -- if the international outlook is faulty, this inevitably has a deep impact on the national outlook of the formation. Thus while we will be addressing ourselves primarily to international questions, we will at the same time be discussing questions with a direct relevance to struggles in the United States.

The Tiger Has Claws and Cunning

Progressive Labor recognizes that American imperialism, despite the expansion of the Soviet camp, remains the dominant power in the world and the deadly enemy of the

working class everywhere. Much of its statement is in fact devoted to documenting the real power of American imperialism economically and militarily and the deeply reactionary role it plays everywhere. While this material is primarily aimed at Khrushchev's attempt to "prettify" American imperialism in preparation for a deal with it, it also dispenses with China's claim that the United States is a "paper tiger" even though the authors of the statement do not deal directly with this position of the Chinese. The picture that emerges from the statement is of a tiger made up of anything but paper with highly developed nuclear claws and a certain cunning as well.

We wholeheartedly agree with this assessment of United States power. It is about time socialists dispensed with the wishful-thinking view that the automatic "revolutionary processes" will take care of imperialism while they themselves keep safely out of the way of the tiger's claws by refusing to engage in real battle with the tiger. Much of the current abstentionism of older radical groups like the Socialist Workers Party is rationalized in this way. Socialists who simply sit on the sidelines "commenting" on the objective flow of events are only helping the tiger to entrench himself that much more firmly.

As we have noted the picture of the tiger which emerges from this statement is of a beast with cunning as well as claws. Not only has the United States built up a nuclear arsenal capable of overkilling the world's population several times and has further displayed its determination to use military intervention to perfect its domination in Vietnam and elsewhere, but the United States has other tactics to deal with threats which cannot be brushed off with military bludgeoning. As the statement puts it:

For the two-pronged U.S. strategy to break up and destroy the socialist camp consists of working two sides of the street. On the one hand there is the piling up of armaments and preparations for war (of all kinds) in order to achieve the desired goals by force if necessary. On the other is the use of this accumulated strength as a kind of 'carrot and nuclear blackmail' operation geared to simultaneously intimidate and seduce the socialist countries thereby creating the conditions for socialism's 'peaceful capitulation.'

Khrushchev Opens the Sluice Gates

It is within this framework that Progressive Labor sees the "peaceful coexistence" line of Khrushchev. ~~Khrushchev is seen as seeking to come to terms with imperialism precisely because he does not wish to really struggle~~

with the tiger, turns his back on the forces that fight imperialism, and relies rather on the "good wishes" of the imperialists. PL sees Khrushchev's efforts to come to terms with the imperialists as representing a dangerous opening for imperialism to undermine the Soviet Bloc countries and to encourage processes which eventually could lead to the reestablishment of capitalism there.

This is no mild charge and its meaning is immense. The present ruling stratum in the USSR and in much of Eastern Europe is seen as functioning to undermine the great social conquests of October -- the workers' state itself. Truly, then, Khrushchev must be a revisionist of the worst sort and the major threat within the working class camp to the defense of the workers' states and to the development of the world revolution. PL states:

Khrushchev's distortion of the Leninist concept of 'peaceful coexistence' to one of 'all-around US-USSR cooperation' has led straight to the inestimable folly of the Soviet leadership 'cooperating' in the isolation of the Soviet Union itself. The sluice gates are open and Washington is pouring its manifold resources into the breach in hot pursuit of its policy of severing the Eastern Democracies from the socialist camp country by country. These are to be 'peacefully' added to that 'free community of nations' within what Walter Lippman calls 'The great theme of European politics today ... the overcoming of the division of Germany and Europe.'

We are firmly in agreement with this essential outlook if not with the exact formulations. American imperialism does truly represent a dual threat to the working class through its military and economic might and its efforts to subvert and break up the workers states. The ruling stratum in the USSR and its allies in the East European workers states are seeking to cooperate with imperialism at the expense of revolutionary struggle and also at the ultimate expense of threatening the conquests of October -- conquests which are the conquests of workers throughout the world and which workers in all lands must defend with all their might. Yes, the defense of these conquests is not a simple matter of attacking the U.S. imperialists. It also requires a struggle within the working class camp against a revisionism which seeks to give in to imperialism. Such a struggle is the task of revolutionary workers themselves and must be conducted in common only with those with the utmost hostility to imperialism and with the aim of strengthening the workers states against imperialism.

It may come as a shock to some Progressive Labor members and supporters, but this is a position which has been fought for by the Trotskyist movement for some 30 years. It was the Trotskyists and only the Trotskyists who warned that the bureaucratic rulers of the USSR could not be entrusted

with the defense of the USSR. These bureaucrats both undermined the struggles of workers in other lands by urging them to support "peaceloving capitalists" and also represented within the workers states a potential source through which capitalist restorationist forces were generated. It has been our contention over this long period that the very defense of the USSR demanded an uncompromising struggle against this leadership which we call stalinist.

Khrushchevism and Stalinism

The question which Progressive Labor has yet to address itself to -- and it must do so if it is to achieve a full understanding of this great danger to the working class -- is how Khrushchevite revisionism arose? This question, which simply bangs one in the face from almost every page of this statement, requires a serious Marxist answer. Progressive Labor is claiming that the present leaders of the USSR have evolved to a position where they are caving in to imperialism and undermining the working class foundations thrown up by the greatest revolutionary event of our or any age -- the October insurrection. PL must explain in Marxist terms how this came to pass -- what is the social base of Khrushchevite revisionism?

Can we for one moment as serious Marxists hold that this is simply a matter of personalities? This is what the Chinese theory adds up to when they date the growth of revisionism in the USSR with the death of one man, Stalin, and the coming to power of another man, trained by Stalin, Khrushchev. No, we cannot accept such a position as a "theory." We are compelled to probe deeper.

We see Khrushchev's present course as nothing but an extension of the course charted by Stalin himself many, many years ago. In the 1930's Stalin also sought to come to terms with imperialism much as Khrushchev does today. First he sought an accommodation with the "democratic" imperialists -- precisely those imperialists who today dominate the world: the United States, England, and France. In all these countries the Communist Parties, under Stalin's orders, supported capitalist parties and refused to struggle for a working class revolution. In the United States the Communist Party threw its support behind FDR and the Democratic Party. Is the present policy, which PL correctly condemns, of supporting the Democrats any different from the CP's policy in the 1930's?

In 1939, after Stalin had obviously failed in stemming the tide of fascism through support to one imperialist camp rather than the working class, he suddenly came to terms with -- Hitler. Is it not a fact that Stalin signed a pact with Hitler and all over the world the Communist parties suddenly discovered that the U.S. and England were imperialist countries? But this pact did not save the USSR from invasion by Hitler. When Hitler invaded Russia, Stalin was so taken by surprise that he was unable to muster any

serious resistance until the Nazis had siezed a huge section of the USSR. This is the way Stalin "defended" the USSR -- it is also Khrushchev's way.

During the war Earl Browder dissolved the Communist Party under Stalin's orders and reached out his hand to the capitalists. Harry Bridges came out for a permanent no-strike pledge to be extended into the indefinite future in peacetime. In Italy the Communist Party supported the re-establishment of a monarchy in that country only to change its line when the Italian people forced it to. Is it any wonder that the Italian CP stands, if anything, to the right of Khrushchev today? And who but Stalin and his ruling clique are responsible for the political evolution of Togliatti?

In the immediate postwar period the Communist parties in Europe joined in common governments with the capitalists forsaking the struggle for workers power precisely at a time when the workers and peasants were armed as partisans and were the dominant force in the major European countries. Only the encirclement of the USSR by the imperialists and their obvious warlike intentions forced Stalin to consolidate workers power in Eastern Europe where originally he also had supported "all-class" governments.

The current position of Khrushchev is nothing more than an extension of a line first formulated by Stalin. Stalin was Khrushchev's teacher, but the pupil finds it opportune to cover his own betrayals by attacking his dead teacher.

The Social Base of Stalinism

The question arises, how did all this come to pass? Now that we have shown that Khrushchevism is nothing more than a modern version of Stalinism, what then is the social base of Stalinism? It is impossible to deal seriously with this question without acquainting oneself with the works of Leon Trotsky, in particular his book The Revolution Betrayed.

Stalinism grew out of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution brought about by the failure of revolution in the West and the isolation of the revolution in a backward country. An immense bureaucracy grew up and the working class was removed from any direct influence either over the Bolshevik party through the Soviets or through the party itself which became simply the instrument of the bureaucracy.

This process was completed only through the actual extermination of the old guard in the party which had led the October Revolution. This is the meaning of the famous Moscow Trials. One after another of the key leaders of the October Revolution were forced to "confess" and then were summarily executed.

This new bureaucracy, while it deeply distorted the conquests of October, was incapable of fully overturning them. The result was what we call a degenerated workers' state. Although the workers were removed from direct rule, the bureaucracy could not consolidate itself as a new class, for it depended for its existence on the very working class property forms that differentiated the country from the capitalist countries. Those who tried to claim that this new bureaucracy was a new class were vehemently fought in 1940 by Trotsky himself, and finally have ended up in the camp of imperialism.

This new bureaucracy represented a retrogression in the direction of capitalism and thus today it plays the role Progressive Labor aptly describes of opening up the "sluice gates" in Eastern Europe to capitalist penetration. Only an understanding of Khrushchev's base in a bureaucracy which itself marks a degeneration towards capitalism can explain this phenomenon. This, sketchily, is the position our movement has held for some years and it is precisely this analysis which today can explain the role Khrushchev plays in world politics. We urge all Progressive Labor members and sympathizers to look deeply into this question and to study the works of Trotsky. Judge for yourself whether or not he was right, and if not, whether there is any alternative Marxist explanation for the growth in the USSR of a revisionist leadership which today threatens the very continued existence of the workers states.



Now that we have achieved, if only in outline, an understanding of the role of Khrushchev in world politics, we need to look at the role played by the Chinese. What is the real nature of their political line in the world today both in their statements and in their concrete actions? What are the reasons China plays the role it does play, the Marxist reasons. What is the meaning of the Chinese line on the "national liberation struggle" and what are its implications not only in the colonial world but in the United States as expressed through PL's assessment of the Negro struggle and the working class struggle as a whole? These are some of the questions we will seek to discuss in the next issue of the BULLETIN.

KHRUSHCHEV OUSTED, CHINA EXPLODES A-BOMB

As we go to press events of extreme importance have taken place which will have a deep impact on the building of a revolutionary movement here and throughout the world. The ruling bureaucracy in the USSR is once again in the throes of a deep crisis expressed through the unceremonious ouster of Premier Khrushchev after 11 years of rule.

At the 20th Party Congress Khrushchev sought to dismiss all that was wrong with past developments in the USSR as brought about by the man Stalin and his "personality cult." Now Khrushchev's successors will seek to blame all the manifestations of the deepening crisis of Stalinism on the man Khrushchev and his "personality cult." Marxists cannot for one moment accept such "explanations."

As we have noted in the previous article, Progressive Labor has made some very fundamental charges against Khrushchev. In effect they have accused him of collaborating with the capitalists in opening up Eastern Europe to capitalist penetration. Now Progressive Labor must decide whether such a development, which threatens the very existence of the workers states, was a result of one man's quirks or has deeper causes. PL members must insist on nothing less than a full, complete, penetrating analysis of the origins of Khrushchevism in Stalinism, and of the role of the present leaders of the USSR as the continuators of both Stalinism and Khrushchevism. PL must demand of the Chinese leadership a critical examination, not only of Khrushchevism but of Stalinism. They must also insist that the Chinese continue a struggle against revisionism even if the current leadership of the USSR seeks a friendlier attitude towards China as a country while it continues to play a revisionist role in relation to imperialism.

On top of these developments in the USSR comes news of China's exploding an A-Bomb and breaking the nuclear monopoly of the "great" powers. This development also cannot fail to have deep repercussions on the international scene. The next issue of the BULLETIN will contain an analysis of both the ouster of Khrushchev and of the meaning of the Chinese bomb. Never more than today has a solid Marxist understanding of world events been needed. The BULLETIN will continue to seek to contribute to such an analysis.

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