

The following article is the first of a series that will analyze Progressive Labor Party's break with Maoism and its present policies and activities.

By TONY THOMAS

The Nov. 1971 issue of *Progressive Labor* magazine announces the complete repudiation of Maoism and of support to the Chinese government by the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), which for nearly 10 years has been the largest and most important Maoist organization in the U.S. Articles in previous issues of *PL* magazine and the PLP newspaper, *Challenge-Desafio*, had criticized the Chinese government's actions in Ceylon and Pakistan and the proposed Nixon trip to China.

But this most recent article goes beyond criticisms and reverses PLP's analysis of China and Maoism. China

ly, Spring 1963) It was just as uncritical of the Kremlin bureaucrats as it later became of the Mao Tse-tung team. For a comprehensive analysis of the origins and history of PLP until 1969 see *Maoism in the U.S., a Critical History of PLP*, by Militant editor Mary-Alice Waters (Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, N.Y., N.Y., 50 cents).

### When PL was Maoist

In its first comprehensive statement "Road to Revolution I," published in 1963, the founders of PLM adopted a position of support to the Chinese Communist Party as leaders of Marxism-Leninism on a world scale. "When the Chinese Communist Party began to provide political and ideological leadership for the world Marxist movement, it was warmly welcomed by true Marxist-Leninists, because it accurately generalized and confirmed their own

experiences and tested CPC [Chinese Communist Party] will succeed in its new historic endeavor.

"The thought of Mao Tse-tung is the summarization of the experiences of the Chinese revolution. It points the way for the revolutionary process everywhere." (*Revolution Today: U.S.A.*, pages 198-99)

However, as far back as 1967, PLP began to take positions at variance with the Mao bureaucracy. These did not offer a revolutionary Marxist alternative to the reformist policies of Maoism. Rather, most of these differences stemmed from opposition to the revolutionary implications of the nationalism of oppressed people, and an increasingly sectarian attitude to any united action with the "Soviet revisionists." However, on none of these questions did PLP ever explicitly state that its views differed from the Chinese leadership's, nor did it openly attack

Moscow-Peking debate, "the Chinese continued to maintain *effective unity* of action with the Soviet Union in delivering arms to Vietnam over the Chinese railroads. At no time did the Chinese engage in public polemics against Soviet aid." (Nov. 1971 *PL*, p. 42, original emphasis)

Furthermore, the Chinese Maoists are now attacked for allegedly preventing Chinese ultralefts from wrecking trains carrying Russian aid to Vietnam. PLP claims that, "A large organized movement developed against Soviet aid to Vietnam. Shipment after shipment of Soviet arms was derailed by left forces in the GPCR [the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution]. *The purpose of these actions was to show revolutionary solidarity with the people of Vietnam by opposing the machinations of the revisionists. . . . Only the direct, violent intervention of the Mao Tse-tung-controlled PLA [People's Liberation Army] was able to put a stop to this movement.*" (Nov. 1971, *PL*, p. 17, emphasis added), from an article entitled "Road to Revolution II"

### Nationalism

Since early 1969, the PLP has been officially opposed to all forms of nationalism—whether of oppressed or oppressor nations—even though this is contrary to the stated positions of the Chinese CP leadership. A June 1969 PLP statement indicated: "For many years, we in the Progressive Labor Party held to the idea of two types of nationalism: revolutionary and reactionary. But a look at world reality shows there's no such thing. Nationalism is either the path to oppression by an outside imperialism or the road back to capitalism from socialism." ("Revolutionaries Must Fight Nationalism," editorial dated June 1969 published in the PLP pamphlet *Black Liberation*.)

Bourgeois nationalists and revolutionary nationalists like Malcolm X, who they once hailed, were now branded as capitalist "sellouts."

The Chinese Maoists have maintained a different attitude toward nationalist struggles. First, a prominent part of their strategy is support to national capitalists in the colonial world who they have friendly diplomatic relations with. This is justified on the basis of the reformist two-stage theory of revolution developed by Stalin which calls for victory by the national democratic forces—usually led by or including capitalists—before socialism (the second stage) can be won.

In addition, the Chinese CP gives verbal support to noncapitalist elements of the nationalist struggles of oppressed peoples for the purpose of exerting a reformist influence on these struggles and to provide Peking with left cover.

PLP has rejected the two-stage theory at least since 1969. The Aug. 1969 *Progressive Labor* states: "It is wrong for Communists to advocate two-stage struggle. Communists have no business advocating national liberation movements that do not openly proclaim socialism as a goal."

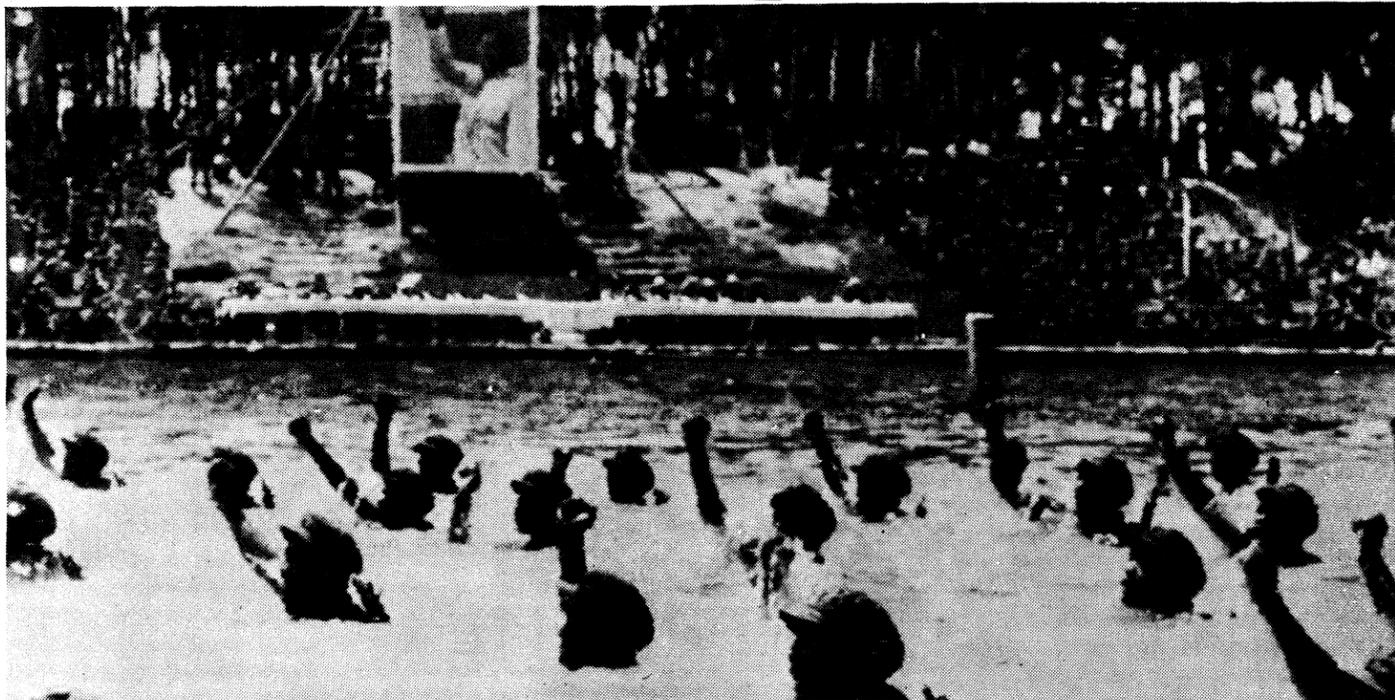
In its most recent positions, PLP attacks outright and falsifies Lenin's position of extending support to the national liberation struggles of oppressed nations and nationalities. It further states: "From the point of view of workers, peasants, and other oppressed people, there is no way to 'sell out' a struggle for national liberation—because this struggle itself is a sellout in its very conception." (Nov. 1971 *PL*, p. 60)

PLP's first *open* attacks on the Maoist leaders came in the wake of Peking's support and aid to the Pakistani dictatorship that launched the genocidal repression against Bangladesh.

The May 1 *Challenge-Desafio* carries an article opposed to the Pakistani rulers entitled "Pakistani Bosses Use Nationalism to Slaughter Workers." It attacks Chou-En-lai for

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# PL breaks with Maoism; brands China capitalist



People's Liberation Army commanders celebrating third anniversary of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's dip in Yangtze. "The thought of Mao Tse-tung . . . points the way for the revolutionary process everywhere," PL wrote before it discovered that China had gone "capitalist."

is now branded as a capitalist state. Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party of China are termed "revisionists" and part of the Chinese "red bourgeoisie." The "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in the late 1960s, which PLP formerly lauded as a success in preventing "capitalist" elements from taking power in China, is now viewed as a victory for the "red bourgeoisie."

Progressive Labor also denounces traditional aspects of Maoist politics such as the Mao personality cult, the two-stage theory of revolution, and the "new democracy." While PLP still defends much of Stalin's "accomplishments" it now criticizes many of the policies taken by the Third International under Stalin, including the "people's front" strategy first adopted at the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935.

PLP, first called the Progressive Labor Movement, was founded in 1962. Its founders were almost exclusively ex-members of the Communist Party who wanted to return to what they termed the "revolutionary heritage" of the CP under Stalin in the early 1930s. It initially took no position on the Moscow-Peking split and in fact criticized the Socialist Workers Party for "its hostility to the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc. . . ." (*Marxist-Leninist Quarter-*

experiences." (*Revolution Today: U.S.A.*, p. 138)

At that time, PLP supported nationalist currents in the Black liberation struggle in the U.S. as well as national capitalist regimes in countries like Indonesia and Cambodia. The Oct. 1965 issue of *PL* for example, even carried an article by President Sukarno on "The Road Since Bandung."

Later, during the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," 1966-69, PLP quickly followed Mao Tse-tung in denouncing the Soviet leaders as capitalists as well as "revisionists." The U.S.S.R. was no longer considered a workers state but an imperialist state. This was explained in its second major policy statement, "Road to Revolution II" published in Dec. 1966.

This document states: ". . . the revisionists have contempt for and fear of the Chinese masses. They hate the Chinese Communist Party and its great leader Mao Tse-tung. Their hate is born of the fear that the Chinese Communist Party and people are the most powerful revolutionary force in the world. . . ."

"It's [the cultural revolution's] every success is a key defeat for U.S. imperialism and modern revisionism. We have great confidence that by utilizing the thought of Mao Tse-tung the

the Maoist bureaucracy until the last few months.

One of the most obvious points of disagreement was over Vietnam. In 1967, PLP adopted the view that the North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front of South Vietnam leaders "backslid" into "revisionism" when they agreed to negotiate with the U.S. (*Vietnam, Defeat U.S. Imperialism*, p. 25)

PLP further argued that the Feb. 1968 Tet offensive in South Vietnam, which dealt a heavy blow to the U.S.-Saigon military effort, was "a lot of wheeling and dealing . . . a lot of scheming instead of revolutionary struggle. . . . The Tet offensive was just part of a sellout maneuver to pressure Johnson. . . ." (p. 29) Although PLP did not attack the Chinese CP at the time, these positions were clearly contrary to those held by the Chinese government.

For a long time, the PLP has taken a sectarian attitude toward "revisionist" aid from the U.S.S.R. being sent to North Vietnam. It opposes such aid on the grounds that it will deepen the "revisionism" of the NLF and the North Vietnamese government.

Now in its most recent statement, PLP goes much further and charges that "throughout the period of bitter back and forth polemics," during the

# Calendar

## BOSTON

**BANGLA DESH—REVOLUTION IN EAST PAKISTAN.** Speaker: Mansur Habib, E. Pakistani student active in Bangla Desh defense. Fri., Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 295 Huntington Ave., Rm. 307. Donation: \$1, h.s. students 50 c. Ausp. Militant Labor Forum.

## CHICAGO

**CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN.** Panel analysis of rape, forced sterilization and prostitution. Fri., Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 180 N. Wacker Drive, Rm. 310, Great Lakes Bldg (Wacker nr. Lake). Donation: 50 c. Ausp. Militant Labor Forum.

## CLEVELAND

**WHY FEMINISM IS REVOLUTIONARY.** Speaker: Cathy Hinds, chairwoman Miami-Oxford Contraception Coalition, member of Young Socialist Alliance. Fri., Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 4420 Superior Ave. Ph: 391-5553. Ausp. Debs Hall Forum.

## NEW YORK CITY

**STRIKE NOV. 31 MARCH NOV. 61** New York students. Help plan the biggest New York antiwar demonstration New York City has ever seen! Come to the first planning meeting of the New York Student Mobilization Committee. We will be discussing plans for:

- Regional antiwar demonstration in New York City Nov. 6
- Student strike Nov. 3
- Moratorium Oct. 13

Sunday, Sept. 26, 1 p.m. 150 Fifth Ave., Rm. 843. Volunteers needed. Free material available—leaflets, buttons, stickers, posters. Call 741-1960.

## NEW YORK: BROOKLYN

**THE ATTICA MASSACRE.** A firsthand account. Speaker: Derrick Morrison, staff writer for *The Militant*. Fri., Sept. 24, 8:30 p.m. 136 Lawrence St. (corner of Willoughby). Donation: \$1, h.s. students 50c. Ausp. Militant Labor Forum.

## NEW YORK: LOWER MANHATTAN

Fall Socialist Educational Series. "The Fascist Uprising," second of three classes on the Spanish Civil War by Les Evans, the editor of the *International Socialist Review*. Sunday, Sept. 26, 1 p.m. 706 Broadway (nr. Fourth St.), 8th floor. 50c per session, \$3.00 for complete series of eight classes. For more information, call 260-0976. Ausp. Socialist Workers Party.

## PHILADELPHIA

**THE WAGE FREEZE AND THE INTERNATIONAL COLLAPSE OF THE AMERICAN DOLLAR.** Speaker: Dick Roberts, staff writer for *The Militant*. Fri., Sept. 24, 8 p.m. 1004 Filbert St. (1 block north of Market). Donation: \$1. Ausp. Militant Labor Forum.

# ...Attica

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half of the observer committee stayed overnight Sunday in the prison. This was in unliberated areas. Other members agreed to arrive early in the morning.

## The attack

But as it turned out, all of the plans laid the previous day went for naught. Seale was stopped at a roadblock at around 8 a.m. Kunstler arrived at 9:15 a.m., only to find the outside gate to the prison locked. Police armed with shotguns were everywhere. National Guardsmen were driving up in trucks.

The 1,000-member assault force entered the prison going toward the liberated areas after two huge CH-34 helicopters dropped canisters of CS-gas in the liberated areas. At this point, relatives of the hostages and some members of the committee broke down in tears. A lot of reporters were sad-faced and shaken up.

Efforts to protest the Attica massacre on Monday included a rally of several hundred during the day at the University of Buffalo, another one downtown, and a gathering of over 2,000 UB students on campus, sponsored by the student government, to listen to Kunstler.

A group of doctors and lawyers led by Professor Schwartz tried to gain entrance to the prison on Tuesday morning with a court order. They wanted to check out medical facilities and also legal aid to the inmates. Despite the fact that reporters and politicians were allowed inside the gates the previous evening during daylight, this group was barred. And at a subsequent hearing on Tuesday before the same judge who issued the order for their entrance, the prison authorities hypocritically talked about the "dangers" of "booby traps" and "bombs" as the reason for barring Schwartz's group. The judge thereupon meekly complied and denied entry to the group.

The National Medical Association, a group of Black doctors claiming 8,000 members, also asked yesterday to be allowed inside the prison to inspect the medical facilities.

The beatings and possible killings (the eight inmates "missing" could easily turn up as deaths) going on in Attica right now are unfathomable, since there is no access to the prison by the public. For the inmates, the prison authorities have the last word. They are the judge, jury and prosecutor. They control, except in times of revolt, all access of the inmates to the outside world.

To show how much they care about the hostages, Rockefeller expressed surprise to find out that 30 had gotten out alive. He didn't expect any of them to live. And ensuring their lives was not his purpose. He was out to es-

tablish "law and order," and if anybody in Attica had to die for its achievement, then so be it. Rockefeller is callous, ruthless and brutal.

To exact justice for the 32 inmates massacred and to defend those inmates still alive, demonstrations, rallies, moratoriums, and memorial meetings are being organized throughout the country.

Along with this is the centrally important task of determining the full unvarnished truth about the massacre and bringing this before the public. A broad national committee composed of representatives from all the mass movements—Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, women, GI, labor and antiwar—should be organized to carry out such an investigation.

A full public exposure of the facts behind the rebellions and massacre would deal a heavy blow against those responsible for the slaughter—including Rockefeller and Nixon—and help win broad public support for the just demands of prisoners throughout this country.

# ...war

Continued from page 3

economy for the Asian Development Bank. The U. S. State Department, it is believed, attaches great importance to this report.

"The one premise basic to all these research projects is that South Vietnam will in the future be a state separate from the North, and integrated in the free world's economy.

"The Smithies report, which is apparently not intended for publication, favors what it describes as the 'clearly preferable' and 'feasible' solution of a restoration of security in a military context. But, adds the report, under present conditions 'the best planning assumption seems to be a military stalemate or withering away of the war, a process that can last for a decade or more.'

"There is no reference in this economist's flat, dispassionate report to the million or so soldiers who have been killed, to the hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties, and the swarms of homeless refugees. . . .

"The high U. S. military budget for Vietnam this year, the failure to reply to the PRG's seven-point peace plan, the great increase in aid to the Pnompenh regime, Washington's admitted violations of the Geneva agreements on Laos, are all sufficient proof that the war is far from over yet. . . .

"The financing of studies on the future of a South Vietnam cut off from the North and part of an anti-Communist Southeast Asia seems to indicate President Nixon's determination to apply a program diametrically opposed to that of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. This 'continuity' in U. S. policy can only help to reduce still more the importance of the Paris peace talks."

# ...PLP

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his role in supporting President Yahya Khan in 1971 and his predecessor Ayub Khan in 1968-69. The article states: "During the 1969 workers rebellion, Chou En-lai warmly welcomed Pakistani army envoys in Peking. The Pakistani army guarded government buildings from (rioting masses) with Chinese-supplied tanks. Today East Pakistani are being massacred by the Chinese—as well as American and Soviet—bullets and rifles. This is the inevitable result of relying on alliances with nationalist bosses rather than on the international working class. . . ."

The May 21 *Challenge-Desafio* reported the invitation of President Nixon to China and began the analysis which led to PLP's later designation of China as capitalist. The article states: "One easily can see that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) which took place in China in the mid-1960s has been reversed." It claims that Mao and Chou are working for a complete accommodation with U. S. bosses. . . . It predicts that the Chinese workers will punish "the Chous and his cronies."

However, in these articles no full analysis is given of the character of the Chinese state. The evolution of PLP's relationship with China takes a qualitative turn in the Nov. *PL* with the designation of China as a capitalist state.

While revolutionary socialists have long criticized the reformist and class collaborationist policies of the Chinese Communist Party and the bureaucratic deformation of the Chinese revolution, we consider it a major error to characterize China as a capitalist country.

In the next article we will take up PLP's claim that China is no longer a workers state.

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