

CLP Embraces Détente

The Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union has recently issued yet one more classless appeal to the freedom-loving bourgeoisies of "all Nations, Parliaments and Governments" to work for "peace." This appeal was given prominent coverage in one particular English-language publication, which reprinted it in full on its front page under the headline "Support Soviet Peace Proposal" and editorially expressed support for "this important peace appeal from the first land of socialism."

Was this merely a mouthpiece for the class-collaborationist Russian bureaucracy, like *Moscow News* or the *Daily World*? No, the publication is the *People's Tribune* (1 July 1975), organ of the "Marxist-Leninist" Communist Labor Party (CLP), whose founders were the first to split from the arch-reformist, pro-Moscow U.S. Communist Party (CP) during the 1950's in solidarity with the Chinese and Albanian "anti-revisionist" Stalinists. (For the history of the CLP see "What is the Communist Labor Party?," *WV* No. 56, 8 November 1974.) Furthermore, the CLP is now raising as its central agitational "mass line" slogan "Jobs With Peace," which politically bears an uncanny similarity to the CP's "Détente Means Jobs," and recently the CLP has obsequiously attempted to lure the CP into united-front actions (*People's Tribune*, 1 July).

Unlike the Revolutionary Union and October League, whose followers were recruited from various petty-bourgeois radical protest movements to a seemingly militant, ascetic and egalitarian "Third World" Maoism, Nelson Peery and other CLP leaders were old veterans of the CP. Their support for the Chinese Stalinists was based on Mao and Co.'s defense of Stalin against Khrushchev's criticisms. Nelson Peery's parting with CP-style revisionism by no means constituted a break with the essentials of the CP's reformist program. All it involved was shifting primary allegiance from the Russian bureaucracy to its Chinese twin and rival.

The Sino-Soviet split was precipitated not by ideological differences but by the conflicting nationalist self-interests of the respective Russian and Chinese bureaucracies, each committed to "building socialism" in one—its own—country. CLP politics have always turned on the anti-revolutionary perspective of "socialism in one country," and now that axis has gyrated from "people's war" back to "détente."

The Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, which in competition with the USSR treacherously pursues its own "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, "ideologically" seeks to justify ever more criminal anti-Soviet and pro-imperialist diplomatic maneuvers by the ludicrous charge that "The Soviet Union today is under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the German fascist type, a dictatorship of the Hitler type" (*People's Daily* [Peking], 9 May 1975). While never willing to equate the USSR with Nazi Germany, the Communist League (CL, predecessor of the CLP) had no compunction in the past about labelling the bureaucratically degenerated Russian workers state "capitalist." Not only Nixon but also Brezhnev were denounced by the CL as "representatives of international finance capital... trying to redivide the world 'peacefully'" (*People's Tribune*, July 1972). The sellout American CP, then labelled the "lapdogs of counterrevolution," was flayed (quite appropriately) for "channeling the cries of indignation against the war expressed by the

working class into abstract cries of peace" (*People's Tribune*, April 1973).

Following Mao, the CL located the Soviet Union's fall from grace in Khrushchev's speech criticizing Stalin in 1956 and his subsequent decree that the USSR had become a "state of the whole people." The class-collaborationist foreign policy and betrayals of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev gangs were attributed to this fatal error, despite the incontrovertible fact that "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism was a policy initiated by Stalin, the great gravedigger of socialist revolutions and executioner of communists.

In point of fact, on the basis of Stalin's pronouncement that socialism had been inaugurated in the USSR in 1936 (in the so-called Stalin Constitution, actually written by the "spies and traitors" Bukharin and Radek), Khrushchev could deduce with unassailable Stalinist logic that the USSR was a "state of the whole people." For Marxists, socialism—a society which has transcended class-based divisions and antagonisms through unleashing the productive forces fettered by private ownership and national boundaries—cannot be achieved in isolation, but only through the extension of the revolution by the proletariat taking power in the advanced countries. The "theory of socialism in one country" leads directly to the counterrevolutionary strategy of détente, since the only threat to the consolidation of "socialism" would be war and imperialist intervention, as Bukharin and Stalin explained in 1928.

A year ago the CL shifted its position on the character of the USSR, criticizing the equation of the U.S. and USSR as "superpowers." Never explicitly attacking the Chinese Stalinists or its own previous line, the CL pointed out with opportunist understatement that such bourgeois terminology "tends to shield the class character of the most ruthless imperialism [i.e., U.S. imperialism] the world has ever known" (*People's Tribune*, May 1974). The CLP has never clearly analyzed what *is* the class character of the USSR. While attacking mainstream Maoists for the "simplistic" position that "state capitalism" is fully triumphant in the Soviet Union, the CLP maintained that "bourgeois imperialist elements" had wielded state power since 1969:

"Is there capitalism in the USSR? Yes, there is and plenty of it. *The Soviet State is an imperialist state.* The imperialists hold state power and are rapidly and aggressively attacking the socialist relations of production."

—*People's Tribune*, June 1974

For Marxists the state is precisely a coercive organ for the maintenance of the relations of production uniquely corresponding to the rule of a particular class. So long as the proletarian property forms that still constitute the economic foundations of the Sino-Soviet states are not liquidated by violent bourgeois counterrevolution, these states in their class character remain workers states, albeit qualitatively deformed by bureaucratic rule.

As has become increasingly obvious, U.S. imperialism looks on the USSR not as a partner in imperialist aggression but as its most formidable enemy. With the victory of the pro-Moscow DRV/NLF, in South Vietnam and the seeming Stalinist advances in Portugal and Italy, it should not be surprising that it was against the USSR, not China, that U.S. "Defense" Secretary Schlesinger directed his threats of a nuclear first strike. While the CLP defended the Chinese betrayals in Ceylon, Bangladesh and the Sudan, these inveterate Stalinists apparently are

now feeling some qualms about Mao's call for more capitalist nuclear missiles aimed at the USSR.

According to the CLP the USSR now again stands with China, together forming "two historic blocks to the continued expansion of USNA [United States of North America] imperialism" (*People's Tribune*, 15 April 1975). Clearly lining up with the Kremlin, the CLP points to the "growing and fundamental danger of war with the Soviet Union," not because of the Maoists' "simple 'twin imperialisms' foolishness" that the U.S. and USSR are rival imperialisms in "collision and collusion," but because of the "capitalists' absolute need to roll communism back from the gates of France and Italy." The material basis of revisionism—"the fear of the invincibility of imperialist military power"—has supposedly been eliminated by the victories in Indochina.

But in their reactionary search for accommodation with and appeasement of imperialism, the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is today prepared to subvert revolution in Italy and Portugal, just as Stalin strangled the Spanish revolution and betrayed partisan insurgents from France to Greece following World War II. The treacherous Stalinist bureaucracies that rule over the laboring masses in the degenerated and deformed workers states must be ousted by a workers political revolution. At the same time, Trotskyists unswervingly struggle for unconditional defense of the revolutionary gains of the working class embodied in these states against counterrevolutionary imperialist assault.

The CLP is edging closer to the line of the CP on domestic issues as well. All the recent rhetoric and militant posturing by the CLP to "Stop the Klan" are window-dressing for its more "serious" tactic of petitioning city councils and state legislatures to do the job. Like the CP, the CLP disorients the working class in the struggle against fascism by fostering illusions in the "democratic" bourgeoisie: *People's Tribune* (1 July 1975) advises "every worker [to] write, demonstrate and demand that Congress defeat" Senate Bill 1 (the so-called Criminal Justice Reform Bill). Like the CP, the CLP uncritically endorses the impotent "strategy" of the bourgeois NAACP to implement busing. And CLP-supported unemployment committees mobilize the jobless and destitute not to fight for full employment at the direct expense of the bosses but merely to pressure the bourgeois government to carry out various inadequate public works programs.

Stalinism, as Trotsky stressed, is the syphilis of the workers movement. By their fundamental strategy of collaborating with the irreconcilable class enemy, the Stalinists monstrously imperil the revolutionary gains of the international proletariat. Time and time again they have betrayed the revolutionary workers and given the bourgeoisie a new lease on life. Those like the CLP who base their policies on the dubious prestige of Stalinism in power are condemned to zigzag between the competing Stalinist bureaucracies as each pursues its own variant of "peaceful coexistence." The only constant, beneath the more or less "militant" rhetoric, is class collaboration.

It is not the "democratic" bourgeoisie and its "Parliaments and Governments" that can "ensure lasting and permanent peace," but red revolution led by a party which, in the words of Lenin, "tells the people that, in order to obtain a democratic and just peace, the bourgeois governments of all the belligerent countries must be overthrown!" ■

TELEGRAM

PDC Protest U.S. Bars Cuban Official

Invited to deliver the keynote address at an annual July 26 New York celebration of the Cuban Revolution, Cuban official Dr. Melba Hernandez has been denied entry into the U.S. by the State Department under the political exclusion provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act. Under this Act, aliens who advocate, teach, hold present or past membership in organizations which advocate or teach, opposition to all organized government or the overthrow by force, violence or other unconstitutional means the U.S. government; or who advocate the economic, international and governmental doctrines of world communism; or who write, print, circulate or display literature reflecting these views, etc., etc., are prohibited from entering the U.S. unless a special waiver is granted by both the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. We reprint below the text of a telegram sent by the Partisan Defense Committee, legal defense arm of the Spartacist League, to protest Dr. Hernandez' exclusion.

July 22, 1975

Attorney General Edward Levi
10 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Henry Kissinger
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

We denounce the U.S. Department of State's decision to deny Cuba's Dr. Melba Hernandez the right to speak in the U.S. We further denounce the exclusion provisions of the McCarran-Walter Act as not only viciously anti-communist legislation but also as unconstitutional under the first and fifth amendments. Strike down the exclusion sections of this repressive law! For freedom of entry for representatives and supporters of the international working-class movement!

PARTISAN DEFENSE
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JUST OUT!

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