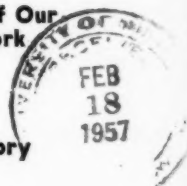


# political affairs

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\* This 1957-

A Theoretical and Political Magazine of Scientific Socialism

Editor: V. J. Jerome

## The Eisenhower Doctrine: A Threat to Peace\*

By National Committee, CPUSA

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE are showing signs of growing alarm as they become aware of the meaning of the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine which the President outlined to Congress Jan. 5. They don't want to play the game of Standard Oil. They don't want the U.S. military to police the Middle East or any other part of the globe.

On the eve of the elections, President Eisenhower, in his nation-wide television address, pledged to the country that there would be no involvement of American troops in the Middle East. Two months and two weeks later, after an elaborate press build-up, he asks Congress for authority to employ the armed forces of the United States as he "deems necessary" in a vaguely defined "Middle East."

What reasons are offered to justify this demand for a "blank check," for what is virtually an undated declaration of war? The answer once again is the myth of Soviet aggression.

But who was the aggressor in Egypt? The Soviet Union? Of course not! The armies of Britain, France and

Israel invaded Egypt. This invasion was stopped by the great colonial liberation movement symbolized in the Bandung Conference, by the protests of the British labor movement, by the all-out support of the Soviet Union and China to the victims of this aggression, by the pressure of world opinion focussed in the UN and by the effect of the common stand on the part of the American and Soviet Governments for an end to the hostilities.

We are told that the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine is necessary to fill the "vacuum" in the Arab countries. What vacuum? As Nehru pointed out, millions of people live in this so-called "vacuum." They have their own governments. Their deepest desire is to achieve full national independence and freedom from all outside control.

Each time the die-hard imperialists get kicked out of a colonial country, they claim a "vacuum" has been created. This is typical imperialist arrogance. It implies that colonialism is a natural state of affairs. But it is imperialism, not nature, which abhors this alleged "vacuum."

In reality, the Eisenhower-Dulles

\* This statement was issued on January 13, 1957—ed.

doctrine is a demand that Congress sanction Wall Street's plan to take over the role formerly played in the Middle East by British and French imperialism. This plan envisages ousting the British and French rivals of the American oil companies and using American men and money to halt the independence movement in the Arab nations.

As such it is a threat to peace. If unchallenged it will jeopardize the interests of the American people no less than the interests of the Arab and Israeli peoples.

It will win us friends nowhere. The Arab peoples reject this attempt to impose a new colonialism. In this, they are strongly supported by India and by the Socialist countries covering one-third of the world. The peoples of all countries quite rightly are suspicious of and oppose this doctrine.

For all these reasons the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine should be defeated by the American people. It can be defeated if the people make their will felt.

They are already beginning to do so despite the efforts of the Administration to jam the issue through Congress. That is why a big debate is now arising in and out of Congress.

This debate also reflects the great concern of labor and the people with the economic burdens which the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine will impose upon them. For there is already talk of the need for increased military budgets, no tax cuts, growing inflation and cuts in social services.

What is needed? The American people must get into this debate and decide its outcome. They must insist that they and their organizations have a chance to express their views through public hearings prior to any action by

Congress. They must demand extensive public hearings in the House and Senate and oppose all efforts to curtain these hearings or to impose a cloak of secrecy upon them.

Labor, the Negro people, the farmers, small businessmen and professionals should speak out through letters, telegrams, resolutions, delegations to Congressmen as well as direct testimony. They should demand:

1) No military alliances and involvement in the Middle East.

2) No by-passing of the UN; for a UN-sponsored program of economic aid without strings.

3) An end to the give-away of American natural resources to the oil trusts; no take-away of Arab natural resources by the oil trusts.

4) Full independence for the Arab nations; recognition of Egyptian sovereignty over the Suez Canal; support to the anti-colonial aims of the Bandung conference.

5) Admission of People's China to the UN.

6) A peaceful solution to the Arab-Israel differences through the UN.

7) For a positive alternative to the Eisenhower-Dulles doctrine: A new meeting at the summit to put the world back on the Geneva road to disarmament, negotiations and peaceful co-existence.

The people and their organizations—the unions, the Negro people's organizations, the farmers—can stop the Dulles effort to rekindle the cold war.

The progressive and socialist-minded forces in our country have a great responsibility. By entering fully into the debate they will be able to project and help fight for the peaceful alternatives that the American people desire.

# More on Historical Experience of Proletarian Dictatorship\*

By "People's Daily" (Peking)

IN APRIL 1956, we discussed the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in connection with the question of Stalin.\*\* Since then, a further train of events in the international Communist movement has caused concern to the people of our country. The publication in Chinese newspapers of Comrade Tito's speech of November 11, and the comments on that speech by various Communist Parties, has led people again to raise many questions which call for an answer. In the present article we shall center our discussion on the following problems: first, an appraisal of the fundamental course taken by the Soviet Union in its revolution and construction; second, an appraisal of Stalin's merits and faults; third, the struggle against doctrinairism and revisionism; and fourth, the international solidarity of the proletariat of all countries.

In examining modern international questions, we must proceed first of all from the most fundamental fact, the antagonism between the imperialist bloc of aggression and the popular forces in the world. The Chinese people, who have suffered enough from imperialist aggression, can never forget that imperialism has always opposed the liberation of all peoples and the independence of all oppressed nations, that it has always regarded the Communist movement, which stands most resolutely for the people's interests, as a thorn in its flesh. Since the birth of the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, imperialism has tried by every means to wreck it. Following the establishment of a whole group of socialist states, the hostility of the imperialist camp to the socialist camp, and its flagrant acts of sabotage against the latter, have become a still more pronounced feature of world politics. The leader of the imperialist camp, the United States, has been especially vicious and shameless in its interference in the domestic affairs of socialist countries; for many years it has been obstructing China's liberation of its own territory, Taiwan, and for many years it has openly adopted as its official policy the subversion of the East European countries.

The activities of the imperialists in the Hungarian affair of October, 1956, marked the gravest attack launched by them against the socialist

\* This article appeared in the *People's Daily*, December 29, 1956. It was accompanied by a note reading: "The article is prepared by the Editorial Department of the *People's Daily* on the basis of a discussion at an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China"—*ed.*

\*\* This was published in *Political Affairs*, May, 1956—*ed.*

camp since the war of aggression they carried on in Korea. As the resolution of the Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party pointed out, the Hungarian affair was the result of various causes, both internal and external, any one-sided explanation is incorrect, and among the causes international imperialism "played the main and decisive part." Following the defeat of their plot for a counter-revolutionary comeback in Hungary, the imperialist powers, headed by the United States, have manoeuvred the United Nations into adopting resolutions directed against the Soviet Union and interfering in Hungary's internal affairs. At the same time, they stirred up a hysterical anti-Communist wave throughout the Western world. Although U.S. imperialism takes advantage of the fiasco of the Anglo-French war of aggression against Egypt in order to grab British and French interests in the Middle East and North Africa in every way possible, it pledges itself to eliminate its "misunderstandings" with Britain and France and to seek "closer and more intimate understanding" with them to repair their united front against Communism, against the Asian and African peoples and against the peace-loving peoples of the world. To oppose Communism, the people and peace, the imperialist countries should unite—this is the gist of Dulles' statement at the N.A.T.O. council meeting on the so-called "need for a philosophy for living and acting at this critical point in world history." Somewhat intoxicated by his own illusions, Dulles asserted: "The Soviet Communist structure is in a deteriorating condition(!), with the power of the rulers disintegrating(!) . . . Facing this situation, the free nations must maintain moral pressures which are helping to undermine the Soviet-Chinese Communist system and maintain military strength and resolution." He called on the N.A.T.O. countries "to disrupt the powerful Soviet despotism (!) based upon militaristic (!) and atheistic concepts." He also expressed the view that "a change of character of that (Communist) world now seems to be within the realm of possibility."

We have always considered our enemies our best teachers, and now Dulles is letting us have another lesson. He may slander us a thousand times and curse us 10,000 times; there is nothing new in this at all. But when Dulles, putting the matter on a "philosophic" plane, urges the imperialist countries to place their contradictions with Communism above all other contradictions, to bend all their efforts towards bringing about "a change of character of that (Communist) world" and towards "undermining" and "disrupting" the socialist system headed by the Soviet Union, this is a lesson that is extremely helpful to us though such efforts will certainly come to naught. Although we have consistently held and still hold that the socialist and capitalist countries should coexist in peace and carry out peaceful competition, the imperialists are bent on destroying us. We must therefore never forget the stern struggle with the enemy, i.e. the class struggle on a world scale.

There are before us two types of contradictions which are different in nature. The first type consists of contradictions between our enemy and

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ourselves (contradictions between the camp of imperialism and that of socialism, contradictions between imperialism and the people and oppressed nations of the whole world, contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the imperialist countries, etc.) This is the fundamental type of contradiction, based on the clash of interests between antagonistic classes. The second type consists of contradictions within the ranks of the people (contradictions between different sections of the people, between comrades within the Communist Party, or, in socialist countries, contradictions between the government and the people, contradictions between socialist countries, contradictions between Communist Parties, etc.). This type of contradiction is not basic; it is not the result of a fundamental clash of interests between classes, but of conflicts between right and wrong opinions or of a partial contradiction of interests. It is a type of contradiction whose solution must, first and foremost, be subordinated to the overall interests of the struggle against the enemy. Contradictions among the people themselves can and ought to be resolved, proceeding from the desire for solidarity, through criticism or struggle, thus achieving a new solidarity under new conditions. Of course, real life is complicated. Sometimes, it is possible that classes whose interests are in fundamental conflict unite to cope with their main common enemy. On the other hand, under specific conditions, a certain contradiction among the people may be gradually transformed into an antagonistic contradiction when one side to it gradually goes over to the enemy. Finally, the nature of such a contradiction is completely changed: it no longer belongs to the category of contradictions among the people themselves but becomes a component part of the contradiction between ourselves and the enemy. Such a phenomenon did come about in the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Communist Party of China. In a word, any one who adopts the standpoint of the people should not equate the contradictions among the people with the contradictions between the enemy and ourselves, or confuse these two types of contradictions, let alone place the contradictions among the people above the contradictions between the enemy and ourselves. Those who deny the class struggle and do not distinguish between the enemy and ourselves are definitely not Communists or Marxist-Leninists.

We think it necessary to settle this question of fundamental standpoint first, before proceeding to the questions to be discussed. Otherwise, we are bound to lose our bearings, and will be unable to explain correctly international events.

### I.

The attacks by the imperialists on the international Communist movement have long been concentrated mainly on the Soviet Union. Recent controversies in the international Communist movement, for the most part, have also had to do with one's appraisal of the Soviet Union. Therefore, the problem of correctly assessing the fundamental course taken by the

Soviet Union in its revolution and construction is an important one which Marxist-Leninists must solve.

The Marxist theory of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is a scientific summing-up of the experience of the working-class movement. However, with the exception of the Paris Commune which lasted only 72 days, Marx and Engels did not live to see for themselves the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat for which they had striven throughout their lives. In 1917, led by Lenin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Russian proletariat carried the proletarian revolution to victory and established the dictatorship of the proletariat; it then successfully built up a socialist society. From this time on, the theory and ideals of scientific socialism became a living reality. And so, the Russian October Revolution of 1917 ushered in a new era, not only in the history of the Communist movement but also in the history of mankind.

The Soviet Union has achieved tremendous successes in the 39 years since the revolution. Having eliminated the system of exploitation, the Soviet Union put an end to anarchy, crisis and unemployment in its economic life. Soviet economy and culture have advanced at a pace beyond the reach of capitalist countries. Soviet industrial output in 1956 is 30 times what it was in 1913, the peak year before the revolution. A country which, before the revolution, was industrially backward and had a high rate of illiteracy has now become the world's second greatest industrial power, possessing scientific and technical forces which are advanced by any standards, and a highly developed socialist culture. The working people of the Soviet Union, who were oppressed before the revolution, have become masters of their own country and society; they have displayed great enthusiasm and creativeness in revolutionary struggle and in construction and a fundamental change has taken place in their material and cultural life. While, before the October Revolution Russia was a prison of nations, after the October Revolution these nations achieved equality in the Soviet Union and developed rapidly into advanced socialist nations.

The development of the Soviet Union has not been smooth sailing. From 1918 to 1920, the country was attacked by 14 capitalist powers. In its early years, the Soviet Union went through such severe ordeals as civil war, famine, economic difficulties, and factional splitting activities within the Party. In a decisive period of the Second World War, before the Western countries opened the second front, the Soviet Union, single-handed, met and defeated the attacks of millions of troops of Hitler and his partners. These stern trials failed to crush the Soviet Union or stop its progress.

The existence of the Soviet Union has shaken imperialist rule to its very foundations and brought unbounded hope, confidence and courage to all revolutionary movements of the workers and liberation movements of the oppressed nations. The working people of all countries have helped the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union has also helped them. It has carried out a foreign policy that guards world peace, recognizes the equality



of all nations, and opposes imperialist aggression. The Soviet Union was the main force in defeating aggression throughout the world. The heroic armies of the Soviet Union liberated the East European countries, part of Central Europe, Northeast China and the northern part of Korea in cooperation with the popular forces of these countries. The Soviet Union has established friendly relations with the People's Democracies, aided them in economic construction and together with them, formed a mighty bulwark of world peace—the camp of socialism. The Soviet Union has also given powerful support to the independence movements of the oppressed nations, to the peace movement of the people of the world and to the many peaceable, new states in Asia and Africa established since the Second World War.

These are incontrovertible facts that people have known for a long time. Why is it necessary then to bring them up again? It is because, while the enemies of Communism have naturally always denied all this, certain Communists at the present time, in examining Soviet experience, often focus their attention on the secondary aspects of the matter and neglect the main aspects.

There are different aspects to Soviet experience in revolution and construction as far as its international significance is concerned. Of the successful experience of the Soviet Union, one part is fundamental and of universal significance at the present stage of human history. This is the most important and fundamental phase of Soviet experience. The other part is not of universal significance. In addition, the Soviet Union also had its mistakes and failures. No country can ever avoid them entirely, though they may vary in form and degree. And it was even more difficult for the Soviet Union to avoid them, because it was the first socialist country and had no successful experience of others to go by. Such mistakes and failures, however, provide extremely useful lessons for all Communists. That is why all Soviet experience, including certain mistakes and failures, deserves careful study while the fundamental part of the successful Soviet Union is proof that the fundamental experience of the Soviet Union in revolution and construction is a great accomplishment, the first paean of victory of Marxism-Leninism in the history of mankind.

What is the fundamental experience of the Soviet Union in revolution and construction? In our opinion, the following, at the very least, should be considered fundamental:

(1) The advanced members of the proletariat organize themselves into a Communist Party which takes Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action, builds up along the lines of democratic centralism, establishes close links with the masses, strives to become the core of the laboring masses and educates its Party members and the masses of the people in Marxism-Leninism.

(2) The proletariat, under the leadership of the Communist Party, rallying all the laboring people, takes political power from the bourgeoisie by means of revolutionary struggle.

(3) After the victory of the revolution, the proletariat, under the leadership of the Communist Party, rallying the broad mass of the people on the basis of a worker-peasant alliance, establishes a dictatorship of the proletariat over the landlord and capitalist classes, crushes the resistance of the counter-revolutionaries, and carries out the nationalization of industry and the step-by-step collectivization of agriculture, thereby eliminating the system of exploitation, private ownership of the means of production, and classes.

(4) The state, led by the proletariat and the Communist Party, leads the people in the planned development of socialist economy and culture, and on this basis gradually raises the people's living standards and actively prepares and works for the transition to Communist society.

(5) The state, led by the proletariat and the Communist Party, resolutely opposes imperialist aggression, recognizes the equality of all nations and defends world peace; firmly adheres to the principles of proletarian internationalism, strives to win the help of the laboring people of all countries, and at the same time strives to help them and all oppressed nations.

What we commonly refer to as the path of the October Revolution means precisely these basic things, leaving aside the specific form it took at that particular time and place. These basic things are all universal truths of Marxism-Leninism which are generally applicable.

In the course of revolution and construction in different countries there are, besides aspects common to all, aspects which are different. In this sense, each country has its own specific path of development. We shall discuss this question further on. But as far as basic theory is concerned, the path of the October Revolution reflects the general laws of revolution and construction at a particular stage in the long course of the development of human society. It is not only the road for the proletariat of the Soviet Union, but also the road which the proletariat of all countries must travel to gain victory. Precisely for this reason the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China stated in its political report to the Party's Eighth National Congress: "Despite the fact that the revolution in our country has many characteristics of its own, Chinese Communists regard the cause for which they work as a continuation of the Great October Revolution."

In the present international situation, it is of particularly great significance to defend this Marxist-Leninist path opened by the October Revolution. When the imperialists proclaim that they want to bring about "a change of character of the Communist world," it is precisely this revolutionary path which they want to change. For decades, the view put forward by all the revisionists to revise Marxism-Leninism, and the Right-opportunist ideas which they spread have been aimed precisely at evading this road, the road which the proletariat must take for its liberation. It is the task of all Communists to unite the proletariat and the masses of the people to beat back resolutely the savage onslaught of the imperialists against the socialist world, and to march forward resolutely along the path blazed by the October Revolution.

## II

People ask: Since the basic path of the Soviet Union in revolution and construction was correct, how did Stalin's mistakes happen?

We discussed this question in our article published in April this year (published in *Political Affairs*, May 1956.—Ed.). But as a result of recent events in Eastern Europe and other related developments, the question of correctly understanding and dealing with Stalin's mistakes has become a matter of importance, affecting developments within the Communist Parties of many countries, unity between Communist Parties, and the common struggle of the Communist forces of the world against imperialism. So it is necessary to further expound our views on this question.

Stalin made a great contribution to the progress of the Soviet Union and to the development of the international Communist movement. In "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" we wrote:

"After Lenin's death, Stalin, as the chief leader of the Party and the State, creatively applied and developed Marxism-Leninism. In the struggle to defend the legacy of Leninism against its enemies—the Trotskyites, Zinovievites and other agents of the bourgeoisie—Stalin expressed the will and wishes of the people and proved himself to be an outstanding Marxist-Leninist fighter. The reason why Stalin won the support of the Soviet people and played an important role in history was primarily because he, together with the other leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, defended Lenin's line on the industrialization of the Soviet State and the collectivization of agriculture. By pursuing this line, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union brought about the triumph of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and created the conditions for the victory of the Soviet Union in the war against Hitler; these victories of the Soviet people served the interests of the working class of the world and all progressive mankind. It was therefore also quite natural for the name of Stalin to be greatly honored throughout the world."

But Stalin made some serious mistakes in regard to the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union. His arbitrary method of work impaired to a certain extent the principle of democratic centralism both in the life of the Party and in the state system of the Soviet Union, and disrupted part of the socialist legal system. Because in many fields of work Stalin estranged himself from the masses to a serious extent, and made personal, arbitrary decisions concerning many important policies, it was inevitable that he should have made grave mistakes. These mistakes stood out most conspicuously in the suppression of counter-revolution and in relations with certain foreign countries. In suppressing counter-revolutionaries, Stalin, on the one hand, punished many counter-revolutionaries whom it was necessary to punish and, in the main, accomplished the tasks on this front; but, on the other hand, he wronged many loyal Com-

munists and honest citizens, and this caused serious losses. On the whole, in relations with brother countries and Parties, Stalin took an internationalist stand and helped the struggles of other peoples and the growth of the socialist camp; but in tackling certain concrete questions, he showed a tendency towards great-nation chauvinism and himself lacked a spirit of equality, let alone educating the mass of cadres to be modest. Sometimes he even intervened mistakenly, with many grave consequences, in the internal affairs of certain brother countries and Parties.

How are these serious mistakes of Stalin's to be explained? What is the connection between these mistakes and the socialist system of the Soviet Union?

The science of Marxist-Leninist dialectics teaches us that all types of relations of production, as well as the superstructures built up on their basis, have their own course of emergence, development, and extinction. When the old relations of production no longer basically correspond to the productive forces, the latter having reached a certain stage of development, and when the old superstructure no longer fundamentally corresponds to the economic basis, the latter having reached a certain stage of development, then changes of a fundamental nature must inevitably occur; whoever tries to resist such changes is discarded by history. This law is applicable through different forms to all types of society. That is to say, it also applies to the socialist society of today and the Communist society of tomorrow.

Were Stalin's mistakes due to the fact that the socialist economic and political system of the Soviet Union had become outmoded and no longer suited the needs of the development of the Soviet Union? Certainly not. Soviet socialist society is still young; it is not even 40 years old. The fact that the Soviet Union has made rapid progress economically proves that its economic system is, in the main, suited to the development of its productive forces; and that its political system is also, in the main, suited to the needs of its economic basis. Stalin's mistakes did not originate in the socialist system; it therefore follows that it is not necessary to "correct" the socialist system in order to correct these mistakes. The bourgeoisie of the West has not a leg to stand on to use Stalin's errors to prove that the socialist system is a "mistake." Nor are others convincing who trace Stalin's mistakes to the administration of economic affairs by the socialist state power, and assert that once the government takes charge of economic affairs it is bound to become a "bureaucratic machine" hindering the development of the socialist forces. No one can deny that the tremendous upsurge of Soviet economy is the result precisely of the planned administration of economic affairs by the state of the working people, while the main mistakes committed by Stalin had very little to do with shortcomings of the state organs administering economic affairs.

But even where the basic system corresponds to the need, there are still certain contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces, between the superstructure and the economic basis. These

contradictions find expression in defects in certain links of the economic and political systems. Though it is not necessary to effect fundamental changes in order to solve these contradictions, readjustments must be made in good time.

Can we guarantee that mistakes will not happen once we have a basic system which corresponds to the need and have adjusted ordinary contradictions in the system (to use the language of dialectics, contradictions at the stage of "quantitative change")? The matter is not that simple. Systems are of decisive importance, but systems themselves are not all powerful. No system, however excellent, can guard against serious mistakes in our work. Once we have the right system, the main question is whether we can make the right use of it; whether we have the right policies, and right methods and style of work. Without all this, even under a good system it is still possible for people to commit serious mistakes and to use a good state apparatus to do evil things.

To solve the problems mentioned above, we must rely on the accumulation of experience and the test of practice; we cannot expect results overnight. What is more, with conditions constantly changing, new problems arise as old ones are solved, and there is no solution which holds good for all time. Viewed from this angle, it is not surprising to find that even in socialist countries which have been established on a firm basis there are still defects in certain links of their relations of production and superstructure, and deviations of one kind or another in the policies and methods and style of work of the Party and the state.

In the socialist countries, the task of the Communist Party and the state is, by relying on the strength of the masses and the collective, to make timely readjustments in the various links of the economic and political systems, and to discover and correct mistakes in their work in good time. Naturally, it is not possible for the views of the leading personnel of the Communist Party and the state to conform completely to reality. Isolated, local and temporary mistakes in their work are therefore unavoidable. But so long as the principles of the dialectical materialist science of Marxism-Leninism are strictly observed and efforts are made to develop them, so long as the system of democratic centralism of the Party and the state is thoroughly observed, and so long as we really rely on the masses, persistent and serious mistakes affecting the whole country can be avoided.

The reason why some of the mistakes made by Stalin during the later years of his life became serious, nationwide and persistent, and were not corrected in time, was precisely that in certain fields and to a certain degree, he became isolated from the masses and the collective and violated the principle of democratic centralism of the Party and the state. The reason for such a partial infraction of democratic centralism lay in certain social and historical conditions: The Party lacked experience in leading the state; the new system was not sufficiently consolidated to be able to resist every encroachment of the influence of the old era (the consolidation of a new system and the dying away of the old influences do not operate in a straightforward fashion but often assume the form of an undulating move-

ment a turning point in history); there was the constricting effect which acute internal and external struggles had on certain aspects of the development of democracy, etc. Nevertheless, these objective conditions alone would not have been enough to transform the possibility of making mistakes into their actual commission. Lenin, working under conditions which were much more complicated and difficult than those encountered by Stalin, did not make the mistakes that Stalin made. Here, the decisive factor is the ideological condition. A series of victories and the eulogies he received in the latter part of his life turned his head. He deviated partly, but grossly, from the dialectical materialist way of thinking and fell into subjectivism. He began to put blind faith in personal wisdom and authority; he would not investigate and study the complicated conditions seriously or listen carefully to the opinions of his comrades and the voice of the masses. As a result, some of the policies and measures he adopted were often at variance with objective reality. He often stubbornly persisted in carrying out these mistaken measures over long periods and was unable to correct his mistakes in time.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has been taking measures to correct Stalin's mistakes and eliminate their consequences. These measures are beginning to bear fruit. The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union showed great determination and courage in doing away with blind faith in Stalin, in exposing the gravity of Stalin's mistakes and in eliminating their effects. Marxist-Leninists throughout the world, and all those who sympathize with the Communist cause, support the efforts of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to correct mistakes, and hope that the efforts of the Soviet comrades will meet with complete success. It is obvious that since Stalin's mistakes were not of short duration, their thorough correction cannot be achieved overnight, but demands fairly protracted efforts and thorough-going ideological education. We believe that the great Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which has already overcome countless difficulties, will triumph over these difficulties and achieve its purpose.

It is not to be expected, of course, that this effort of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to correct mistakes would get any support from the bourgeoisie and the Right-wing Social-Democrats of the West. Eager to take advantage of the opportunity to erase what was correct in Stalin's work as well as the immense achievements of the Soviet Union and the whole socialist camp up to now, and to create confusion and division in the Communist ranks, the Western bourgeoisie and Right-wing social-democrats have deliberately labelled the correction of Stalin's mistakes "destalinization" and described it as a struggle waged by "anti-Stalinist elements" against "Stalinist elements." Their vicious intent is evident enough. Unfortunately, similar views of this kind have also gained ground among some Communists. We consider it extremely harmful for Communists to hold such views.

As is well known, although Stalin committed some grave mistakes

in his later years, his was nevertheless the life of a great Marxist-Leninist revolutionary. In his youth, Stalin fought against the tsarist system and for the spread of Marxism-Leninism. After he joined the central leading organ of the Party, he took part in the struggle to pave the way for the revolution of 1917. After the October Revolution, he fought to defend its fruits. In the nearly 30 years after Lenin's death, he worked to build socialism, defend the socialist fatherland and advance the world Communist movement. All in all, Stalin always stood at the head of historical developments and guided the struggle; he was an implacable enemy of imperialism. His tragedy lies in the fact that, at the very time when he was doing things which were mistaken, he believed they were necessary for the defense of the interests of the working people against encroachments by the enemy. Stalin's mistakes did harm to the Soviet Union, which could have been avoided. Nonetheless, the socialist Soviet Union made tremendous progress during the period of Stalin's leadership. This undeniable fact not only testifies to the strength of the socialist system but also shows that Stalin was after all a staunch Communist. Therefore, in summing up Stalin's thoughts and activities, we must consider both his positive and negative sides, both his achievements and his mistakes. As long as we examine the matter in a rounded way, even if people must speak of "Stalinism," it could only mean, in the first place, Communism and Marxism-Leninism, which is the main aspect; and secondarily it contains certain extremely serious mistakes which go against Marxism-Leninism and must be thoroughly corrected. Even though at times it is necessary to stress these mistakes in order to correct them, it is also necessary to set them in their proper place so as to make a correct appraisal and avoid misleading people. In our opinion Stalin's mistakes take second place to his achievements.

Only by adopting an objective and analytical attitude can we correctly appraise Stalin and all those comrades who made similar mistakes under his influence, and correctly deal with their mistakes. Since these mistakes were made by Communists in the course of their work, what is involved is a question of right versus wrong within Communist ranks, but not an issue of ourselves versus the enemy in the class struggle. We need therefore to adopt a comradely attitude towards these people and should not treat them as enemies. We should defend what is correct in their work while criticizing their mistakes and should not blankly denounce everything they did. Their mistakes have a social and historical background and can be attributed especially to their ideology and understanding. In just the same way, such mistakes may also occur in the work of other comrades. That is why, having recognized the mistakes and undertaken their correction, it is necessary that we regard them as grave lessons, as an asset that can be used for heightening the political consciousness of all Communists, thus preventing the recurrence of such mistakes and advancing the cause of Communism. If, on the contrary, one takes a completely negative attitude towards those comrades who made mistakes,

treats them with hostility and discriminates against them by labeling them this or that kind of element, it will not help them to learn the lesson they should learn. Moreover, since this means confusing the two entirely different types of contradiction—that of right versus wrong within our own ranks and that of ourselves versus the enemy—it will only help the enemy in his attacks on the Communist ranks and attempts at disintegrating the Communist position.

The attitude taken by Comrade Tito and other leading comrades of the Yugoslav League of Communists towards Stalin's mistakes and other related questions, as their recent views indicate, cannot be regarded by us as well-balanced or objective. It is understandable that the Yugoslav comrades bear a particular resentment against Stalin's mistakes. In the past, they made worthy efforts to stick to socialism under difficult conditions. Their experiments in the democratic management of economic enterprises and other socialist organizations have also attracted attention. The Chinese people welcome the reconciliation between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries on the one hand, and Yugoslavia on the other, as well as the establishment and development of friendly relations between China and Yugoslavia. Like the Yugoslav people, the Chinese people hope that Yugoslavia will become ever more prosperous and powerful as it advances to socialism. We also agree with some of the points in Comrade Tito's speech, for instance, his condemnation of the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries, his support for the Worker-Peasant Revolutionary Government of Hungary, his condemnation of Britain, France and Israel for their aggression against Egypt, and his condemnation of the French Socialist Party for adopting a policy of aggression. But we are amazed that, in his speech, he attacked almost all the socialist countries and many of the Communist Parties. Comrade Tito made assertions about "those hard-bitten Stalinist elements who in various parties have managed still to maintain themselves in their posts and who would again wish to consolidate their rule and impose those Stalinist tendencies upon their people, and even others." Therefore, he declared, "Together with the Polish comrades we shall have to fight such tendencies which crop up in various other parties, whether in the Eastern countries or in the West." We have not come across any statement put forward by leading comrades of the Polish United Workers' Party, saying that it was necessary to adopt such a hostile attitude towards brother Parties. We feel it necessary to say in connection with these views of Comrade Tito's that he took up a wrong attitude when he set up so-called "Stalinism," "Stalinist elements," etc., as objects of attack and maintained that the question now was whether the course "begun in Yugoslavia" or the so-called "Stalinist course" would win out. This can only lead to a split in the Communist movement.

Comrade Tito correctly pointed out that "viewing the current development in Hungary from the perspective—socialism or counter-revolution—we must defend Kadar's present government, we must help it." But help to and defense of the Hungarian Government can hardly be said to be



the sense of the long speech on the Hungarian question made before the National Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia by Comrade Kardelj, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council of Yugoslavia. In the interpretation of the Hungarian incident he gave in his speech, Comrade Kardelj not only made no distinction whatsoever between ourselves and the enemy, but he told the Hungarian comrades that "a thorough change is necessary in the [Hungarian] political system." He also called on them to turn over state power wholly to the Budapest and other regional workers' councils, "no matter what the workers' councils have become," and declared that they "need not waste their efforts on trying to restore the Communist Party." "The reason," he said, "was because to the masses the Party was the personification of bureaucratic despotism." Such is the blueprint of the "anti-Stalinist course" which Comrade Kardelj designed for brother countries. The comrades in Hungary rejected this proposal of Comrade Kardelj. They dissolved the Budapest and other regional workers' councils which were being controlled by counter-revolutionaries and persisted in building up the Socialist Workers' Party. We consider that the Hungarian comrades are entirely right to act in this way, because otherwise Hungary's future would belong not to socialism but to counter-revolution.

Clearly, the Yugoslav comrades are going too far. Even if some part of their criticism of brother Parties is reasonable, the basic stand and method they adopt infringe the principles of comradely discussion. We have no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, but the matters mentioned above are by no means internal. In order to consolidate unity of the international Communist ranks and avoid creating conditions which the enemy can use to cause confusion and division in our own ranks, we cannot but offer our brotherly advice to the Yugoslav comrades.

### III

One of the grave consequences of Stalin's mistakes was the growth of doctrinairism. While criticizing Stalin's mistakes, the Communist Parties of various countries have waged a struggle against doctrinairism. This struggle is entirely necessary. But by adopting a negative attitude towards everything connected with Stalin, and by putting up the erroneous slogan of "destalinization," some Communists have helped to foster a revisionist trend against Marxism-Leninism. This revisionist trend is undoubtedly of help to the imperialist attack against the Communist movement, and the imperialists are in fact making active use of it. While resolutely opposing doctrinairism, we must at the same time resolutely oppose revisionism.

Marxism-Leninism holds that there are common, basic laws in the development of human society, but each state and nation has features different from those of others. Thus all nations pass through the class struggle, and will eventually arrive at Communism, by roads that are

the same in essence but different in their specific forms. The cause of the proletariat in a given country will triumph only if the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism is properly applied in the light of its special national features. And so long as this is done, the proletariat will accumulate new experience, thus making its contribution to the cause of other nations and to the general treasury of Marxism-Leninism. Doctrinaires do not understand that the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism manifests itself concretely and becomes operative in real life only through the medium of specific national characteristics. They are not willing to make a careful study of the social and historical features of their own countries and nation or to apply in a practical way the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism in the light of these features. Consequently they cannot lead the proletarian cause to victory.

Since Marxism-Leninism is the scientific summing-up of the experience of the working-class movement of various countries, it follows that it must attach importance to the questions of applying the experience of advanced countries. Lenin wrote in his book *What Is To Be Done?*: "The Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but also that a movement that is starting in a young country can be successful only if it implements the experience of other countries." What Lenin meant here was that the Russian working-class movement, which was just beginning, must utilize the experience of the working-class movement in Western Europe. His view applies, likewise, to the use of Soviet experience by younger socialist countries.

But there must be a proper method of learning. All the experience of the Soviet Union, including its fundamental experience, is bound up with definite national characteristics, and no other country should copy it mechanically. Moreover, as has been pointed out above, part of Soviet experience is that derived from mistakes and failures. For those who know how best to learn from others this whole body of experience, both of success and failure, is an invaluable asset, because it can help them avoid roundabout ways in their progress and reduce their losses. On the other hand, indiscriminate and mechanical copying of experience that has been successful in the Soviet Union—let alone that which was unsuccessful there—may lead to failures in another country. Lenin wrote in the passage immediately following the one quoted above: "And in order to implement this experience, it is not enough merely to be acquainted with it, or simply to transcribe the latest resolutions. What it requires is the ability to treat this experience critically and to test it independently. Anybody who realize how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to fulfill this task." Obviously, in countries where the proletariat has gained power, the problem is many times more complex than that referred to by Lenin here.

Between 1931 and 1934 in the history of the Communist Party of China there were doctrinaires who refused to recognize China's specific characteristics, mechanically copied certain experiences of the Russian revolution, and caused serious reverses to the revolutionary forces of our country. These reverses were a profound lesson to our Party. In the period between the Tsunyi conference of 1935 and the Party's Seventh National Congress held in 1945, our Party thoroughly liquidated this extremely harmful doctrinaire line, united all its members, including those who had made mistakes, developed the people's forces and thus won victory for the revolution. If this had not been done, victory would have been impossible. It is only because we discarded the doctrinaire line that it has become possible for our Party to make fewer mistakes in learning from the experience of the Soviet Union and other brother countries. It is because of this too that we are able to understand fully how necessary and arduous it is for our Polish and Hungarian comrades to correct today the doctrinaire errors of the past.

Errors of doctrinairism, whenever and wherever they occur, must be set right. We shall continue our efforts to correct and prevent such errors in our work. But opposition to doctrinairism has nothing in common with tolerance of revisionism. Marxism-Leninism recognizes that the Communist movements of various countries necessarily have their own national characteristics. But this does not mean that they do not share certain basic features in common, or that they can depart from the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. In the present anti-doctrinaire tide, there are people in our country and abroad who, on the pretext of opposing the mechanical copying of Soviet experience, try to deny the international significance of the fundamental experience of the Soviet Union and, on the plea of creatively developing Marxism-Leninism, try to deny the significance of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism.

Because Stalin and the former leaders in some socialist countries committed the serious mistake of violating socialist democracy, some waverers in Communist ranks, on the pretext of developing socialist democracy, attempt to weaken or renounce the dictatorship of the proletariat, the democratic centralism of the socialist state, and the leading role of the Party.

There cannot be any doubt that in a proletarian dictatorship the dictatorship over the counter-revolutionary forces must be closely combined with the broadest scope of people's, that is, socialist, democracy. The reason why the dictatorship of the proletariat is powerful, why it is capable of defeating powerful enemies at home and abroad to assume the great historic task of achieving socialism, is that it is a dictatorship of the working people over the exploiters—a dictatorship of the majority over the minority—and gives the broad masses of the working people a democracy which is unattainable under any bourgeois democracy. Failure to forge close links with the mass of the working people and to gain their enthusiastic support makes it impossible to establish the dictatorship of

the proletariat, or at any rate impossible to consolidate it. The more acute the class struggle becomes, the more necessary it is for the proletariat to rely, most resolutely and completely, on the broad masses of the people and to bring into full play their revolutionary enthusiasm to defeat the counter-revolutionary forces.

The experience of the stirring and seething mass struggles in the Soviet Union during the October Revolution and the ensuing civil war proved this truth to the full. It is from Soviet experience in that period that the "mass line" our Party so often talks about was derived. The acute struggles in the Soviet Union then depended mainly on direct action by the mass of the people, and naturally there was little possibility for perfect democratic procedures to develop. Although after the elimination of the exploiting classes and the wiping out in the main of the counter-revolutionary forces, it was still necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat to deal with counter-revolutionary remnants—these could not be wiped out completely so long as imperialism existed—yet its edge should have been mainly directed against the aggressive forces of foreign imperialism. In these circumstances, in the political life of the country, democratic procedures should have been gradually developed and perfected; the socialist legal system perfected; supervision by the people over the state organs strengthened; democratic methods of administering the state and managing enterprises developed; links between the state organs and the bodies administering various enterprises on the one hand, and the broad masses on the other, made closer; hindrances impairing any of these links done away with and a firmer check put on bureaucratic tendencies. After the elimination of classes, the class struggle should not continue to be stressed as being intensified, as it was done by Stalin, with the result that the healthy development of socialist democracy was hampered. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is completely right in firmly correcting Stalin's mistakes in this respect.

Socialist democracy should in no way be pitted against the dictatorship of the proletariat; nor should it be confused with bourgeois democracy. The sole aim of socialist democracy, in political, economic and cultural fields alike, is to strengthen the socialist cause of the proletariat and all the working people, to give scope to their energies for the building of socialism, and to bring their energies into full play in the fight against all anti-socialist forces. If there is a kind of democracy that can be used for anti-socialist purposes and for weakening the cause of socialism, this is certainly not socialist democracy.

Some people, however, do not see things that way. Their reaction to events in Hungary has revealed this most clearly. In the past the democratic rights and revolutionary enthusiasm of the Hungarian working people were impaired, while the counter-revolutionaries were not dealt the blow they deserved, with the result that it was fairly easy for the counter-revolutionaries, in October 1956, to take advantage of the discontent of the masses to organize an armed revolt. This showed that, in the past, a dictatorship of the proletariat had not been really established in Hungary.

Yet when Hungary was facing its crisis, when it lay between revolution and counter-revolution, between socialism and fascism, between peace and war, how did Communist intellectuals in some countries see the problem? They not only did not raise the question of realizing a dictatorship of the proletariat but came out against the righteous action taken by the Soviet Union in aiding the socialist forces of Hungary. They came forward to declare that the counter-revolution in Hungary was a "revolution" and to demand that the Worker-Peasant Revolutionary Government extend "democracy" to the counter-revolutionaries. In certain socialist countries some newspapers are even to this day wantonly discrediting the revolutionary measures taken by the Hungarian Communists who are fighting heroically under difficult conditions, while hardly a word has been said by them about the reactionary international campaign against Communism, against the people and against peace. What is the meaning of these strange facts? It means that those "socialists" who depart from the dictatorship of the proletariat to prate about "democracy" actually stand with the bourgeoisie in opposition to the proletariat; that they are, in effect, asking for capitalism and opposing socialism, though many among them may themselves be unaware of that fact. Lenin pointed out time and again that the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most essential part of Marxism; that acceptance or rejection of the dictatorship of the proletariat is "what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois." Lenin asked the Hungarian proletarian regime of 1919 to use "mercilessly rigorous, swift and resolute force" to suppress the counter-revolutionaries. "Whoever has not understood this," he said, "is not a revolutionary, and should be removed from the post of leader or adviser of the proletariat." So if people reject the fundamental Marxist-Leninist principles regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, if they slanderously dub these principles "Stalinism" and "doctrinairism" simply because they have perceived the mistakes committed by Stalin in the latter part of his life and those made by the former Hungarian leaders, they will be taking the path that leads to betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and away from the cause of proletarian revolution.

Those who reject the dictatorship of the proletariat also deny the need for centralism in socialist democracy and the leading role played by the proletarian party in socialist countries. To Marxist-Leninists, of course, such ideas are nothing new. Engels pointed out long ago, when struggling against the anarchists, that as long as there is concerted action in any social organization there must be a certain degree of authority and subordination. The relation between authority and autonomy is relative and the scope of their application changes with different stages of the development of society. Engels said that "it is absurd to speak of the principle of authority as being absolutely evil, and of the principle of autonomy as being absolutely good," and that anyone who insisted on such an absurdity was in fact to "serve reaction." In the struggle against the Men-

sheviks, Lenin brought out most clearly the decisive significance of the organized leadership of the Party for the proletarian cause. When criticizing the German Communist "Left" in 1920, Lenin stressed that to deny the leading role of the Party, to deny the part played by leaders and to reject discipline, is tantamount "to completely disarming the proletariat in the interest of the bourgeoisie. It is tantamount to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organized action, which, if indulged in, must inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement." Have these principles become obsolete? Are they inapplicable to the specific conditions in certain countries? Will their application lead to the repetition of Stalin's mistakes? The answer is obviously "no." These principles of Marxism-Leninism have stood the test of history in the development of the international Communist movement and of the socialist countries, and not a single case that can be called an exception to them has been found so far.

Stalin's mistakes did not lie in the practice of democratic centralism in state affairs, nor in putting leadership by the Party into effect; it lay precisely in the fact that, in certain fields and to a certain degree, he undermined democratic centralism and leadership by the Party. The correct practice of democratic centralism in state affairs and the proper strengthening of leadership by the Party in the socialist cause are the basic guarantees that the countries in the socialist camp will be able to unite their people, defeat their enemies, overcome their difficulties and grow vigorously. It is precisely for this reason that the imperialists and all counter-revolutionaries, bent on attacking our cause, have always demanded that we "liberalize," that they have always concentrated their forces on wrecking the leading bodies of our cause, and on destroying the Communist Party, the core of the proletariat. They have expressed great satisfaction at the current "instability" in certain socialist countries, resulting from the impairment of discipline in the Party and the state organs, and are taking advantage of this to intensify their acts of sabotage. These facts show how great is the significance of upholding the authority of democratic centralism and the leading role of the Party to the basic interests of the masses of the people. There is no doubt that the centralism in the system of democratic centralism must rest on a broad basis of democracy, and that the Party leadership must maintain close ties with the masses. Any shortcomings in this respect must be firmly criticized and overcome. But such criticism should be made only for the purpose of consolidating democratic centralism and of strengthening the leadership of the Party. It should in no circumstances bring about disorganization and confusion in the ranks of the proletariat, as our enemies desire.

Among those who are trying to revise Marxism-Leninism on the pretext of combating doctrinairism, there are some who simply deny that there is a demarcation line between the proletarian and the bourgeois dictatorship, between the socialist and the capitalist systems and between the socialist and the imperialist camps. According to them, it is possible for

certain bourgeois countries to build socialism without going through a proletarian revolution led by the Party of the proletariat and without setting up a state led by the same, the state capitalism in those countries is socialism itself, and even human society as a whole has already been "growing into" socialism. But while these people are publicizing such ideas, the imperialists are mobilizing all available military, economic, diplomatic, espionage and "moral" forces, actively preparing to "undermine" and "disrupt" socialist countries which have been established for many years. The bourgeois counter-revolutionaries of these countries, who are in hiding at home or living in exile, are still making every effort to stage a comeback. While the revisionist trend serves the interest of the imperialists, the actions of the imperialists do not benefit revisionism but point to its bankruptcy.

## IV

It is one of the most urgent tasks of the proletariat of all countries in its fight against imperialist onslaughts to strengthen its international solidarity. The imperialists and reactionaries in various countries are trying in a thousand and one ways to make use of narrow nationalist sentiments and of certain national estrangements among the peoples to wreck this solidarity, thereby destroying the Communist cause. Staunch proletarian revolutionaries firmly uphold this solidarity, which they regard as being in the common interest of the working class of all countries. Wavering elements have taken no firm, clear-cut stand on this question.

The Communist movement has been an international movement from its very inception, because the workers of various countries can throw off joint oppression by the bourgeoisie of various countries and attain their common aim only by common effort. This international solidarity of the Communist movement has greatly helped the proletariat of various countries in developing their revolutionary cause.

The triumph of the Russian October Revolution gave enormous impetus to the fresh advances of the international proletarian revolutionary movement. In the 39 years since the October Revolution, the achievements of the international Communist movement have been immense, and it has become a powerful, world-wide political force. The world proletariat and all who long for emancipation place their hopes on a bright future for mankind on the victory of this movement.

During these past 39 years the Soviet Union has been the center of the international Communist movement, owing to the fact that it is the first triumphant socialist country, the most powerful and experienced country in the socialist camp since its emergence, capable of giving the most significant help to other socialist countries and to the peoples of various countries in the capitalist world. This is not the result of anyone's arbitrary decision, but the natural outcome of historical conditions. In the interests of the common cause of the proletariat of different countries,

of joint resistance to the attack on the socialist cause by the imperialist camp headed by the rulers of the United States, and of the economic and cultural upsurge common to all socialist countries, we must continue to strengthen international proletarian solidarity with the Soviet Union as its center.

International solidarity of the Communist Parties is an entirely new type of relationship in human history. It is natural that its development cannot be free from difficulties. The Communist Parties must seek unity with each other as well as maintain their respective independence. Historical experience proves that mistakes are bound to occur if there is no proper integration of these two aspects; if one or the other is neglected. Should the Communist Parties maintain relations of equality among themselves and reach common understanding and take concerted action through genuine, and not nominal, exchange of views, their unity will be strengthened. Conversely, if, in their mutual relations, one party imposes its views upon others, or if the parties use the method of interference in each other's internal affairs instead of comradely suggestions and criticism, their unity will be impaired.

In the socialist countries, the Communist Parties have assumed the responsibility of leadership in the affairs of the state, and relations between them often involve directly the relations between their respective countries and peoples, so the proper handling of such relations has become a problem demanding even greater care.

Marxism-Leninism has always insisted upon combining proletarian internationalism with the patriotism of the people of various countries. Each Communist Party must educate its members and the people in a spirit of internationalism; because the true national interests of all peoples call for friendly cooperation among nations. On the other hand, each Communist Party must represent the legitimate national interests and sentiments of its own people. Communists have always been true patriots, and they understand that it is only when they correctly represent the interests and sentiments of their nation that they really enjoy the trust and love of the broad masses of their own people, effectively educate them in internationalism and harmonize the national sentiments and interests of the peoples of different countries.

To strengthen the international solidarity of the socialist countries, each Communist Party must respect the national interests and sentiments of other countries. This is of especial importance for the Communist Party of a larger country in its relations with that of a smaller country. To avoid any resentment on the part of the smaller country, the Party of a larger country must constantly take care to maintain an attitude of equality. As Lenin rightly said, "It is the duty of the class-conscious Communist proletariat of all countries to treat the survivals of national sentiments among the countries and nationalities which have been oppressed for the longest periods with special caution and special attention."

As we have already said, Stalin displayed certain great-nation chau-



vinist tendencies in relations with brother Parties and countries. The essence of such tendencies lies in being unmindful of the independent and equal status of the Communist Parties of various lands and that of the socialist countries within the framework of international bond of union. There are definite historical reasons for such tendencies. The time-worn habits of big countries in their relations with small countries continue to make their influence felt in certain ways, while a series of victories achieved by a Party or a country in its revolutionary cause is apt to give rise to a certain sense of superiority.

For these reasons, systematic efforts are needed to overcome great-nation chauvinist tendencies. Great-nation chauvinism is not peculiar to any one country. For instance, country B may be small and backward compared to country A, but big and advanced compared to country C. Thus country B, while complaining of great-nation chauvinism on part of Country A, may often assume the airs of a great nation in relation to country C. What we Chinese especially must bear in mind is that China too was a big empire during the Han, Tang, Ming and Ching Dynasties. Although it is true that in the hundred years after the middle of the 19th Century, China became a victim of aggression and a semi colony and although she is still economically and culturally backward today, nevertheless, under changed conditions, great-nation chauvinist tendencies will certainly become a serious danger if we do not take every precaution to guard against them. It should, furthermore, be pointed out that some signs of this danger have already begun to appear among some of our personnel. That was why emphasis was laid on combatting the tendency of great-nation chauvinism both in the resolution of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China and the statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China issued on November 1, 1956.

But it is not only great-nation chauvinism that hinders international proletarian unity. In the course of history, big countries have shown disrespect for small countries and even oppressed them; and small countries have distrusted big ones and even become hostile to them. Both tendencies still exist to a greater or lesser extent among the peoples and even in the ranks of the working class of various countries. That is why, in order to strengthen the international solidarity of the proletariat, apart from the primary task of overcoming great-nation chauvinist tendencies in bigger countries, it is also necessary to overcome nationalist tendencies in smaller countries. No matter whether their country is big or small, if Communists counter-pose the interests of their own country and nation to the general interests of the international proletarian movement, make this a pretext for opposing the general interests, and not seriously to maintain international proletarian solidarity in actual practice but on the contrary to damage it, they will be committing a serious mistake of violating the principles of internationalism and Marxism-Leninism.

Stalin's mistakes aroused grave dissatisfaction among people in certain

Eastern European countries. But then neither is the attitude of some people in these countries towards the Soviet Union justified. Bourgeois nationalists try their best to exaggerate the shortcomings of the Soviet Union and overlook the contributions it has made. They attempt to prevent the people from thinking how would the imperialists treat their country and their people if the Soviet Union did not exist. We Chinese Communists are very glad to see that the Communist Parties of Poland and Hungary are already putting a firm check on the activities of evil elements that fabricate anti-Soviet rumors and stir up national antagonisms in relations with brother countries, and also that these parties have set to work to dispel nationalist prejudices existing among some sections of the masses and even among some of the Party members. This is clearly one of the steps urgently needed to consolidate friendly relations among the socialist countries.

As we pointed out above, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union has, in the main, conformed to the interests of the international proletariat, the oppressed nations and the peoples of the world. In the past 39 years, the Soviet people have made tremendous efforts and heroic sacrifices in aiding the cause of the peoples of the various countries. Mistakes committed by Stalin certainly cannot detract from these historic achievements of the great Soviet people.

The Soviet Government's efforts to improve relations with Yugoslavia, its declaration of October 30, 1956, and its talks with Poland in November 1956 all manifest the determination of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Government to thoroughly eliminate past mistakes in foreign relations. These steps by the Soviet Union are an important contribution to the strengthening of the international solidarity of the proletariat.

Obviously at the present moment, when the imperialists are launching frenzied attacks on the Communist ranks in the various countries, it is necessary for the proletariat of all nations to strive to strengthen its solidarity. As we are faced with powerful enemies no word or deed, no matter what name it goes by, which harms the solidarity of the international Communist ranks, can hope to receive any sympathy from the Communists and working people of the various countries.

The strengthening of the international solidarity of the proletariat, with the Soviet Union as its core, is not only in the interest of the world proletariat but also in the interests of the independence movement of all oppressed nations, and of world peace. Through their own experience, the broad masses of the people in Asia, Africa and Latin America easily understand who are their enemies and who their friends. That is why the imperialist-instigated campaign against Communism, against the people and against peace has evoked so faint a response, with only a handful among the more than 1,000 million people who inhabit these continents. Facts prove that the revolutionary proletariat of the Soviet Union, China, the other socialist countries and that of the imperialist countries are all

staunch supporters of Egypt's struggle against aggression, and of the independence movement in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The socialist countries, the proletariat in the imperialist countries, and the countries striving for national independence—these three forces have bonds of common interest in their struggle against imperialism and their mutual support and assistance is of the greatest significance to the future of mankind and world peace. Recently the imperialist forces of aggression have again created a certain degree of tension in the international situation. But with the joint struggle of the three forces we have mentioned, plus the concerted efforts of all other peace-loving forces in the world, a new lessening of such tension can be achieved. The imperialist forces of aggression failed to gain anything from their invasion of Egypt; instead, they were dealt a telling blow. Furthermore, thanks to the help given by the Soviet troops to the Hungarian people, the imperialists were frustrated in their plan to build an outpost of war in Eastern Europe and to disrupt the solidarity of the socialist camp. Socialist countries are persisting in their efforts for peaceful coexistence with the capitalist countries, to develop diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with them, to settle international disputes through peaceful negotiations, to oppose preparations for a new world war, to expand the peace area in the world, and to broaden the scope of application of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. All these efforts will certainly win ever more sympathy from the oppressed nations and the peace-loving peoples throughout the world.

The strengthening of the international solidarity of the proletariat will make the imperialist warmongers think twice before embarking upon new adventures. Therefore, despite the fact that the imperialists are still trying to resist the efforts described above, the forces for peace will eventually triumph over the forces of war.

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The international Communist movement has only a history of 92 years, reckoning from the establishment of the First International in 1864. Despite many ups and downs, the progress of the movement as a whole has been very rapid. During the First World War, there appeared the Soviet Union, covering one-sixth of the earth. After the Second World War, there appeared the camp of socialism, which now has a third of the world's population. When the socialist states commit errors of one kind or another, our enemies are elated while some of our comrades and friends become dejected; a number of them even waver in their confidence as to the future of the Communist cause. However, there is little cause for our enemies to rejoice or for our comrades and friends to feel dejected or to waver. The proletariat has begun to rule the state for the first time in history; in some countries this occurred only a few years ago, and in the oldest only a few decades ago. So it is impossible to expect that no failures should be encountered. Temporary and partial failures have occurred and are still occurring, and may occur in the future. But any person

with foresight will not feel dejected and pessimistic because of them. Failure is the mother of success. Recent temporary, partial failures have enriched the political experience of the international proletariat and will help to pave the way for great successes in the endless years to come. Compared with the history of the bourgeois revolutions in Britain and France, the failures in our cause are insignificant. The bourgeois revolution in Britain started in 1640. After vanquishing the king, this was followed by Cromwell's dictatorship. Then came the restoration of the old royal house in 1660. It was not until 1688 when the bourgeois party, staging a coup d'etat, invited to England a king who brought along with him troops and naval forces from The Netherlands that the British bourgeois dictatorship was consolidated. During the 86 years from the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789 to 1875, when the Third Republic was established, the bourgeois revolution in France went through a particularly stormy period, swinging in rapid succession between progress and reaction, republicanism and monarchism, revolutionary terror and counter-revolutionary terror, civil war and foreign war, the conquest of foreign lands and capitulation to foreign states. Although the socialist revolution faces the concerted opposition of the reactionaries throughout the world, its course as a whole is smooth and remarkably steady. This is a true reflection of the unparalleled vitality of the socialist system. Though the international Communist movement has met with some setbacks recently, we have learned many helpful lessons from them. We have corrected, or are correcting, the mistakes in our own ranks which need to be rectified. When these errors are righted, we shall be stronger and more firmly united than ever before. Contrary to the expectation of our enemies, the cause of the proletariat will not be thrown back but will make ever more progress.

But the fate of imperialism is quite different. There, in the imperialist world, fundamental clashes of interest exist between imperialism and the oppressed nations, among the imperialist countries themselves, and between the government and the people of these imperialist countries. These clashes will grow more and more acute and there is no cure for them.

Of course, the new-born system of proletarian dictatorship still faces many difficulties, and has various weaknesses. But, compared with the time when the Soviet Union was struggling by itself, the situation is a good deal better. And what new birth is not attended with difficulties and weaknesses? The issue is the future. However many twists and turns may await us on our forward journey, humanity will eventually reach its bright destiny—Communism. There is no force that can stop it.

# The Significance of the XXth Congress, CPSU\*

By Palmiro Togliatti

IN THE working-class and socialist movement of the entire world, and for us Communists, especially, as the conscious vanguard in this movement, the most important fact of the recent period has been the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, because of the revitalizing change which it announced, justified, determined. There are two great pillars that all the decisions of this Congress rest on. The first is the declaration of the existence of a system of socialist states, which accompanies the collapse of colonialism; the second, is the denunciation of wrong political trends under the leadership of Stalin, which, according to the description given by the Soviet comrades, led to "... brutal violations of the Leninist principles of leadership, to brutal violations of socialist legality . . .", with consequences that went to the length of the commission of criminal acts.

From the Congress discussions, important conclusions have been drawn in regard to the strategy and the tactics of the Communist movement; the affirmation of the possibility of avoiding war in consequence of the changes in the structure of the world; the recognition of the possibility of an advance towards socialism which may exclude insurrection and is carried out within the orbit of democratic legality,

while utilizing parliamentary institutions. And from the revelations [at the XXth Congress] it is impossible not to see the necessity for profound correction and a turn to a new course.

But one observation must be made. The close connection existing between the new positions of principle and political activity stated with such clarity, and the criticism and denunciation of the erroneous course followed by Stalin in the period the Congress indicated, was not brought out in sharp relief with the necessary evidence. Because of this a point of the very greatest importance, theoretical as well as practical, has remained cloudy. These errors in political activity, which the Congress revealed, not only had never been compatible with our principles and with our program and not only did they cause damage to the construction of socialist society, but they were capable of causing—and did cause—even greater damage when the passage was being made from the construction and existence of socialism in one country alone, to the existence of a socialist world made up of a system of states.

\* This consists of Section Two of the Report to the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Italy. It was translated for *Political Affairs*, by A. Schechter, from *L'Unità*, December 6, 1956. The section was entitled as above; the entire Report was entitled, "For the Italian Road to Socialism"—Ed.

This defect is due perhaps to the fact that the powerful denunciation of errors so grave that they went to the point of crime, was not accompanied immediately by a deep-going investigation and by critically pointing out their origins and the conditions under which they were committed. They were treated within the confines of a dramatic posthumous signaling of the aberrations in the character of, and the wrongs done by, a leader; instead of searching out what distortions had been produced and had to be corrected in the political order; what the causes were which had been able to produce them; and what, as a result, the method should be which would definitely do away with them.

This defect has in a certain measure rendered more difficult the struggle against the campaign of enemies of every stripe, who immediately maintained that the whole Soviet system, and the whole socialist society as well, must be considered responsible for the deeds which were revealed, and are to be condemned on principle.

More serious, however, seems to be the fact that from this defect there resulted the absence of an immediate and complete evaluation of all the consequences which would have to be expected from the XXth Congress revelation, and thus, what corrections and modifications, some of them profound in character, ought to be made in all the countries where Communists are at the head of the State and of society.

*The Twentieth Congress and the necessity for profound and courageous corrections in the peoples democracies of Eastern Europe.*

Developments were not everywhere the same. In the Soviet Union the revelations had rightly been preceded by important corrections, which already constituted the substance of a change. Problems of the development of industry, of agriculture, of the political direction of the Party were stated in a new way. The direction and activity of the security organs were altered energetically and without hesitation. Important corrections were made in the scientific and cultural fields.

In China the Communist Party could not have found in this anything extraordinary. It had always had its own original way of conducting its affairs, adapted to the conditions of that great country. There the building of a socialist society was being carried out under new forms and the life of the Party also had its special character, growing out of the long and heroic struggle which had created close bonds between the Party and all strata of the toiling population, and made the Chinese Communists the highest expression of the national and social consciousness of the whole Chinese people.

The XXth Congress discussions did, however, come as a shock to at least some of the peoples democracies, and in all probability a profound one. This helps to explain why conditions continued to exist which should have been faced swiftly, and courageously changed; to explain the consequent bewilderment, the breaking of ranks, the loss of control over events and the insinuation into all this of treacherous and violent action on the part of class enemies, as happened so dramatically in Hungary.

We consider of great importance the fact that in the Soviet Union it has been stated that the duty of the Soviet

comrades is not simply *not to oppose* indispensable alterations in political and personal trends which have been adopted, but to participate in an active manner, with criticism and guidance, to the end that resistance may be overcome, and the alterations carried through. This—and nothing other—was the content of the logic of the XXth Congress decisions.

The lag in confirming this opened up the way to the most serious consequences. In the peoples democracies of Eastern Europe new regimes arose after the war, in the course of the destruction of the reactionary regimes preceding it; and because the presence of Soviet troops barred a return to the past, to a capitalist restoration, reactionary in content. Thus the working-class parties were able, with the people's support, to place themselves at the head of a broad movement for a revolutionary transformation of the economic base and of the political structure of society. The face of this part of Europe was changed, a part which in the 25 preceding years had been a hornet's nest of imperialist agents, of warmongers and fascists.

Problems were solved which for centuries had waited in vain for solution, such as the destruction of the feudal landowning system; the bases for the construction of socialism were rapidly created. New experiences in the field of broad social and political collaboration were achieved. When the first stage of a bourgeois-democratic character had been effectively mastered, and passage towards the stage of a more definitely socialist transformation began, the Cold War was launched, and the situation was rendered still more difficult by the break with Yugoslavia.

The demands of external defense and internal vigilance assumed first importance, and there was—though not everywhere, and not in equal measures in all countries—a certain tendency for each land to isolate itself within its own borders. It probably was at this moment that there began to gain the upper hand the servile imitation of the Soviet model in the solution of problems connected with the building of socialism and with the defense of the new power. It was, also, the only model there was; and the Soviet Union was the only country which offered help and support to the new democracies, while the West kept calling for the destruction of the new regimes, and giving support to the reactionary forces which operated with this aim in view.

The mechanical transposition of the results of the great Soviet experience to the new socialist lands, wrong in principle, necessarily revealed itself to be harmful in practice. Certain of the principles which had guided to a victorious solution the grave historical problem of the passage to socialism in one country, the Soviet Union, cannot have a universal value, nor can they be copied mechanically. I am thinking, for example, of the rapid, obligatory organization of a heavy industry, at the cost of any sacrifice; of the necessity of developing fully all the basic branches of industry; of the expansion in the course of a few years of collectivization to the entire mass of the agricultural population.

The mechanical transference of these Soviet examples to countries where conditions were largely different, could only create excessive difficulties, harsh treatment and serious imbalances, rendering accumulation more onerous,

slowing the process of raising the standard of living, and, at length, causing too heavy burdens to fall on the shoulders of the workers and peasants. The tendency to mask the difficulties by unjustified repressive measures, reaching the point of the violation of legality, aggravated the situation.

There is the additional fact that in the countries of new democracy there did not exist a working-class vanguard which was comparable to the party of the Russian Bolsheviks—in compactness, in its moral force, its capacity for work, and the breadth of its ties with the masses. There was lacking, as well, to sustain the new regimes, forms rooted in organized democratic trends, which would have integrated the activity of parliamentary bodies, while the trade unions did not fully employ their function as a regulatory force in the country's economic development through the defense of the immediate demands of labor. Thus, the democratic foundations both of economic and political life were narrowed down considerably.

In this manner something was forgotten that for us is a position of principle—the necessity that the advance towards socialism be accomplished by, and proceed from, the working class, guided in various ways according to existing conditions and the specific economic, political, national and cultural character of each land.

Already in 1902, discussing the program of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party, Lenin declared that ". . . the Russian program cannot be . . . identical with that of the other European countries. . . ." This concept was thereafter constantly confirmed and developed, an expression of it being his speech on the Italian question,

in 1921, when, again, Lenin, said: "We have never maintained that Serati would—in Italy—copy the Russian revolution. It would be foolish to say it. We are intelligent and flexible enough to avoid a piece of stupidity of this sort."

Nor is the question here solely of respect for national traditions and feelings. Apropos of this, is the fact that during recent Hungarian events we have learned of things that amazed us, as, for example, the suppression, by Hungarian comrades, of the festival celebrating the 1848 revolution, which would be, as if here we Italian Communists, should refuse to celebrate the *Five Days of Milan*. The major problem is to follow a political line which makes it possible to unite the working-class forces, to gather around them the broadest and most solid bloc of alliances of classes and of political beliefs, of both urban and rural circles; and in this way to isolate, progressively, and render harmless the reactionary groupings, depriving them of the possibility of all support—through broad political action, and not alone through security measures. A political line of this sort cannot be elaborated and cannot be applied, unless cognizance is taken of all the specific characteristics of national life.

*Two elements were at the foundation of events in Hungary: ideological isolation and obstinate resistance above, and disintegration below.*

The most acute period of the Cold War being ended, the statement, made at the XXth Congress, on the existence of a system of socialist states, merits consideration from the angle of the situation of the countries of new de-



mocracy. A system of socialist states, which has as its basis the recognition of the principle of diverse paths of development towards socialism, must be a system of independent states in which the sovereignty of the smallest countries cannot be limited and placed in jeopardy by intervention and pressure on the part of the stronger states.

The Soviet declaration of October 30th, thoroughly expounded this principle, and it would have had even greater significance if this had been done earlier, immediately following the XXth Congress. Then it would have served as a stimulus to the individual countries and the parties directing them, to face courageously and put into practice that change in direction which, in some of these countries especially, was an urgent and vital necessity.

Instead, what actually happened? What happened—and here I refer especially to Hungary—was that the most significant decisions and documents of the XXth Congress were, in fact, brought to the notice of the Party members and of public opinion; but, while they stimulated the people to think, they did not stimulate the directing groups to act, and act with energy, in a manner that would let all see that the necessity turn was being made under the firm leadership of the Party. Thus there began that process which necessarily brought about an acute situation in Poland and collapse in Hungary.

Ideological isolation, lack of foresight and stubborn resistance from above, while below there sprung up no longer criticism, but a veritable public campaign of vilification against the party leadership, the Party and the entire regime. This campaign, to which no really serious and reasoned defense

was opposed by the Party, but only lofty and schematic summary judgments, caused, in turn, further disintegration. The agitation at the noted Petofi Circle became, under these conditions, the premise for counterrevolution, since into the void that had opened there inevitably entered the class enemy and very sort of adversary, openly aiming at the possibility of overthrowing the new regime through an armed insurrectional movement.

The regimes of peoples democracy had not been in existence as long as the Soviet regime. The old reactionary ruling classes still maintain, especially in some countries, certain strength and certain organizational bases; they have the unconditional support of western imperialism, and a support manifesting itself in the form of the continuous call to revolt and concrete aid in organizing it.

In judging the facts of recent happenings we thus place the emphasis, first of all, on the mistakes in political leadership, continued too long and not corrected in time, and on the erroneous method of discussing them outside of the Party, destroying the unity and the strength of the Party itself. The gravest mistake, would be, however, to limit the matter to this, excluding, out of hand, the intervention and the presence of the enemy, more or less justifying the recourse to violence against the regime of peoples democracy, or even the absurd appeal to the masses against the Party. The Party should have been leading them. The enemy was not only the dollars of the American imperialists, although these are in themselves sufficiently effective, but is also the survival in men's consciousness of falsely oriented ideals and practices, because the minds of

men become transformed only in the measure that it is possible to transform the economic and political structure.

This array of diverse elements explains in part the gravity of Hungarian events, resulting actually in the downfall of a regime which could and should have had unbreakable bonds with the working masses! resulting in the disintegration of a Communist Party and then, in a wide popular participation, under conditions of the most extreme confusion, in a revolt into which, from the very first moments there had insinuated themselves, in order to dominate it, the avowed class enemy. Thus there came about the situation which rendered unavoidable, as a harsh necessity, the Soviet action in order to bar the road to the thing that would have been the worst of all—fascism and war. In other words, they were carrying out not alone a class duty, but a duty to all the forces of democracy and peace.

We cannot be astonished that among some workers there have been uncertainty, hesitation and mistaken judgments, in the face of such appalling facts which place before us complex political questions, and which among some, unable to orient themselves quickly, seem to pose even matters of conscience. These things must be overcome, and will be overcome by careful reasoning and persuasion, and by concentrating our fire against the enemy who is using events as ammunition, and against the forces of reaction which hope that now they will be able to raise their heads again.

*Relations between the socialist countries today are posed in a new manner and at a high level.*

The criticisms and revelations of the

Congress, when they are accorded their proper value, create the conditions for a new and a multiple forms, within broad confines. The socialist world is strengthening itself by renewing itself, is carrying through a process of internal articulation and unification, breaking up schematic forms and incrustations which hinder its forward thrust, organizing more solid ties with the working masses, liquidating illegality, the absurd limitations on democratic rights, accepting debate and meeting openly face to face ideologies that differ from ours, liberating science and art from curbs that were injuring them.

The relations between the individual socialist countries are being built in a new way, as I have already pointed out. And we must also add here—although this theme is outside of our scope—that also in the field of economic relations between these lands we are probably at the initiation of a new period, in which these relations would seem to be developing to a higher level. This flows from the need to relinquish mechanical and slavish imitation of Soviet achievements in this field. The Soviet Union has up to this time provided an enormous amount of aid for the development of the socialist countries, aid in overcoming their difficulties, in building factories, in the mastery of the most advanced technical achievements, up to the level of the most modern atomic installations. If it were possible to calculate the material value of this aid, the total would run into astronomical figures. The people of the Soviet Union, by this obligation they assumed and carried out, by this sacrifice they made, have won the imperishable gratitude of the whole working-class movement. But the time

has arrived in which the method of this aid has become inadequate to solve the true problem, which is that of establishing a system of economic cooperation which, without in any manner injuring the independence and sovereignty of the individual states, shall permit, through a sort of international division of labor, the reduction of costs, a rise in productivity, and hence a greater well-being in each individual land. This has always been the objective of which the founders and the great teachers of our movement spoke, when they looked towards the future.

The conditions are such that objectively they demand and render possible a new forward thrust and new progress in the Communist movement. The critical moment which we are going through is thus not a moment for revisionism, not for sterile meditation, but for creative development, assuring definite new successes.

It is natural that the question of the relations between the Communist parties and the workers should, in this situation, present itself as an acute problem, and in new forms. The Communist International fulfilled a great role in the past, through giving a revolutionary orientation to the working-class movement and educating more than a generation of forces for it. Frequently, in its decisions, there existed a certain sectarianism, which isolated the Communists from the great masses of workers. This sectarianism was, however, energetically liquidated when, faced by the threat of fascism and of war, the unity of the workers and democratic forces presented itself as the supreme necessity, the primary task.

In the brief and fragmentary activi-

ties of the Cominform, also, there was a tendency towards a certain sectarian isolation, demonstrated in the incorrect decision which led to the break with the Yugoslav Communist movement. The indispensable seeking, by each Party for its own road for advancing towards and struggling for socialism, and not alone for its road to inner development, demands autonomy of inquiry and of judgment in applying to national situations the principles of Marxism-Leninism which guide us. And these same principles are not dogma: they furnish a method, by following which we are in a position to understand reality, to adapt action to this reality, and through such action to develop the principles and discover new laws regulating the creation of a socialist world; new orientations and directions for a Communist movement now a world force and a movement of masses led by Communists, such as never existed until the present day. To retain faith in basic principles, and from them deduce that which is necessary for our rejuvenation—this is the task which today faces all of us.

It is a difficult task, and in order to carry it through effectively the help—on a basis of reciprocity—of all sections of our movement, is indispensable, the help of all our Parties. There no longer exists a unique organization and hence a unique directing center. Consideration was given to the idea of a system of multiple groupings and centers; but this organizational form too appeared incompatible with the full autonomy of each Party and of such a nature that it would place upon one or another of these an excessive degree of responsibility.

*Bilateral relationships between the Communist Parties and the Principles of non-intervention in the internal matters of each one.*

The system of bilateral relationships satisfies the need for autonomy, but only if this is carried into effect with serious intent, and in a concrete manner, taking into account the concrete situation existing today. The content of these bilateral relationships must thus include, in the first place, mutual knowledge and mutual respect, and must allow—must solicit friendly criticism, which poses problems and encourages their investigation in depth. What would be completely inadmissible, from wherever the impetus for it might come, would be a return to the systems which we have criticized and overcome, the intervention in the internal questions of other parties, the transformation of criticism into attack which spreads discredit and confusion, the arbitrary distrust, the open or concealed support of factional struggle, the stimulation of a split in the unity of other Parties, or of our movement as a whole.

It is on the basis of these principles that we have guided our relations with the League of Yugoslav Communists. We consider this to be a positive achievement, and consider instructive the primary results of our study of the experiences of building socialism in Yugoslavia; and we intend to further develop this friendly relationship. We should not, however, fall into errors which would violate the principles indicated above. We consider as dangerous, contrary to truth and unjust, the attempt to split the Communist movement into two parts as though there existed one section which on principle

opposed the decisions of the XXth Congress, and the conclusions which must be drawn from it. The fact is that in various countries there exists a variety of methods of bringing about the necessary corrections. As regards the peoples democracies, it would be a serious blunder to consider the situation revealed in Hungary as common to all, or to close one's eyes to the progress already attained, and to the new successes achieved, as for instance the recent Czech legislation on social security.

There must be profound changes; events like those in Hungary, must never, at any cost, take place again. But change does not mean a breakup; and in order that such events shall not be repeated, the unity and solidarity of the working-class parties is necessary and their proper activities, which create unbreakable bonds with the masses.

*International unity of the working-class movement is strengthened by the autonomy of the individual parties.*

All of us feel it necessary—through drawing closer and establishing contact between the different Parties of our great international movement—that our mutual knowledge of the questions we are seeking to solve in different countries, even though through differing methods, should become more exact and more profound. We are opposed to a return to any form whatsoever of centralized organization. But we do not exclude the possibility of the organization of international conferences of representatives of several Parties—we rather hope it will gain support as a thing that is useful to all—to examine problems of special importance, and to

study the diverse paths which are being followed for the solution of various situations; the aim of these meetings being not to elaborate decisions binding on all, but to clarify for all the positions held by those attending, and thus to increase the unity of the movement.

Also the representatives of organizations who are not Communist, but Social Democrats and democrats of every variety, but which refuse to take part—at the orders of reaction—in the crucifixion of the Communists, could also participate in similar meetings, and this would be a step, even if a small one, in the direction of overcoming the present split in the international working-class movement, achieving, at least, creation of the conditions under which in the future this split can be healed.

The working-class movement has a fundamental duty which is binding upon it—that of internationalism; and internationalism should be expressed through an effective political solidarity, not only among the Parties which at this time are carrying on the fight to come to power, but also those Parties which already are in power and are governing a state. If there is not international proletarian solidarity, there can be no correct orientation either in external or internal policy.

This is not to say that we take a nihilist approach to national sentiment and to national obligations, that is, to the problems of the independence and freedom of a nation and to its traditions. When there was a tendency for this sort of national nihilism to prevail in some strata of workers, because of the conditions of misery and neglect in which they were forced to live, we have been able to meet and overcome

it. We guided the Italian working class to take its stand at the head of the struggle for national liberation, and to make their own the banner of independence, while the ruling classes groveled before the foreigner. From our international class consciousness derives no sentiment, no duty, no bond, no position which can be contrary to the interests of the nation. Rather, it is in the struggle for a socialist renaissance that the nation will find the conditions for a loftier affirmation of its freedom and its sovereignty, the conditions for progress and for a fuller affirmation of the qualities which are peculiarly its own.

Socialism can never be imported from abroad. It is a social transformation which must rise out of the labors and the struggle of the whole people, certainly in the light of international experience, but under the guidance of the finest national traditions and of a system of revolutionary thought, a body of experience lived through by the people itself, creating in the people a new consciousness.

The Communist movement must have unity, not only nationally, but internationally, as well. This unity can be understood in two ways: it can be understood as the result of external pressure, of a mechanical transposition or servile imitation of the direction followed by one's neighbor, and this we reject. But there can also be a unity which is created by the diversity and originality of individual experiences, nourished by a mutual critical spirit, strengthened by the autonomy of the individual Parties. It is this sort of unity which we need: we should necessarily be united for the reason that we have the same principles and pursue the same final goal.

Our unity is an augury of the international society for which we are fighting, in which all the peoples shall be equal, free and brothers. We must be united, because only in our unity can the proletarians of the entire world find the guide which will show them the way towards understanding one another, towards drawing close to one another, and collaborating across national boundaries. We must be united so that we can always successfully unite in combatting with our combined forces the enemies of the working class.

The gangster attack on the headquarters of the French Communist Party at Paris has made everyone realize what schemes are always smoldering in the minds of the present ruling classes. The joy shamelessly displayed by the reactionary press at the spectacle of the Communists hanged and mutilated in the streets of Budapest made it exceedingly clear what in cold fact they are thinking about—these ruling classes—when they dare to speak of the “liberation” of countries where we are today at the helm. Fascism and the White Terror are their unique ideal when they think of us. And they make no distinctions in regard to us: whatever it may be that we say or that we do, we always are “. . . the enemies of humankind . . .”, the “servants of Moscow . . .”, the “infidels.”

It is not to get into the good graces of reactionaries that we are working for the renaissance of our movement, for a more effectively articulated unity of the entire international Communist movement; we are doing this, because—overcoming our sectarian isolation—this is the best way in which to gain reinforcements, to become more close-

ly united with the working masses, to combat and overcome our enemies.

*It is the October Revolution which opened up for all the road towards socialism and determined the downfall of the colonial system.*

Some attack our attachment to the Soviet Union, for the role we attribute to that country and the Party which leads it in the socialist world and in the international Communist movement; but the attack remains on the level of insults and lies. We have said, and none has attempted to discuss this on any serious basis, that our attachment to the Soviet Union stems from the fact that in the decisive moments of history—after World War I, in the years of the temporary stabilization of capitalism, when the fascist onslaught was unleashed, and then when World War II broke out—from the Soviet Union came the outlines and the example of the sort of action which posed and correctly solved questions which were matters of life and death for the working-class and democratic movement.

It was in the Soviet Union that for the first time the chains of capitalism were sundered; and there that for thirty-nine years they labored to build a new society. This society is a fact, it exists, it is the first great pattern of socialist organization, it is a society which is developing according to new laws, which are no longer the laws of profit and of exploitation, but of productive, technical and cultural progress serving to raise the level of well-being of all.

What have the reactionary sections among the social democrats to coun-

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terpose to this great creation which has changed the source of history? Their course of action had, as its point of departure, the betrayal of 1914; then went on through the drowning in blood of the Spartacist revolution of 1919. They boast of administering society in the interests of capitalism and to prevent capitalism's downfall; their course today has reached its culmination in the ultimate act of prowess of the Social-Democratic government of France, in the criminal aggression against the Egyptian people. What have the Catholic integralists and the hierarchy to counterpose, other than their support of openly reactionary and fascist regimes?

It was the Bolshevik Revolution which opened the road to socialism to all. It was the construction of Soviet socialism which gave spirit and drive to the whole working-class movement. It was the victories of the Soviet Union which made possible the crushing of fascism, which was the determining force in the downfall of the colonial regimes, and in the formation of new free states in Asia and in Africa.

*A profound study is necessary of the causes determining the distortions in socialist society.*

We also, the Communist Party of Italy, were born out of the October Revolution and have grown under its influence. We do not for a moment hesitate to declare that we have always worked to carry forward the work of that Revolution; nor that we hold to this at the present time too as our task and the task of the working class of the entire world.

We must appreciate fully the worth of the victories won, to under-

stand the sacrifices which these cost, and from these things to judge the system which some today would throw overboard—for the reason that at a certain moment in its development it has demonstrated the capacity energetically to expose its own defects, to criticize them courageously, and to gird itself to carry through the task of correcting them. For this reason we refuse to use the term "Stalinism" and its derivatives because it carries with it the conclusion which is false, of a system that is, as a whole, wrong, rather than giving impetus to the search for the evils which made their way, for specific causes, into a situation marked by positive economic and political construction, of correct activity in the field of international relations, and decisive victories resulting from them. There are those who maintain that these evils were inevitable: and, still more serious, who, on the basis of these seek to build empty destructive criticism.

We have discussed with the Soviet comrades, openly, the character of these evils, characterized by us as deformations of some parts of the organization of socialist society; we have tried to contribute to the evaluation of their gravity and of their origin. We state our opinion, and if there is some disagreement on this question between us and the Soviet comrades, very definitely this disagreement has no sort of reference to the necessity of the criticisms and revelations made at the XXth Congress, which we unreservedly approved of, and from which there can not be any turning back. The debate on the causes of misleadership, and of the grave, painful and impermissible deeds denounced by the Congress, is a debate which will certainly

continue, because this is to the interest of the whole working class; and because the frenzied attack by the enemy, which is seeking to use this question as a lever, can be repulsed the more effectively, the more the investigation into these things, and our answers, are serious, and reasoned, and do not fail to consider any one of the aspects of reality.

I continue in my conviction that the inquiry must be especially directed towards bringing to light the relationship, the contradictions and the reciprocal influences operating between economic developments and political superstructure, of which the manner of leadership at the highest level also forms a part.

When the evolution of the economic base had already reached a point which allowed—and demanded—an extension of democratic life, this was not done, but instead, came restrictions and artificial isolation. Here seems to me to be the key which explains how, in a socialist society, whose substantially democratic character results solely from the continuous initiative, from the activity and from the economic and political creativeness of the popular masses even under the most difficult conditions—democracy can undergo, in the Party and outside of it, the violations and limitations which are today being denounced. From this test too, however, the system has emerged victorious. The Soviet comrades have had the courage to reveal the violations and the ability to correct them.

Our need is to inform ourselves about things, to study them before passing judgment; to inform ourselves about the Soviet Union, about the peoples democracies and the great Chinese

republic, and to make them better known to our whole movement. Not to conceal the difficulties and the problems of socialist construction; not to keep silence about the sacrifices which this can cost. This will allow us to refute more effectively false lines of reasoning by opponents and enemies, to estimate at its true value what the Soviet Union has accomplished, and the historic worth attaching to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to its leaders, as the first—without having before them any example from which to take guidance and inspiration—to attack the practical problems of socialism, which never before had been stated; and to succeed in resolving them, guiding the people along paths which had never been trodden before.

*There is not a guide state nor a guide party: the guide is our principles and the interests of the working class and the Italian people.*

The position which the Soviet Union and the Party which direct it occupies in the socialist world, of which it is the axis and the main moving force is a reality historically determined and which cannot be destroyed. There is no guide state, nor guide party. The guide is our own principles, the interests of the working class and of the Italian people, the permanent defense of peace, and of the independence of the nation, the obligations of international solidarity. Following this guide, we shall hew out a path which is altogether our own, and which the example and the experiences acquired in the course of the titanic labors which have been and are being carried out in the Soviet Union will continue to illuminate.



## Marxism-Leninism and "American Prosperity"

By William Z. Foster

AT THE PRESENT TIME there is a militant drive on in the Communist Party against Marxism-Leninism, on the grounds that it is essentially Left-sectarian and, as such, unadaptable to American conditions. . . . of this anti-Leninist trend got into the main Draft Resolution for the Convention now before us, which is why the present writer voted against it. This de-Leninizing tendency, expressed in numerous ways, is summed up in the general aim to abolish the Communist Party and to replace it with a so-called political action organization.

The basic premise of this anti-Leninist trend—that Leninism is alien to the United States and unworkable here—is false. By almost four decades of actual experience in the class struggle, Marxism-Leninism, crystallized in the Communist Party and its activities, has proved itself far more adaptable to the American class struggle than have the various other tendencies professedly aiming at Socialism. And this, despite the numerous mistakes that have not surprisingly been made in the application of Marxism-Leninism and also not withstanding the serious governmental and other persecutions to which the C.P. has always been subject.

Even after the heavy losses suffered by the Communist Party under the fierce attack by the Government during the cold war years, the C.P. is still numerically stronger than all the other Left groups put together—Socialist Party, Social-Democratic Federation, Socialist Labor Party, Socialist Workers Party, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the Sweezy and Cochran groups. Besides, over the years, the C.P. has made a record of struggle and achievement that dwarfs those of the other Left groups combined. All this constitutes living proof of the greater adaptability of Marxism-Leninism to class struggle conditions in this country.

### THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States is notoriously the most difficult capitalist country in the world for the growth of Socialist ideology. This is basically because of the higher living standards of the workers here than in other countries. And the difficulties before Socialism in this country have mounted with the rapid rise of American imperialism and with the considerable wage improvement during the past half century, notwith-

standing several major economic crises in the meantime. Of course, the improvements in the workers' conditions in no way correspond to the fabulous increases in capitalist profits in this period, nor to the enormous growth of the workers' productivity. More than one-half of American families are now living upon a scale 30 per cent below the minimum requirements of the Heller Budget, and the general position of the workers, counting together wages, prices, hours, productivity, and unemployment, has sunk, according to Perlo, from 100 in 1899 to 51 in 1952. Notoriously, the wages of unskilled workers are far below minimal living standards, and the economic conditions generally of the Negro people are shocking.

Such wage improvements as the workers have secured over the years, they have won by endless struggle on both the economic and political fields. At the same time they have also secured a number of other important betterments.

These working class betterments, of course, rest upon very uncertain foundations, due especially to the deepening of the world crisis of capitalism, from which the United States is by no means exempt. They are subject to partial or complete cancellation as a result of imperialist war, fascism, economic crises, high taxes, lost strikes, etc. This we have seen happen time and again, especially in Europe, but also in the United States. All of which goes to emphasize the elementary fact that

only under Socialism are the conquests won by the working class in struggle against the exploiters, both of a fundamental character and secure in their tenure.

#### THE DECLINE OF SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AMONG AMERICAN WORKERS

Limited and precarious though they may be, the concessions won by American workers in relentless struggle, although stimulating the growth of trade unionism (from about 900,000 in 1900 to some 17,000,000 now) have undoubtedly tended to dampen down the workers' revolutionary spirit. The workers' proven ability to better their conditions, even if only partly, under capitalism has weakened their receptivity to Socialist ideas, and it has exposed them to bourgeois reformism, notably Rooseveltian Keynesism. Forty years ago, many American international trade unions, state federations, and local councils openly advocated a Socialist perspective, and the Socialist representation at the national A.F. of L. conventions ran up to nearly 40 per cent; but nowadays, hardly a union anywhere in the vast A.F. of L.-C.I.O. organization supports Socialism, and individual voices advocating Socialism in the American labor movement are now fewer than for many years past.

Such a temporary decline in the revolutionary spirit of the workers during the period of the upswing of imperialism in a given country is not unique to the United States.

It has been known elsewhere, notably in Great Britain and Germany.

The United States is now passing through a comparable period, although in a much more exaggerated degree.

In these general conditions of partially improved working class standards, the various Socialist groupings guage shared by all artists of good in the United States have fared badly during recent decades. Their own errors in policy have, of course, also contributed greatly to their general lack of success in the difficult objective situation. Already by 1900 the Socialist Labor Party, with its narrow sectarian policy, had proved itself utterly incapable of giving advanced political leadership to the working class and had degenerated into a rigid sect. The Socialist Party, for almost 20 years after its birth in 1900, exhibited considerable growth and activity, reaching a membership of over 100,000 and a national vote of 900,000 in 1912. But it soon thereafter began to decline, until now its two wings together—the Socialist Party and the Social Democratic Federation—have only a tiny membership. Among the S.P.'s most costly errors were: its dubious stand in World War I; its chronic anti-Soviet attitude; its illicit alliance with the conservative Gompers-Green trade union bureaucracy; its wrong attitude on the Negro and labor party questions; the abandonment of its progressive vanguard role, etc. The Industrial Workers of the World also made a big surge from 1905 to

about 1920, but in the generally difficult circumstances of the period, it was finally overwhelmed by its mistakes, including anti-politicalism, anti-religion propaganda, dual unionism, excessive decentralization, and other Syndicalist sectarian practices. The Lovestone renegade Rightwing group remained a tiny sect as long as it lasted. As for the Trotskyites, in their several groupings they have been incurably hamstrung by a crippling Left-sectarianism and by a pathological hatred of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. And the Sweezy and Cochran groups have been basically only discussion groups of intellectuals.

#### THE RELATIVE SUCCESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

As against this general record of failure of Left-wing groups in the United States during recent decades, the Communist Party has registered, by comparison, a considerable success. It has shown that it possesses distinct elements of growth and leadership in the difficult American situation. During its earlier years, while the other Marxist groupings were floundering about in impotent sectarianism, the C.P. became a real factor in the class struggle and it built up, by the 1940's, a membership of about 85,000. Even now, after the heavy losses suffered by the Party under severe government attack, in the Party's heroic and basically correct fight against the war danger of the cold war years, the C.P. still has more members and

more political vitality than all the other pro-Socialism groups combined.

The fundamental reason for this long record of Communist relative success has been that the Communist Party is a Marxist-Leninist organization. Its liveability and capacity for growth lies primarily in the fighting principles of Lenin with which it has been animated through the years. Among these may be mentioned, not necessarily in the order of their importance, the Party's strong discipline, its practice of self-criticism, its consciousness of its vanguard role, its policy of the united front, and its strong principles of internationalism. Although it often applied very crudely these fundamentally correct Marxist-Leninist principles and policies, nevertheless it was able to demonstrate their basic effectiveness in the American situation. Let us remark a few of them in some detail:

Communist Party discipline, despite the many bureaucratic practices which twisted and distorted it throughout this whole period, has been a powerful force in the life of the Party, one which has been at once the dread of all our enemies and a basic cause of the Party's many successes. The same may also be said of our practice of self-criticism. Although this fundamental Leninist principle has been applied over the years in a very one-sided and inadequate way, nevertheless it has given our Party an inestimable advantage of flexibility and progressiveness over

other Left organizations, which systematically try to obscure their mistakes and shortcomings.

Of especially great advantage, too, for the Communist Party—and one of the basic Leninist principles that have conferred profound vitality upon our Party—has been its conception that the Communist Party must fight at the head of the working class, as its vanguard. This vital concept has also been much distorted in the Party's propaganda and fighting practice; still it is one of the most dynamic reasons why our Party has been able to play such an important role in the class struggle. It has led to the Party's pioneering, over the years, many vital causes of the workers and the Negro people—including the fights for the organization of the unorganized, for unemployment relief and insurance, for the economic, political, and social rights of the Negro people, for the demands of the youth, for the defense of political prisoners, for independent political action of the workers and their allies, for trade union unity, for the struggle against fascism, and, in the last years, in its brave struggle against war—in all of which fields, as well as in various others, the Communist Party has displayed unequalled initiative and militancy, and has kept always in the front line of the class struggle. This has been an invaluable advantage for the Party.

Still another of the many fundamental policies, especially associated with the name of Lenin, that have helped to demonstrate the superior

vitality and effectiveness of Marxism-Leninism as against the policies of other Left parties and groups in the United States, is that of the united front. Here again, in the application of this great policy almost every imaginable error has been made during the Party's long experience. Nevertheless, the policy has been basically effective in the especially difficult objective and subjective conditions in the United States. Upon innumerable occasions, with very substantial success, the Communists have been able to develop effective cooperative action with other progressive forces. Some of the many of these movements were the broad campaigns of the Trade Union Educational League in the early 1920's; the big Farmer-Labor Party activities of the same period; the wide united fronts on the Negro question in the 1930's; the joint union election campaigns with progressives in the Needle trades, Machinists, Carpenters, Miners, and other trade unions in the same decade; the long cooperation with the Center group in the C.I.O. during the building and functioning of that organization throughout the 1930's and 1940's. In fact, almost every success ever won by the Party throughout its entire history has been upon the basis of the Leninist united front policy.

To mention only one more of the many Leninist policies that have contributed to the relative success of the Communist Party, has been its militant policy of internationalism,

particularly its active support of the developing Soviet Union and, in later years, of People's China and the European People's Democracies. This internationalism, by keeping the Party in close sympathetic touch with the advance of Socialism all over the world, gave the Party a unique and powerful advantage in attracting to its ranks the most advanced workers. This took place in spite of numerous errors made in the practice, particularly the maintenance of an uncritical attitude towards the U.S.S.R. and the other Socialist countries. The Party's over two decades of affiliation to the Communist International, although not without certain negative aspects, was also invaluable in developing the Party's ideology, its fighting quality, its leading cadres, and its international spirit.

The progress of the Party during its stormy life was obviously greatly hindered by its many and grievous errors in applying basically correct Marxist-Leninist policy in this country. Of course, it would be nonsense to suppose that any Party leadership could fight aggressively for a Communist program in the United States, with its powerful and ruthless capitalist class, without making many costly mistakes. Generally these errors over the years have been tendencies to copy mechanically the revolutionary experience of the Russian working class; to run far ahead of the American working class with our policies; to not take sufficiently into consideration concrete Ameri-

can conditions and traditions, and the like. Together with these elementary Left-sectarian trends, the Party has also, from time to time, made serious Right opportunist errors, notably those associated with the names of Pepper, Lovestone, and Browder. And in its present wide yaw to the Right, the Party is now making the most harmful error of this type of its entire career. Like other Communist Parties, ours has also suffered much from bureaucratic practices.

#### THE "POLITICAL ACTION ASSOCIATION"

The present proposal of Comrade Gates and others to transform the Communist Party into a so-called political action association is based upon the assumption that from here on to Socialism in the United States there will be a minimum of class struggle. In his article in the November number of *Political Affairs*, Comrade Gates paints an idyllic picture in this general respect. He ignores the existence of the general world crisis of capitalism and the certainty of serious repercussions of it in the United States, and he foresees a relatively smooth evolutionary development to Socialism.

This line is much akin with that promulgated by Browder a dozen years ago and by Lovestone in the latter 1920's. It is essentially influenced by the "prosperity" illusions among the masses, as indicated above, and is an ideological weakening under the hammer blows of the

Government's persecution of the Communist Party and its members. Browder and Lovestone, however, were fundamentally wrong in their no-class struggle perspective, and so is Comrade Gates.

In accordance with its generally incorrect perspective, the Gates tendency develops an attack upon the workers' fighting philosophy, strategy, and tactics—Marxism-Leninism—and precisely upon those active policies which made the Communist Party into a fighting organization and which were responsible for such successes as the Party scored. Thus, the Gates group would have us discard the Party form itself, the very incorporation of Marxism-Leninism; it cuts the heart out of our endorsement of Leninism in general by making such endorsement conditional and by abandoning the term Marxism-Leninism; it gives up the principle of democratic centralism; it casts aside the vital concept of the vanguard role of the Party; it ignores the policy of the united front, having in mind a perspective essentially of tailing after the leaders of mass organizations; it abandons the Leninist concept that labor leaders of the Meany type are lieutenants of the capitalists, etc., etc.

The proposed political action association would be primarily a propaganda organization for Socialism. This would be in line with the Gates conception that serious class struggle will be but a minor factor in the American future and that the Communists have no special van-

guard role to play in it, except to advocate Socialism abstractly. The association, because of its bizarre form and limited functions, obviously could not be a mass organization. Besides, in the change-over from Party to association, involving the formal liquidation of the Party, (just as in the Browder case) there would necessarily be a heavy loss of members. The whole project is highly liquidationary, despite the main Resolution's assertion to the contrary.

A political action association would curtail or wipe out Communist activity in many fields, among others in that of electoral political action. It is nonsense, the assertion that there is no place for a Communist party in a country like ours, with a "two-party" system. This fact is demonstrated by the situation in "Two-Party" Great Britain, where the Communist Party, although not large in size, has a wide influence among the workers, especially in the trade union movement and in the local branches of the Labor Party, where Left-progressive strength runs up to a third or more of the total. The British Party follows a correct election policy of supporting Labor Party candidates generally, and of putting up candidates of its own where those of the Labor Party are unsatisfactory or non-existent. Our Party should follow a comparable policy in this country.

Contrary to the claims made for it, such an association as Gates proposes would also not improve the

Communists' legal status. The Government, if disposed to persecute the Communists sharply, would simply arrest the leaders of the new organization under the pretext of its being the Communist Party under a new name, or a Communist front. Nor would a political action association improve our contact with the masses. On the contrary, such a body would be quickly and effectively pilloried publicly as a sinister "boring-from-within" group, with the sole purpose of penetrating and dominating mass organizations. In this respect it would be far more vulnerable than the Communist Party itself.

One of the basic negative consequences of the emergence of the strong Right tendency in the Party has been a decided weakening of its dynamic spirit of internationalism. This is one of the major evil effects of the downplay of class struggle, both in a national and in a world sense. Also, its weakening of the principles of Marxism-Leninism in general tends to drive an ideological wedge between the C.P.U.S.A. and the Communist Parties in other countries. The resultant weak international spirit of the Right, in some cases, definitely verges into tendencies towards bourgeois nationalism.

The proposed political action association is the climax to the campaign that has been carried on internally in the Party by the Right tendency for the past several months. This campaign has included extravagant and concocted charges of multitudi-

nous errors allegedly made by the Party during the recent period. This crass exaggeration has served to discredit the past activities of the Party and also the Party leadership. The future of the Party has also been assailed by placing before the members a perspective of a new organization to be formed, at first an almost immediate "mass party of Socialism" and now a political action association. All this has been highly demoralizing to the Party membership, which, not surprisingly, has already been gravely disturbed over the deeply shocking revelations of the Stalin cult of the individual and especially over the recent tragic and bloody events in Hungary. This campaign of systematically belittling the Party—its past, its present, its future and its leadership—has confused the theory, policies, and practices of the Party and it has been carried on basically for the purpose of clearing the way for the Gates plan to liquidate the Communist Party and to put in its place a "political action association," which would be essentially only a propaganda body for Socialism.

#### RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The American working class needs imperatively a strong Communist Party, based firmly upon the principles of Marxism-Leninism. This would be true even if the perspective ahead of the American workers were such a smooth and struggle-less one as that foreseen by Comrade Gates. But his picture of

the future is basically false. The workers of this country will certainly confront a perspective of sharpened class struggle. In such a situation, they must have a fighting Communist Party, acting as their vanguard. The need for this type of Party was graphically illustrated during the cold war years, when the big majority of the mass leaders tamely followed the imperialist lead of monopoly capital in its aggressive foreign policy.

Those who think that the present "boom" conditions in industry and the corresponding class collaboration relations between the top trade union leaders and the monopoly capitalists will last indefinitely are in for a rude awakening. The current post-war industrial boom is wearing to its end. American monopoly capital still has lots of fight left in it, as it will demonstrate once its general position, in the world and in an internal economic crisis, begins to deteriorate seriously under the inexorable workings of the general crisis of world capitalism, and when American workers face massive assaults against their living and working conditions. Such a perspective of struggle makes doubly necessary the building of a strong Communist Party.

The C.P.U.S.A. stands committed to the possibility of a parliamentary road to Socialism; but this course must not be misunderstood in the smooth, no-class struggle sense in which it is now being put forth by some comrades in the Party. Instead,



the perspective in this respect must be conceived on a fighting basis, as I stated it originally in the pamphlet, *In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders*. There I pictured the American workers as fighting their way ahead towards Socialism in the setting of a developing capitalist crisis; with the monopolists using every means in their power to strip the workers of their democratic rights, and with the workers fighting successfully to restrain and defeat the capitalists' violence and to maintain intact the democratic institutions of the country, firmly enough to enable them to proceed legally and in a relatively peaceful manner to the establishment of Socialism.

This is a realistic, class-struggle perspective of the road to Socialism in the United States. It calls not for the liquidation of the Communist Party and of Marxism-Leninism, but for their continuation and strengthening. Just as the workers and their sume that powerful and militant peaceful co-existence among the various powers in the world only on the basis of their strength, vigilance, and struggle, so also, on the same principle, can the workers of the United States travel a parliamentary road to Socialism. It would be wrong to assume, that powerful and militant American imperialism will surrender up its control of society short of the sharpest struggle. The big lesson for us in all this is that not only in their daily struggles do the American workers and there allies need the

Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, but also that this need will be many times greater when they eventually start on their path to Socialism.

What we as Communists should do, therefore, in our present difficult situation, is to rebuild actively the Communist Party, now seriously weakened after its long persecution by the Government during the cold war years. And instead of casting aside Marxism-Leninism the Party should strive more closely to adapt our working class science to the specific needs of the American class situation, and to become more skilled in its application in the workers' struggle. To abandon or emasculate Marxism-Leninism would be unthinkable for Communists.

In the profound Party discussion of the past several months, in countless letters, articles, meetings, etc., the members have made it very clear what improvements are necessary in order to adapt more effectively our Party and our ideology to the class struggle in the United States. Here I can only list some of these projected advances which, for their general correctness, cannot be questioned. Among them are more democracy and less bureaucracy in the Party and generally an end to Stalinlik e"command" practices that grew up over the years; more theoretical initiative upon our part and an end to long-time tendencies of waiting for leaders in other countries to speak out first upon important questions of this character; to develop a comradely critical relationship to-

wards other Communist parties and the Socialist countries, instead of the uncritical attitudes of previous years; a more close application of policies to concrete American conditions, instead of the previous often mechanical application of general international policies; a cooperative, less dogmatic attitude towards other Left groups in this country; the institution of practices of genuine Leninist criticism and self-criticism in the Party, etc. And overall, a continuous fight against the basic Left-sectarian deviation of the Party, without, however, neglecting to combat the Right danger. All these betterments in our theory and practice can be far more effectively developed and applied in the Communist Party than in a nondescript political action association. Our task, consequently, is to help to develop Marxism-Leninism and to make it more flexible and adaptable to the American situation, not to cast it aside for the sake of some hastily improvised program of more than dubious validity.

The discarding of the Communist Party in favor of a political action association, and with this the serious weakening of Marxism-Leninism as our guiding philosophy would constitute a major defeat for the American working class; an unjustified ideological retreat on our part in the face of arrogant American imperialism. Only in this sense could it be understood by the workers in this country and throughout the world. Organized reaction would

hail it with glee, as indicating that in the strongest capitalist country in the world there is no basis for Communism and the Communist Party. We must not make such a disastrous and needless surrender. Other Communist parties in the world have from time to time lost more heavily than we in their fight against powerful reaction and they have later recovered greater strength than ever. The C.P.U.S.A. can and must similarly rebuild its weakened forces.

It is now being proposed that at the coming National Convention the Party should not be transformed into a political action association, but this matter should be referred to a continuing general Party discussion, looking to a special convention a year hence to settle the question. But to prolong the Party discussion on this matter in the period after the convention would be a most serious error. It would expose the Party not only to debating a sterile question, to which the members are now obviously opposed, but it would also condemn it to a year-long destructive factional fight. The proposed political action association must be specifically and decisively rejected by the Convention, as having no basis in political conditions now nor in the foreseeable future. The maintenance and building of the Communist Party should be categorically affirmed. This is the sole road to Party unity, mass activity and strength. It would be bankruptcy to bypass this question at the convention and it would seriously cripple the Party.

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# Some Concepts of Our Trade-Union Work

By Hal Simon

A TRADE-UNION POLICY that is worthy of the name Marxist-Leninist must be a policy that will help our Party to end its isolation in the labor movement of our country. In spite of the constant attacks against our Party, the many struggles that the workers are carrying on, the tremendous battles of the Negro people, signify that "objective situations," do not rule out the ending of our isolation. On the contrary, with an approach that is soundly based, we should be able to make a modest, but consistent and important contribution to these struggles. On such a basis we will be able to make progress towards ending that harmful isolation.

There has been too little fresh thinking on this problem. However, where new approaches are developed, many of them have come under fire from some comrades, (including leading ones) as "anti-Leninist." Such is the case, for example, with respect to the material published with regard to trade union problems in issue No. 3 of the National Discussion Bulletin.

In our opinion the shoe is on the other foot. We feel that the published material, notwithstanding weaknesses it may contain, is imbued with, and defends, a genuine Marxist-Leninist approach as against a sectarian, DeLeonist kind of think-

ing which has time and again contributed heavily to our isolation over the years, and threatens to do so again.

We wish, without challenge to the integrity of working-class devotion of those comrades with whom we disagree, to dispute such views, some of which we have shared in the past. We wish to do so within the framework of discussing practical trade-union policies and problems before us. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to deal with the opinion that in trade-union matters, the published material of the labor sub-committee "manufactures or exaggerates" Party errors in this field during the past.

## THE PARTY'S ERRORS

No one will dispute the serious objective difficulties of the post-war period, the intensity of the attacks against our Party. But just because we agree, we cannot understand a refusal to face up to the errors in policy and tactics that *ignored the objective situation* and based itself on over-exaggerated estimates of the strength of the Left. This resulted in repeated exhortations to the relatively small number of Left-led unions and Left forces in shops to be more aggressive, more bold, more militant, to stand up and "be count-

ed," regardless of consequences.

Anyone who knows Detroit and Toledo, Youngstown and Pittsburgh, Chicago and Cleveland, knows that in these and other towns and cities which constitute the industrial heartland of America, you will find the wreckage of comrades, former comrades and Party clubs isolated as a consequence of *direct catastrophic sectarian errors* for which we were responsible.

The tragedy is that following the Draft Resolution on the 1952 elections, when we began to correct some of our thinking on the approach to trade-union problems, we no longer had sufficient membership in the shops or positions of leadership in unions to make all the drastic changes required.

It was Left-sectarian errors of this type, that contributed to the split in the CIO in 1949. In practice, we made acceptance of our position on political questions the minimum basis for united front in the period prior to 1949. As a consequence, even though we tried to change when we finally realized that the dominant forces in the leadership were moving towards a split, again it was too little and too late.

Fundamental errors in judgment were also made on the question of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. merger. We were told (when the merger agreement was announced in February 1955), that one of the main reasons for the merger was, "A belief on the part of reactionary forces that if the workers can all be combined under one head, it will be much easier to cramp them

into the service of American imperialism's war-like foreign policy." (Wm. Z. Foster—*Daily Worker*, Feb. 16, 1955). This dubious point of view that inferred the merger was really instigated by the State Department, *held our Party back* at a time when it should have been enthusiastically working, (even with its limited capacity), to contribute to this historic event, this forward step in the direction of American trade-union unity.

We rather doubt that a trade-union activist can be found who will not agree that we have made most serious and extremely costly sectarian errors. What causes our deepest concern is that this charge of "manufacture or exaggeration" of errors really means, when you get to the bottom of it, a refusal to *admit* that these were mistaken policies. That concern is sharper when we examine the approach of these same comrades to our current trade-union problems. For we find on the part of those entertaining this view, a continuation of the same wrong policies.

#### THE LABOR MOVEMENT TODAY

Let us proceed to cases, taking first the question: how shall we estimate the American labor movement today? It is obvious that the answer to this question underlies all other policies and tactics.

The charge is made that the Trade-Union Material is "complacent" about the "alleged political independence" of the unions, rather

than recognizing that they are dominated by capitalist influence, and that therefore, our task is to help the trade unions achieve real ideological and organizational independence. In addition, it is said that this material is too apologetic towards the leaders of the labor movement and weakens the Leninist conception that they are "lieutenants of the capitalists" in the ranks of the workers.

In the most general sense, some of this is of course historically true. But when this is all that is said and general historic statements are made the bases for day-to-day tactics, *the advice that it offers to our working-class comrades is that the main enemy they face is the labor leadership.*

It is quite true that the workers are heavily influenced by the sweep of propaganda that is drummed into their ears from morning to night. It re-inforces their belief in capitalism and insulates them from any willingness to consider a Socialist outlook. This continuing support for and belief in capitalism is further encouraged by the fact that as far as they can see, they have been able to improve their economic conditions without any lessening of support for capitalism. They do not feel that they are *forced* to accept capitalism. They *agree* with it. This is the level of their thinking at the present time. We must hasten to add, however, that the workers have not made their support for capitalism a barrier to the struggle against their employers to improve and extend their economic conditions. This is of course

the main question, the one upon which we must base our tactics for the present and from which the working class can be helped to seek out the proper path for the future.

To repeat Lenin's support in 1920 for DeLeon's phrase calling the trade-union leaders, "Lieutenants of the capitalists in the ranks of the workers," as a fundamental clue to trade-union tactics and strategy in the U.S.A. today, is far from helpful. There are quite a few changes that have taken place, changes of a kind which Lenin always taught must be taken into account. For otherwise we are being given DeLeonism in 1957, not Leninism.

The approach of the Trade Union Material stresses an appreciation of the strength, the potential, and every sign of growing independence by A.F.L.-C.I.O. The material stresses a most positive approach to the gains already achieved through A.F.L.-C.I.O. unity, and the greater achievements still ahead, in winning better wages and working conditions, meeting the problems of automation, advancing Negro-white unity, organizing the unorganized, especially in the South, and moving towards genuine independence politically.

We feel that a stress of this kind is absolutely necessary because we have a continuing job of ridding ourselves of a sectarian, "holier-than-thou" attitude on our part which has so bitterly estranged us from millions of workers. We feel that a stress of this kind is necessary because we find such an approach attacked as "un-Marxist" and "anti-Leninist," and

behind that we feel is a *policy* of continuing sectarianism.

The characteristic of the American Socialists of the 1880's, their sectarian isolation from the labor movement, still plagues us today. Marx and Engels argued sharply at that time, as Lenin noted particularly: "They [the socialists in America] are incapable of adapting themselves to the theoretically helpless, but living, powerful, mass labor movement marching past them."

Is not this comment precisely applicable to our situation today? Is there not a labor movement that is living and powerful, far beyond previous levels and at the same time theoretically weak? Are we not isolated from it and in it? And are we not receiving advice and warnings from some comrades stressing the "class collaborationist" thinking in this labor movement, the "capitalist-lieutenant" character of the leadership, the lack of "independence" of the movement? Meanwhile, *it marches past us!*

The Trade-Union Material tries to place central emphasis on the importance of working with the rank and file of labor in the development of struggle around the many valid demands of A.F.L.-C.I.O., some of which, like the shorter-hours demand, are far-reaching in character. The Trade Union Material tries to center attention not on pigeon-holding labor leaders as "Left," "Right," "Center," but on the fact that the way to move and influence the direction of leadership is through the movement of the rank and file.

We should condemn that past practice which has tried (in vain) to assign permanent pigeon-holes for trade-union leaders. In addition, we used to set forth our position not only in terms of expressing our differences, but also by calling them "renegades," "fascist-minded," and a host of other names. This practice only resulted in making *us* seem on later occasions to be the most unprincipled and conscienceless people, flip-flopping into seeking united front relations with some of the objects of our vilification.

We ought to drop this habit suitable to an embittered and isolated sect, especially if we hold to the view that vast changes have opened in the world and that new relations are possible. We ought to reject that caricature of Marxism-Leninism which rips quotations out of Lenin's writing at the time of the Russian revolution. At that time he excoriated labor opportunists who constituted the *main danger* during the *sharp revolutionary advance* of the workers. It is a caricature of Leninism to apply such quotations to the American labor movement and the American scene in 1957.

At that, Lenin's general revolutionary principle, that which is of *universal validity*, dictated the seeking out at all times of every possible ally, no matter how temporary, vacillating or unstable. May Heaven (and a true reading of Lenin) give us the skill to apply that great principle, for indeed we have need of it!

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still smoked of revolution, Lenin nevertheless scored, in his "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, that trend in various countries which declared the incorrectness and "impossibility" of working in the Right-wing and "reformist" unions and people's organizations. He warned that the worst mistake Communists could make was to substitute their own desires for objective realities, to mistake what was obsolete for them as already obsolete for the workers, for the masses.

Here again, is a Leninist principle of universal validity. Yet one comrade insisted that the *Trade-Union Material* handled altogether incorrectly the question of class collaboration, "brushing aside" our "fighting policy" on this question, etc. Of course those who read the *Trade-Union Material* will find that it plainly sets forth our class struggle policy as against a class collaboration policy. But the *Trade-Union Material* handles this on the basis that most American workers, while they have a readiness to fight for their demands, do *not* extend this to acceptance of our basic "class struggle" view. The labor leadership is plainly class collaborationist, and their type of leadership is, unfortunately, not now under threat from any energetic rejection of their views by the membership.

Class collaboration is obsolete for us, but it is far from obsolete for the American labor movement. Recognizing that, the approach of the *Trade-Union Material* is to stress

that differences of view on this broad social question need not at all divide those who are agreed on the necessity for the big and important struggles at hand. We make clear our different view, but within the framework of a basis for unity and struggle.

The only real effect of the kind of approach suggested by the above-mentioned comrade would be to direct our central fire against the labor leadership as "class collaborationist," and to do so at a moment when they appear before the workers as standing (willingly or no) at the head of actual struggles. And if we fall into this way of demonstrating our "differences," we shall stand before the workers as convicted of the charge of being disrupters, "borers-from-within," interested only in our partisan aims! We must protest against the assignment of the name "Leninist" to such a policy. It is a policy which dares not recommend that we stay *outside* of the trade unions, but does suggest that *we work within the trade unions as outsiders*.

Without question, the handling of the question of "class struggle" as against "class collaboration," and of a number of other questions in the *Trade-Union Material*, could stand considerable sharpening and improvement. But we believe the way in which the question is approached is correct, that it provides a basis for improved work and improved relations on the part of our trade-union comrades.

## THE "LEFT-CENTER" CONCEPT

In the opinion of one leader of our Party, it is the greatest practical weakness of the Trade-Union Material that it recommends a re-examination of the tactic of "Left-Center" unity. It is correct that the Trade-Union Material does so, suggesting that this is a "frozen political geography" which is devoid of real meaning and helpfulness in the situation before us. To be sure, those who insist on the past method of expounding this conception have admitted difficulty in defining who is "Left," who is "Right," who is "Center" at this time. For one thing, the situation is fluid in the labor movement. For another, having called the various conservative leaders "lieutenants of capitalism," and the various Social Democratic leaders "traitors" and "renegades," even more dangerous than the former, the difficulty of inventing a "center" becomes obvious.

We ought to re-examine the entire question of how we have used the "Left-center" conception as the explanation for our past trade-union achievements. Off-hand, it is very well known that not only did these "lines of division" set up by us "a priori" continuously shift (Brother X was a "Right" one year, a "Center" next, then a "Left," then back way over "Right" again) but it is also true that our categorizing of individuals often served to hinder new alignments, or in some instances to drive a bad situation to extremes. It might perhaps be helpful also to

consider for a moment how it looked to the workers and the leadership of the labor movement when we arrogated to ourselves the omniscience of deciding who was in paradise, who in limbo, and who in hell.

In any case, for the situation we face in the labor movement today, and for the tasks ahead, to continue using these "Left," "Right," and "Center" conceptions as we have in the past, can only work harm. Should we not apply ourselves to thinking over deeply the significant statement made by Marx and Engels over 100 years ago in the *Communist Manifesto*: "They [the Communists] do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."

The comrades who hold some of these sectarian concepts should explain how they see the relation of the labor movement to the perspective outlined in the Draft Resolution for building an anti-monopoly coalition.

If an anti-monopoly coalition is to have any meaning, the heart of that coalition must be the labor movement. If the labor movement is the most important ingredient of this coalition then it will only fulfill that role if major sections of the union leadership, under pressure of the workers, becomes a part of their movement. For the workers will not participate without their leaders.

The Draft Resolution describes the anti-monopoly coalition as being

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based on the united struggles of the workers, farmers, small business and professionals, "who suffer directly from the exploitation and depredations of Big Business." It does *not* say only the Left forces in each grouping should work together. It does project an all-embracing multi-class unity against a common enemy—the monopolies.

But these same comrades who say they support this strategic aim of the resolution reject a concept of a struggle for all-embracing unity around specific issues within the labor movement. They are so weighted down by their desire to label the trade-union leaders and stuff them into pre-fabricated compartments that they can only see the labor movement becoming a part of the coalition if its present leadership is defeated and eliminated. This view rejects or refuses to recognize what progress the workers have been able to make even with the present leadership. More than that it consigns the whole concept of an anti-monopoly coalition far and away to the dimly lit future and destroys its meaning.

To make this point is not to deny that there are differences among the trade-union leaders. In fact the Trade-Union Material describes these differences at some length. Undoubtedly as the struggle of the workers develops, greater differentiations will develop and some leaders may be replaced. What is new and what experience has shown is, that on a number of occasions and

under pressure of the workers the present leaders of various persuasions can work together, and with other sections of the people. This is part of what gives us confidence that the labor movement can be the decisive sector of an anti-monopoly coalition.

Nor do we wish to understate the particular role of the most progressive and Left forces in the unions. Theirs is the task of helping to unite the rank and file, of fighting to bring to life the stated policies of the union. In the course of such activity, the Left forces will grow in numbers and strength.

#### TO OVERCOME ISOLATION

The biggest problem that confronts our working-class comrades, in fact the Party as a whole, is how to overcome our isolation from the labor movement. Some comrades confuse their individual participation in a shop or local union with the question of involvement of the Party as such. But this is not the same thing. Our *Party* is isolated and it is no longer recognized by any significant sector of the workers as a valid force in the labor movement. This is true in spite of our many heroic struggles and important past contributions. The problem then is how to get out of this box.

It should be apparent that there is no short cut. We should recognize that we have a long road to travel to re-establish even a minimum status in the eyes of the workers.

However, we will make no progress unless we are prepared to discard sectarian policies, concepts and habits that in the past contributed to our isolation. We need a clear re-assessment of the status of the American trade-union movement. We need greater clarity on the relation between the Party and the unions, as well as the particular tasks of the Party.

It should be of some significance that the comrades who adhere to past discredited concepts are unable to discuss this problem at all. They are seemingly unconcerned with how we are going to begin to break with our isolation *today*. Their outlook seems to be that all we have to do is to repeat by rote certain general historic shibboleths, and try to hold a few stalwarts together while waiting for the inevitable economic crisis to develop. At that time, they presume, the workers will come flocking to our banners and we will put an end to capitalism in our country.

This is the dream of a discredited sect and not of a Party based on the teachings of scientific socialism.

The task of our Party *now* in the labor movement *today* is to contribute, to the limit of our capacity, to the broadest unity of the workers in the daily struggle to advance their wages and working conditions. To leave it at that, however, would not differentiate our Party members from other progressive and militant workers.

Our task therefore, basing our-

selves on our participation in these struggles, is to help to infuse that ingredient of consciousness that will help to give purpose and direction to these struggles; to help weld a firm anti-monopoly coalition.

We know that even this objective, as important as it is, falls short of answering the problems that the workers will increasingly face in this era of automation and atomic energy. Therefore, it is the constant task of our Party to outline what Socialism would mean for the American workers. Not Socialism as it has come about and developed in other countries as the model and blueprint for us. But Socialism as it will be in our country, supported by American workers who have the highest standard of living in the world and are determined to defend and advance those standards beyond the limits imposed by capitalist society.

As the Trade-Union Material states: "We reject any idea that our role is to stand at the end of the road and beckon." Our task is to get in there and to fight shoulder to shoulder with *everyone* who wants to procure something more for the workers. For it is only in this way that workers will come to understand the limitations of capitalism.

Giving ear to the demands of many workers, the AFL-CIO and various international unions have adopted comprehensive programs. As the Trade-Union Material points out, every part of these programs is not endorsed by all sections of the

leadership; some points are in fact opposed. Nonetheless, resolutions adopted by various bodies cover such questions as improvement in wages and working conditions, the shorter work week, organizing the unorganized, repeal of Taft-Hartley, opposition to State "Right-to-Work" laws, run-away shops, taxation, workmen's compensation, increased unemployment insurance and supplementary benefits, health and safety, housing, education, civil rights, anti-discrimination, women workers, Puerto Rican workers, against racketeering, children and youth, atomic energy, political action, Farmer-Labor unity, prices and profits, and last but not least foreign policy on which there are important debates and differences taking place. That is not all, there are many more.

However, while many trade-union leaders feel it necessary for a variety of reasons to adopt such resolutions, they do not feel under the same compulsion to undertake a struggle to achieve the objectives they contain. They fear to take the main step which would guarantee victory—the mobilization of the rank and file workers.

Herein lies a key to the particular role of our Party and other advanced class-conscious workers. It is to supply in a bold and constructive fashion, the same crusading spirit in the fight for labor's program today as we did in the days when we helped spark the organization of the CIO.

It will not be easy. Conditions in the labor movement today are vastly different from the middle thirties. Not only do trade union leaders tell workers, "leave everything to me"; but many workers are prepared to do just that when they feel that it involved questions that they do not see directly related to their wages and one-the-job conditions.

The task of our Party is to help to show the relation between the program and the direct economic conditions of the workers.

Our Party leadership has not been actively concerning itself with these questions. But it is only in relation to how we contribute to stimulating this kind of crusade, how we help to spark this kind of a movement that we can overcome our isolation. There is a need for popular pamphlets and other literature in which we could discuss such questions with workers. Forums, in which our point of view, together with others, could be placed would be attractive to many socialist-minded workers.

There is no detailed blue-print that can be sketched to fit each and every local union. What does apply to all is the need to divest ourselves of old self-isolating concepts and sectarian habits. Let us give free rein to seek out a fresh Marxist-Leninist working-class comrades in the shops to the profound initiative of our approach towards solving the problems of our isolation.

## In Defense of Theory

By Hyman Lumer

THERE IS no doubt that we have long been guilty of a dogmatic doctrinaire approach to Marxist-Leninist theory. We have tended to take the letter of the Marxist-Leninist classics for the essence of their ideas. We have tended to view these writings not as the foundation of an expanding, growing body of scientific thought, but as constituting in all essential respects the totality of the theory. And we have tended, in consequence, to elevate minor theoretical propositions to the level of fundamental principles.

Even while inveighing against such an approach and repeatedly asserting that theory must be treated as a guide to action, we have all too often used this guide in a thoroughly Talmudic fashion. For this we have, of course, had to pay a price. Included in it is a static body of theory which has shown little growth and which, with the march of history, becomes increasingly inadequate as a guide to action. Included, too, is a heritage of false partisanship which, instead of looking all facts in the face and using them as a test of theory, tends often to seek out those facts which fit the accepted doctrine.

Obviously, these distortions in our use of theory are sorely in need of correction, and the fact that much of the current discussion centers around the re-examination of basic theoretical concepts is greatly to be welcomed. However, if such a re-examination is to produce anything positive, it must be based on a firm grasp of scientific method and the nature of scientific theory. Without this, the same faulty conception of theory which contributed to our dogmatism can well lead us into the opposite pitfall, namely the negation of theory. And it must be said that trends leading in this direction, in the name of correcting theory and bringing it up to date, have become all too widespread.

The most extreme form is that which simply equates theory with dogma, and argues that to rid ourselves of dogmatism we must rid ourselves of dependence on theory itself. The latter is regarded as a set of shackles which bind us rigidly and prevent us from taking an uninhibited, creative approach to problems. It is being tied to theory, say the proponents of this view, that leads us into error. "How can Marx-

ism-Leninism be of any real value," they ask, "if it leads us to make so many serious mistakes? Would we not be better off to base ourselves simply on practical experience and good common sense, and to use the theory only as an adjunct?"

These people attribute the mistakes arising from the misuse of theory to the supposed faultiness of theory as such. They resemble the driver who wrecks a car through his own incompetence, then explains the wreck by saying: "They don't build them the way they used to any more."

Such outright downgrading of the value of theory requires little comment. It is an expression of the traditional American disdain for theory which lies at the root of pragmatism. It is characteristic, in particular, of the American labor movement, with its insistence on "hard-headed practicality." To base the activities of the Party on such an approach would be to reduce its ideological level to that of the spontaneous movement of the working class. Needless to say, such a party could hardly be called a party of scientific socialism.

Another, though not so obvious, version of the same tendency is the notion that re-evaluation of theory consists simply in sorting out theoretical propositions and discarding those which are invalid. "We will take from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin those propositions which are valid," say the advocates of this approach, "and reject those which are not."

To test the correctness of every proposition is, of course, necessary. But *taken by itself*, this leads only to a thinning-out of the body of theory, to seeing how much of it we can discard. In the end it leads to a negation of theory, for it is based on the fallacious idea that a body of theory is merely a conglomeration of independent propositions which can be sorted into two piles—"correct" and "incorrect."

If we pursue this to its logical conclusion, we can say with equal justification that we will take from Keynes those of his ideas which are valid, and similarly from theoreticians of other schools those of their ideas which are valid. For there are undoubtedly valid propositions to be found in all of these writings. But the result of such a process will not be a body of theory. On the contrary, it can only be an eclectic mishmash seeking to reconcile conflicting schools of thought. It is this approach, for example, which underlies the efforts being made in some quarters to reconcile the theories of Marx and Keynes.

However, a body of theory is not a pile of propositions but a logically interconnected whole. Its foundation is a set of fundamental laws or generalizations pertaining to the entire field of interest. On this foundation is built a complex superstructure or hierarchy of lesser laws and principles applying to limited segments of the field. The validity of all these is, of course, determined by their correspondence to observed facts and

by the ability they confer on us to make correct predictions from these facts in given situations.

Every such body of theory is constantly expanding with the accumulation of new observations and new experiences, and in the course of this its more basic principles are also enlarged, or modified, or subsumed under still broader generalizations. We can correct, elaborate or scrap these propositions in the light of greater experience. But we cannot deal with them as isolated entities.

We cannot modify or scrap a given proposition without taking into account its ramifications and logical relations to other propositions. A principle which is derived as a logical conclusion from certain others cannot be rejected without also rejecting its premises. Some of the efforts to pick out certain aspects as valid and to question or reject others tend to overlook this.

Thus, Comrade Gates writes in his article "Time for a Change" (*Political Affairs*, November, 1956, p. 51):

The issue is to determine what remains valid, such as the materialist conception of history, surplus value, the class struggle, the leading role of the working class in the struggle for Socialism, imperialism as capitalism in its monopoly, dying stage, the national and colonial question, for example, and what is no longer valid, such as the law of inevitable violent proletarian revolution, the inevitability of war, or needs to be modified, like the theory of the state, etc.

It is wrong to place on a par such a cornerstone of Marxist theory as historical materialism and individual, derivative propositions relating to the inevitability or non-inevitability of violent revolution or war under specific conditions. To modify or reject the latter in keeping with changed conditions is a necessary part of the application and development of Marxism, but to reject the former would be to reject Marxism itself.

Further, before proceeding to modify such a basic concept as the theory of the state, one must recognize that it is not unrelated to the other basic aspects of Marxism, and that changing it may necessitate modification or even abandonment of these. Comrade Gates does not explain what he means by "modification," but what is often meant by others who advocate it is discarding or emasculating the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Let us see what this entails.

Fundamental to the whole of Marxist theory is dialectical materialism. The laws of dialectics are simply the laws of change and development—of the motion of matter—expressed in their most general terms. They provide a method, an approach, applicable to the study of all phenomena. The application of this approach to human society leads to the basic principles of historical materialism, which form the foundation for the whole of Marxist social science.

In his introduction to the *Communist*

*nist Manifesto*, Engels expresses this in the following paragraph:

The *Manifesto* being our joint production, I consider myself bound to state that the fundamental proposition which forms its nucleus belongs to Marx. That proposition is: That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

From this fundamental proposition is elaborated the entire Marxist conception of the class struggle, and *with it* the Marxist conception of the state as the instrument of the ruling class for maintaining its rule—as the dictatorship of the ruling class. And from this, in turn, arises the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the working class, having achieved political power, for establishing socialism and

abolishing classes altogether.

This is not true, however, of those propositions which are conclusions reached by applying the basic Marxist concepts to specific situations (such, for example, as the *form* of the proletarian dictatorship). Such conclusions hold only where the particular conditions exist; where these change, the application of the same basic laws may yield quite different conclusions.

Thus, on the basis of his analysis of imperialism, Lenin showed that certain conclusions reached earlier by Marx and Engels were no longer valid (for example, that socialism must develop first in the most highly industrialized countries, or that it could not be established in one country alone). He did so, however, not by discarding the basic Marxist laws of capitalist development, but by *proceeding from them*.

In the same way, the basic features of imperialism, operating within a given relationship of forces, lead to the conclusion that imperialist wars are inevitable, whereas in a changed relationship of forces they give rise to the conclusion that such wars are *not* inevitable. But in both cases the conclusions are reached on the basis of the same fundamental laws of monopoly capital. The same may be said of the conclusions regarding the presence or absence of violence in the course of the transition to socialism (that is, aside from the *advocacy* of violent means, which was never a part of Marxism-Leninism).

There is another form of negation of theory, which has its roots in a mistaken notion of what is meant by "interpretation" of theoretical concepts. "We will accept the principles of Marxism-Leninism," it is asserted, "not as rigid propositions laid down by someone else, but as *we* interpret them. We will decide for ourselves what are and what are not fundamental principles. And unless we are free to interpret theory in the light of present-day realities, it becomes a mere dogma."

To be sure, there is a valid meaning of interpretation of scientific principles, in the sense of judging their significance and applicability in given circumstances. The need for such interpretation arises of necessity out of the practical application of the theory—out of its employment as a basis for deciding questions of policy and program. In particular, when a political party seeks consciously to base its activities on scientific principles, it is necessary to arrive at collective judgments as to how these principles are to be understood and applied to specific practical problems.

But it does not at all follow from this that we can arbitrarily decide what are and what are not basic principles of a particular body of theory, or that theoretical principles can mean whatever we interpret them to mean. Such an approach is profoundly unscientific. And unfortunately, the formulations in both the Draft Resolution and the Draft Constitution lend themselves to such

an erroneous meaning.\*

It is an obvious fallacy to think that the Communist Party or any other organization or individual can act as an arbiter of the truth or falsity of scientific propositions. This kind of approach leads to a denial of the objective validity of science.

The objective laws of nature and society are what they are. Our task is to uncover them, to learn to understand and use them. If our policy is based on a correct knowledge of these laws, it will be effective and will lead toward the results we seek; if it is not, it will lead us into a morass. This is the meaning of Engels' well-known aphorism: "Freedom is the recognition of necessity."

The test of theory is its correspondence to the observed facts—to practical experience. This requires painstaking examination and analysis of factual evidence, which is essential to the verification of theory, correction of errors and the development of new theory. Without it, debate becomes aimless and goes round in a circle, as has become true of much of the current discussion.

To be sure, we have in the past committed the error of looking to

\*The Draft Resolution states (p. 56): "Basing ourselves on these Marxist-Leninist principles as interpreted by the Communist Party of our country, we must learn much better how to extract from the rich body of the theory that which is universally valid, combining it with the specific experiences of the American working class in the struggle for socialism in the United States."

The preamble of the Draft Constitution states: "The Communist Party bases its theory generally on the cultural heritage of mankind and particularly on the teachings of the giants of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and V. I. Lenin, as interpreted by the Party and creatively applied and developed in accordance with the conditions of the American class struggle, traditions and customs."



certain other Communist Parties as absolute authorities on what are and what are not basic theoretical principles, and this needs to be corrected. We cannot do so, however, by simply shifting the mantle of "interpreter" to the shoulders of the Communist Party of the United States; this only continues the same error in another way. What is needed is to discard this erroneous approach altogether, and the formulations in the Draft Resolution and Draft Constitution should be changed toward this end.

This is not to say that the Communist Party should not take a position on theoretical questions. It means rather than its position must be based on the necessary research and development of theory, not alone on discussion and voting, if it is to lead to correct policy.

The negation of theory, whatever its form, arises in part from a failure to understand clearly the nature of dogmatism. It is, in fact, the other side of the coin. If dogmatism ascribes to all theoretical propositions an equal status of universality andponents of it insist equally on theponents of it insist equally on the right to degrade all concepts to the same level of questionable validity, or to ascribe our own meanings to them. At the same time, others, leaping to the defense of Marxism-Leninism, take up the cudgels for dogmatism and attack virtually every proposed theoretical change as tantamount to abandoning Marxism altogether. Both are, of course, wrong.

A correct approach to theory lies along neither of these paths.

The starting point of all theoretical work and development today must be the body of proven theory which already exists. For there does exist an extensive body of Marxist-Leninist science which has stood the tests of both logical consistency and conformity with observed facts, and which has served as an instrument for the successful building of socialism. It is this body of theory which we must interpret, apply and build upon.

Any attempts to chop out basic propositions from it or to "interpret" them to suit subjective inclinations in place of objective study and analysis can lead only to rejection of Marxism-Leninism. This, of course, anyone who so chooses is free to do. But he has no right to do it in the name of "creative Marxism."

There are some who contend that a *basic* revision of theory is required because we live in a totally new historical period—a period which not only Marx and Engels but also Lenin never envisioned. We are no longer, they say, in the era of wars and revolutions of which Lenin spoke, but are on the threshold of a new era of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism. Furthermore, Lenin's writings were directed not only to a specific historical era, but also in a very large part to the specific problems and conditions of Russia.

There is no doubt that the post-war years have witnessed momen-

tous changes in the world relationship of forces, with the emergence of many qualitatively new features. There is also no doubt that our theory has sadly lagged behind these historical developments — that we have sought to tackle postwar problems with prewar theory, a state of affairs to which our dogmatism and lack of creative theoretical work have greatly contributed. With the full crystallization of the new world situation, and with the accumulation of our own errors, this lag has become so acute as to compel a thoroughgoing re-examination of our theoretical position.

But we are still living in the era of imperialism, of dying capitalism in a state of deepening general crisis. We are still in what Lenin described as the final stage of capitalism, the epoch of the world transition to socialism. The basic features of imperialism which he defined still exist, even though in the new relationship of forces some of their *consequences* may be different.

Nor can it be said that Lenin's theories were directed simply to the special conditions then prevailing in Russia. This is plainly not true of his theory of imperialism. No more is it true of his concept of Party organization. The struggles which he led in Russia for a new type of party were part of a fight against Social-Democratic opportunism which was developing in a number of countries. And in order to deal with the particular problems of party organization in Russia, he had

first of all to lay down certain more general features of a working-class party of socialism.

Among these, he showed, is the need for a vanguard type of party, armed with the Marxist theory of scientific socialism and possessing a high degree of unity and discipline, as against the loose, reformist election machines which the existing Social-Democratic parties had become. In its essential features, this is no less true today than it was when Lenin first formulated it.

We have, of course, habitually mistaken Lenin's specifically Russian application of these ideas for universal truths. But to scrap such fundamental concepts is not to *advance* but to *abandon* Marxism-Leninism. Any genuine theoretical advance must take them as its point of departure. To eliminate them is to deprive Marxist theory of its revolutionary core, to emasculate it.

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One prerequisite of theoretical advance, therefore, is the mastery of existing theory. And it must be admitted that in this respect we have been seriously lacking. Study of theory in our ranks, never one of our strongest points, has undergone a drastic decline during the past six years. Indeed, much of our present theoretical inadequacy is due to these past shortcomings. Consequently, much of the present demand for re-evaluation of theory is raised with only a hazy notion of what is to be reevaluated, and hence, much of the discussion assumes a

superficial, aimless character.

A second and related, prerequisite is encouragement and organization of original theoretical work. This should not be the domain of a handful of "specialists" who are utterly divorced from practical problems, but should be developed in conjunction with our practical work. Nor can we count on such work being done spontaneously, in odd moments, by people busy with a thousand other tasks. It must be *organized*, and in such a way as to make the best use of the considerable resources at our disposal for Marxist research and scholarship.

Furthermore, it is necessary to provide an atmosphere which encourages the freest discussion and clash of ideas. Nowhere is this so essential as here, on the very frontiers of new knowledge and theory.

Some assert that our theoretical shortcomings are due largely to a failure to study the American scene. This is not entirely true. One could compile a fairly impressive list of such writings. But these could and should be far more numerous. They have been limited both in scope and number by our dogmatism and our discouragement of departures from the accepted pattern of thinking.

Those who accepted the established mode of thought found their path relatively easy, but those who did not found it very difficult. This

was strikingly demonstrated in the genetics controversy, in which those who supported the Lysenko school received every encouragement, while those who questioned it in any degree found themselves subjected to a barrage of pressure and criticism which eventually discouraged all but the most hardy from speaking out. Had there been an atmosphere of free discussion, of genuine give-and-take, we could have avoided the extreme positions which were arrived at on some questions and have come much closer to the truth on these questions than we actually did.

The correction of our errors is not an overnight task, but is rather an extended process. In the Chinese Communist Party, the liquidation of doctrinaireism, beginning in 1935, took a period of fully ten years. Nor will our mistakes be corrected simply because we recognize them and have a will to correct them. It is also necessary to know *how* to do so, to know what the correct path is. And this requires the development of a truly scientific approach to theory—one which avoids both the dogmatic defense of every comma in the Marxist classics and the negation of theory in the name of freedom from dogmatism. Such an approach to the study and creative expansion of Marxist-Leninist theory is essential to the future of the socialist movement in our country.

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