

TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

Once Again About Peaceful Revolution

THE POSSIBILITY of peaceful transition to Socialism becomes an ever more important issue in the Western world. Marx and Engels, in their time, discussed conditions which might make violence inevitable in such transition — where a capitalist minority refused to abide by the will of the majority. They also discussed conditions under which peaceful transition would be possible, as in the U.S.A., Great Britain and Holland.

Herbert Brownell to the contrary notwithstanding, the right to revolution was not something discovered by Marx or Lenin. John Locke had the idea long before them. And of course the most important document of American history—our country's birth certificate—enshrines that right. Incidentally, the most interesting discussion of the American revolutionary tradition and of the current Smith Act trials that I've read recently is Dr. John Somerville's "The Communist Trials and the American Tradition."

WITHIN THE Communist movement, here and abroad, discussion of peaceful transition went on long before the 20th congress of the Soviet Communist Party. As a matter of fact the Soviet Communists were quite belated in giving theoretical recognition to changes that Communists elsewhere had long been discussing.

Among those who had pioneered in the post-World War II period were the Italian Communists. The power and influence of the Italian Communists, and of their Socialist allies, was such that their aim of peaceful, constitutional transition to Socialism caused much greater alarm among the reactionaries than any threats of violence, real or imagined. This was reflected in several articles written by Walter Lippmann on the subject during a visit to Italy in the fall of 1954.

In a column published Oct. 19, 1954 (N. Y. Herald Tribune) Lippmann wrote:

"As the Communists are so near the point where they would be numerous enough to be entitled to take over the government, the position is—on its face and taken logically—very precarious."

ITALY, Lippmann found, was becoming a testing ground of the theory that Communists in Europe could not take over government without any intervention; direct or indirect, of the Soviet

Union. "This theory," Lippmann conceded, "does not hold in Asia, where Communism grows upon native nationalism."

But Lippmann was fearful that in Italy the Communists, and their Socialist allies might win in a democratic count of heads. What then? Lippmann found friends in Italy who reassured him. The assurance came not as to whether the count of heads would favor Socialism—it came in the pledge that the ruling class would not abide by any democratic decision. Lippmann wrote:

"The non-Communist parties are in control of the apparatus of the state, of the bureaucracy, the armed forces and the police. They will not, I have been told, surrender their sovereign power to the Communists if they fall behind in the count of heads."

It's almost as though Lippmann had just finished reading Engels: "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," or Lenin's "State and Revolution."

Some Communists read Lippmann at that time and concluded: Doesn't this prove beyond shadow of doubt that peaceful transition is impossible? It's not that Communists advocate force and violence, but as long as the capitalists control "the apparatus of the state, of the bureaucracy, the armed forces and the police" they will refuse to abide by democratic decision and will invoke force and violence to maintain their power, profits and property. Isn't that what the slaveholders did in 1861? And the British Tories in 1775?

WE'RE INDEBTED to the Russian Institute of Columbia University for a book which contains a brilliant discussion of this problem. The book (published by Columbia University Press) is entitled: "The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism." It contains the Khrushchev report on Stalin, comment by Communists in various countries about this report, and Daily Worker editorials.

The book also has the full text, for the first time in English, of Palmiro Togliatti's Report to the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party on June 24, 1956, which deals most profoundly with the question of transition to socialism in Italy and other countries. (This report was made after the interview by Togliatti which has been published in the Daily Worker.)

First of all Togliatti shows that the possibility of peaceful transition could and did arise under present conditions because back in the period of World War I the Russian Bolsheviks successfully led their revolution. They did so because they won majority support of the people. And they did not shrink but carried out the revolution even though the Russian ruling class and world imperialism at that time made force and violence their major method of trying to decide political questions.

It was the success of Marxism against the reformism of the Social Democrats at that time which brought success to the Russian revolution. In this connection, even a non-Marxist historian like E. H. Carr shows that the Mensheviks, or reformists, could not lead the revolution, which simply had to be made to save the Russian people from utter disaster. Only the Bolsheviks under Lenin were able to lead the people.

The victory of Lenin in Russia was precisely the factor which later created favorable conditions for the working class in Italy and elsewhere to prevent the use of

capitalist force and violence against a socialist majority.

THUS AN ENTIRELY new situation developed — first after the Russian revolution — and most certainly after the post-World War II revolutions, especially after the Chinese revolution, which made socialism a world-wide system. However, aside from those changes, the World War against fascism and the resistance struggles of the occupied people, considerably altered old relationships.

For that matter, the rise of fascism before World War II had already introduced new methods of struggle and new theories. They were exemplified in the People's Front and in support of and even participation by Communists in bourgeois governments under certain conditions. More and more the capitalists disowned the democracy through which they had formerly ruled and the workers became the consistent champions of democracy.

The Marxist theory of the state was being modified, not by throwing out Marxism, but developing it under the new conditions. With the overthrow of fascism in Italy and victory in World War II the Italian Communists and their Socialist allies were among the moulders of the new Italian constitution. Therefore they created the premise of a constitutional path to socialism in their country.

TOGLIATTI shows how false it is to pose the issue of a parliamentary transition to socialism AGAINST the need of struggling for the rights of the workers, and for socialism. He shows that parliamentary transition becomes possible in a struggle for worker-farmer control of parliament. He explains that this involves not only electoral activity but the mass struggles of workers in their factories, of farmers in their villages, of the whole people for advancing their economic, social and political rights.

It is the very opposite of Marxism to hang on to quotations and writings dealing with specific times and circumstances even when times and circumstances change. Therefore Togliatti deals with the basic premise of Marx and Lenin that the workers cannot simply take over the capitalist government apparatus, but that they must destroy it.

"Is this position still entirely valid today?" Togliatti asks? "Here is a subject for discussion. When, in fact we state that it is possible to proceed toward socialism not only through democracy but also by using parliamentary forms, it is evident that we are correcting something in this position, taking into consideration the changes which have taken place and which are still taking place in the world."

It is the greatest merit of Togliatti's writing that for him Marxism is a method of explaining the real world, not a dogma. He uses it as a means for advancing toward socialism, not as a kind of religious incantation. Communism in the Western world faces the absolute necessity of advancing to new positions. Lippmann thinks it can be held back. Togliatti thinks it can be advanced.

Georgia Official Urges Southwide Ban on NAACP

ATLANTA, Aug. 13 (FP).—Attorney General Eugene Cook of Georgia has called for a southwide drive to outlaw the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Cook predicted Georgia would follow Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and South Carolina in cracking down on the NAACP.

He declared that the white citizen-councils act "as an effective barrier to NAACP work" in Mississippi.

Cook's legislative recommendation that the Negro organization be outlawed was passed over by the legislature. He said we would introduce the same measure next year.

Daily Worker

Published daily except Saturday and Sunday by the Publishers New Press, Inc., 25 E. 12th St., New York 2, N. Y. Telephone ALgonquin 4-7854.

Registered as second class matter Oct. 22, 1947, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

3 mos. 6 mos. 1 year
Daily Worker only \$4.00 \$7.00 \$12.00
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(Except Foreign)
Daily Worker & Worker 4.75 8.00 13.00
The Worker 2.00 3.00