

Stalinism — Issue CP Can't Bury

By Myra Tanner Weiss

All factions in the leadership of the American Communist Party admit that the prolonged crisis the party is suffering stems from the shattering of the ideological foundations of the world Communist movement when the Khrushchev revelations on the crimes of Stalinism came to light.

What is the specific nature of this ideological crisis as compared with previous crises in the Communist Party? And what are the party leaders doing to repair or replace the ideological foundations that have crumbled beneath them?

The present crisis is unlike anything the CP has previously experienced because it is lodged in the crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy itself. The inner equilibrium of the Soviet bureaucracy has been fundamentally upset by the intense pressure of the working masses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Soviet bureaucracy is fighting for its very life against the threat of a revolution to install workers' democracy.

CAUGHT

The leaderships of the Communist parties throughout the world are beset by a contradiction they cannot resolve. From previous training they know only one way to meet a crisis in the party—by relying on the political stability of the Soviet bureaucracy with its ideological monolithism and its cult of unquestioning obedience to a Stalin. Now, however, this source of political stability is shaken; the very crisis the CP leaders face arises from the shattering of the Stalin cult and the ideological crisis of Stalinism in the Soviet orbit.

This means that the current crisis has altogether different features than the CP crisis of

Freiheit on Soviet Jewish Question

Chaim Suller, manager of the Morning Freiheit, Yiddish daily published in New York, reported on the condition of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union in the Sunday Worker, Sept. 22. Suller first reviewed his account last year of plans for the revival of Jewish culture that he had been told about during a visit to the Soviet Union in July 1956. These plans had been approved by the Soviet Writers Union, but had not been approved by the Soviet government. Still, other Jewish journalists who visited the Soviet Union at that time also reported on plans that were made. "This made us all feel certain," Suller said, "that the plan would really be carried out. But it is clear to all that now, a year later, this plan has NOT been carried out. Not one book has been published in Yiddish. There is not a single Yiddish newspaper except the one in Birobidian (which did not cease publication during all this period). There is no permanent Yiddish theatre. The Jewish cultural conference was not called. The Yiddish literary journal has not yet appeared."

Suller expressed the opinion that this failure did not constitute evidence of anti-Semitism. And he expressed hope that the plan "will be fulfilled." But he said, "We must . . . conclude that this failure to satisfy the cultural needs of the Jewish population is a violation of the fundamental principles of socialism as they relate to the national question. No socialist and no friend of the Soviet Union can overlook or condone it."

1939, for example, when Stalin signed his pact with Hitler.

For the anti-fascist-minded workers in the CP, the Stalin-Hitler Pact came as a body-blow. All the tactical explanations in the world couldn't appease the anger and dismay of many. Others found the sudden switch in party line—from "collective security" of the "democratic" imperialism against the fascist imperialism, to a pseudo anti-war policy—too strong for their middle-class radical taste.

Yet these losses did not destroy the stability of the central party apparatus. The turn resulting from the Stalin-Hitler Pact was ruthlessly carried through, without regard for casualties — and the subsequent switch back to super-patriotic support of the war (after the Stalin-Hitler Pact ended with the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union) came even more easily. These sharp twists and turns didn't disorient the central core of the CP machine because it could continue its dependence on a relatively stable Soviet bureaucracy.

The present situation is entirely different. It flows, as we have said, not from the changing foreign policy needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy, but from the crisis of the bureaucracy itself.

WISFUL THINKING

Sid Stein, organization-secretary of the CP, said at the July National Committee meeting: "Recent developments in the Soviet Union afford us an objective basis for greater confidence that the superiority of socialism will be demonstrated in terms that more and more Americans will find easier to grasp. As the conditions are prepared for a great advance in living standards of the Soviet people, as the

process of democratization is accelerated, and as a result of the defeats suffered by those who attempted to scuttle the XXth Congress decisions, new and stronger bonds of friendship will be built. . . ."

This type of approach to solving the ideological crisis is at best wishful thinking and evades the heart of the problem. The Soviet Union is not traveling the road of correction of previous "errors" and "abuses" in a harmonious and unified way. It is torn by an inner contradiction between the working class and the bureaucracy. This contradiction is reaching an acute stage and has already resulted in revolutionary uprisings of Soviet-orbit workers.

The American Communist Party is faced with the choice: cling to allegiance to the Soviet bureaucracy or break with the bureaucracy and take the side of the workers. There is, of course, another choice: stick with the Soviet bureaucracy or go over to the imperialist crusaders for "freedom."

Class-conscious Communist workers are not interested in this latter choice. Only hopeless bureaucrats or unstable middle-class radicals who identified revolution with its bureaucratic usurpers, leap from the bureaucratic frying pan into the capitalist fire. Revolutionary workers will seek to discover a Marxist answer to the questions arising from the crisis in the Soviet orbit.

WANT BASIC ANSWERS

Communist workers will ask: Why is democratization in the Soviet Union needed forty years after the most democratic revolution in history? Who suppressed Soviet democracy and what forces impel the present

movement to restore it? Revolutionary workers cannot accept the kind of answers provided by the Kremlin bureaucrats: "Stalin made mistakes; Khrushchev is correcting them."

Facts refute the contention that "all is now well" and that Khrushchev and Co. will correct the previous "errors": the crisis in the Soviet orbit did not abate with the first concessions to workers' demands. After Malenkov's "new course" came the Beria purge. After the Beria purge came Malenkov's downfall. After the 20th Congress came the Poznan revolt and the murder and repression of the striking Polish workers. After Poznan, workers' councils appeared in Poland. Then came the Hungarian revolution, with its general strike, its workers' councils and its bloody repression. After these gigantic events came new purges in the top apparatus of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Each one of these violent disturbances in Kremlin rule, affected the Communist parties throughout the capitalist world. And these parties will continue to feel the effects of every disturbance in the Kremlin so long as their leaderships remain tied to the Soviet bureaucracy.

SOURCE OF CRISIS

To break with Stalinism, that is, with the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, does not mean to go over to the imperialist enemies of the Soviet Union and the world socialist revolution. On the contrary, the very source of the Kremlin's crisis lies in the extension of the world revolution since World War II. With the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, with the great anti-imperialist upheavals in the former colonial possessions of capitalism, with the extension of the Soviet orbit to Eastern Europe, the workers in the Soviet Union have begun to feel that they are no longer isolated. They also feel their class power as the second largest industrial proletariat in the world.

Superficial observers credited Stalinism with the extension of the socialist revolution and with the growing industrial might of the Russian working class. Actually, Stalin's police dictatorship in the Soviet Union came into being and grew in power with every defeat of the workers revolution elsewhere. The advances in both the world revolution and Soviet economy took place despite Stalinism and not because of it.

With the forward motion of the world revolution, Stalinism has been thrust into mortal crisis and has come face to face with the revolutionary movement of the workers in the Soviet orbit. This revolutionary power should be greeted by workers everywhere as a powerful new force in the world struggle for socialism.

To get the background on the present conflict in the

MIDDLE EAST

You Must Read:

Egypt

A People Rising

By Abu Hashim

42 pages 25c.

The Algerian Revolution

By Messali Hadj

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