

LEFT REVISIONISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

After Stokely Carmichael returned from a trip which included visits to Cuba, North Vietnam, the People's Republic of China and the USSR he made a speech in Oakland, California. He said: "Communism is not an ideology suited for Black people, period. Socialism is not an ideology fitted for Black people, period, period." And further, "Communism nor Socialism does not speak to the problem of racism. And racism, for Black people in this country, is far more important than exploitation."

Mr. Carmichael explained as follows: "Now for white people who are Communists, the question of Communism comes first, because they're exploited by their other people. If you were exploited by other Black people then it would be a question of how we divide the profits. It is not that for us, it is not that for us. It is a question of how to live as a people--and we do not do that because of the effects of racism in this country. We must therefore consciously strive for an ideology which deals with racism first, and if we do that we recognize the necessity of hooking up with the nine hundred million Black people in the world today."

Mr. Carmichael and Prof. Charles V. Hamilton have written a book, Black Power, the Politics of Liberation in America. In this book they raise the following question about the national leadership of the AFL-CIO and its direction: "We cannot see, then, how Black people who are massively insecure both politically and economically, can coalesce with those whose position is secure--particularly when the latter's security is based on the perpetuation of the existing political and economic structure."

Mr. William Epton is the Vice-chairman of the Progressive Labor Party. The PLP is recognized as a Marxist-Leninist Party by Sidney Rittenberg, Mao Tse-tung and other leaders of the "cultural revolution". Mr. Epton attacks Carmichael, Hamilton and their views in Progressive Labor, October, 1968, in an article entitled "Stokely's Anti-Communism Bared". Mr. Epton says, "Because of the special oppression of the Black workers they are usually in the vanguard in the fight against the bosses and the corrupt union leadership. White workers fully understand this vanguard role because they almost always follow the Black workers in this struggle." (Our emphasis.-H&S)

Here Mr. Epton wrongly claims that the white chauvinism of Meany and Reuther has no class base and is no problem for the Afro-American people. Because Epton and PL do not recognize white chauvinism as an imperialist ideology in the trade unions they cannot fight it; in practice they surrender to it and promote it.

Mr. Epton, in the same article, takes the same position as the NYC teachers' union leader, Shanker, who has been described by a young Afro-American leader in NYC, John Hatchett, as a "racist bastard". Epton, like Shanker, denounces Afro-American demands for control of schools in their communities. He asks and answers the following question: "Will the ruling class allow the children to learn about Malcolm X and Nat Turner? We (PL) think so."

The editorial board of H&S believes that victory for the Afro-American liberation struggle, the Vietnam liberation struggle, and the liberation struggles of the peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America will establish the conditions necessary for the next stage, Socialist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat. We therefore disagree with Mr. Carmichael when he says that the "ideology of Socialism is not fitted for Black people". We also disagree with Mr. Carmichael's negative attitude toward geography and Black liberation. Land and territory (geography) for Afro-Americans in the Black Belt are the key to liberation.

But the essence of Mr. Carmichael's question is whether the ideology of the present leaders who claim to be building Socialism and Communism in this period is "Eitted for Black people" or any other peoples oppressed by imperialism, headed by US imperialism. Is this question valid?

Since the death of Stalin none of the leaders holding state power in countries claiming to be Socialist has supported self-determination for Black people in the Black Belt.

Before the death of Stalin it was only the Trotskyite and Browderite servants of imperialist oppression who claimed that the Afro-American question was a "class question". Mao Tse-tung has issued statements in 1963 and 1968 based on the Trotskyite line that the Afro-American question is not one of national oppression by US imperialism but is one of "essentially class". These statements were timed to help US imperialism when Black national demands were resulting in fierce battles.

Nor is the defection from the teachings of Lenin and Stalin on the national question restricted to the Afro-American question. It is DeGaulle who raises the question of self-determination for Quebec, while Brezhnev, Hoxha and Mao remain silent. What kind of "Socialist builders" are these who fail to oppose Canadian and US imperialism while DeGaulle speaks out?

When the leaders of so-called Socialist construction do speak out, whom do they support? Chou En-lai, one of the handful of "cultural revolution" leaders taking the Trotskyite road, has supported the Ceausescu regime of Roumania--without reservation. He tells the peoples that such a regime is capable of defending Roumanian national independence. Yes, this is the same Ceausescu who slandered Anna Pauker and Stalin and gave open vulgar support in the UN to US imperialism and the State of Israel against the Arab people.

Even when the peoples of the S^U faced a period of relatively peaceful growth, Stalin never forgot the international meaning of Socialist construction. Speaking to the Comintern in the fall of 1926 he explained the "respite" from imperialist attacks depended: "Firstly on the contradictions within the imperialist camp..." "Secondly on the contradictions between imperialism and the colonial countries..." "Thirdly on the growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries..." "Fourthly on the strength and might of the proletariat of the USSR, on its achievements in Socialist construction, and on the strength of organization of its Red Army."

He also said in the same speech, "The Party says that the proletariat of one country is not in a position to overpower the world bourgeois by its own efforts. The Party says that for the final victory of Socialism in one country it is necessary to overcome, or at least to neutralize, the world bourgeois."

Today the situation has changed in certain respects. The focal contradiction is between the oppressed peoples and imperialism. This has sharpened the major contradiction between imperialist groups and nations. Does this mean that a M-List evaluation can depart from the Lenin-Stalin principle of internationalism? On the contrary. Socialist construction either concentrates on defeating US imperialism in Vietnam or it degenerates into capitalist exploitation. It is on this question above all others that the modern and left revisionists leave the camp of international solidarity and desert Marxism-Leninism.

Speaking in Peking on October 6, Beqir Balluku, Politbureau member of the Party of Labor of Albania, took a "scholarly" view predicting a spontaneous victory over modern revisionism and imperialism. No tasks for the M-Lists in Albania, in China or in other countries were given on Vietnam or any other national liberation struggle. The struggle against US imperialism has nothing to do with Socialist construction in China—that is the theme of Balluku. Socialist construction in China is solely a question of seizing power from "the handful of Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road".

In Tirana, Ramiz Alia, Politbureau member of the PLA, applied this line to Albania in a report to the PLA's Central Committee October 4. According to the news bulletin of the Albanian Telegraphic Agency, Alia failed to discuss US imperialism and Titoism as a threat to Socialist construction. To Alia, and to the CC, PLA, it is simply a question of deepening the Socialist revolution through "the development of the class struggle and the implementation of the mass line".

Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao and Chou En-lai have sent a telegram of "support" to Albania, in case of attack by Russian or US imperialists. The People's Republic of China will not tolerate such an attack, says the telegram. Very simple. The leaders of the "cultural revolution" have not stopped aggression against Vietnam and Korea. They have neither freed Taiwan nor prevented US imperialists from using Hong Kong as a military base. But they will defend Albania on the other side of the world. Sounds like Khrushchev's "pledges" to the Congo in 1960.

We believe the independence of Albania requires an international M-List movement. Our proposals to the PLA and the CPC on this question have been principled and correct.

Our answer to Stokely Carmichael would not include a defense of the contemporary leaders of the Marxist movement, especially those in state power. They are not internationalists, not Marxists, not in the tradition of Lenin and Stalin. They cannot develop or defend Socialism. Their ideas are borrowed from Tito, Trotsky and Khrushchev. Their line will be destroyed. A new M-List movement will be built which will raise high the standard of liberation for the Afro-American people and all oppressed peoples. A new M-List movement, in both theory and practice will lead the fight against white and great-power chauvinism among the white workers and white middle class. Without this struggle, without large numbers of whites backing the right to self-determination for the Black people in the Black Belt, a Socialist revolution in the US is impossible.

A new M-List movement will develop in the world as it is now developing in the US, on the basis of theoretical and organizational struggle against the left revisionists of Peking and PL, their bankrupt spokesmen here. It will develop in struggle against the modern revisionists in Moscow and the CPUSA leaders, their echoes in this country. No revisionists, whether left or right, can prevent the oppressed peoples and their supporters from attacking US imperialism. Effective attacks and successful struggle require the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist Party. The central task of H&S is to develop the policies and personnel for such a Party.

A serious approach to a M-List Party in the USA requires recognition of the problems involved. Such a Party must be built in a country ruled by the main enemy of the world's peoples--US imperialism. Such a Party must contribute to a worldwide M-List movement and have the support of such a movement.

Objective conditions in the world have given the CPC an opportunity to play the leading role in the international M-List movement. The leaders of the CPC have adopted policies and practices which make such a leading role for the CPC impossible without an extended internal Party struggle against modern and left revisionism. The leaders of the "cultural revolution" now in state power have denied the leading role of the CPC in their own country. They have removed many of its cadres, promoting sections of students, intellectuals and businessmen who favor peaceful co-existence with US imperialism.

The presence of Anna Louise Strong at the head table with Chou En-lai at a National Day banquet in October, 1968, symbolizes the temporary strength of reaction in China. Miss Strong comes from a family long devoted to US imperialist interests in China. She was expelled as an imperialist agent from the SU when Stalin was alive. Later she was "rehabilitated" by Khrushchev and Mao.

H&S's editorial board has been asked if stating the facts re: the CPC will not discourage revolutionary forces, since China is such an important nation, with such outstanding achievements in the anti-imperialist struggle. Revolutions are not led by forces afraid to face or recognize setbacks. M-Lists are not ostriches, hiding their heads in the sand when difficulties arise.

We have been asked if we are not mechanically applying the same yardstick which measured revisionism in the USSR to China. China is a former semi-colonial nation. The proletariat is a small part of the population. The Chinese proletariat cannot exercise its dictatorship over all non-proletarian forces without regard for the differences among the national bourgeois, the peasants, the intellectuals, the students concerning the main enemy of Socialism in China--US imperialism. The proletariat cannot exercise its dictatorship by depicting any section of the national bourgeois of China as a more important enemy than US imperialism,

But the policy statements of the "cultural revolution" leaders, contradictory on all other questions, are consistent in lumping all nonproletarian forces into one solid bloc as the main enemy of Socialism in China. In the name of "crushing all the bourgeois at once" the pro-US-imperialist bourgeois strengthen their power. This is left revisionism. It is a more effective tool of US imperialism in China than the open modern revisionist errors of the CPC leaders in 1956, '57, '58, '59, and '60. These errors included the endorsement of Tito and the 20th Congress CPSU, the anti-Stalin line, and the collaboration with Khrushchev on the 81-Party attack on the principles of Leninism in 1960.

We are asked if we are not accepting the victory of the "cultural revolution", of left revisionism, as "final". Is it not true that there is resistance, that Mao now talks "working-class", that a curb has been put on students whose attacks on the CPC resembled the attacks by Indonesian students on the PKI?

Our answer is that the dictatorship of the proletariat in any country, including China, is a hoax without the leading role of a Marxist-Leninist Party. We are well aware of Mao's generally correct view on this question when J. V. Stalin lived. We have studied the ambivalent statements of Mao and the CPC in the period 1961-1966. On the one hand Mao condemned the CPSU leaders for revisionism on the leading role of the Party. On the other hand he supported the CPSU leaders by continuing to endorse the 81-Party Statement of 1960 which attacked Stalin and the vanguard role of a Leninist Party. The doctrine of Mao's thought is now the basis for widespread attacks on the concept of a M-List Party. Mao is no longer a Leninist. Like Kautsky he served the revolutionary movement well for a period of time and then took the counter-revolutionary path.

M-List Parties are not created by government edicts. They will emerge in this period as a result of struggle against left and modern revisionism and against their sponsor and producer--US imperialism. A M-List Party in China will defeat the romanticist concept of one man's thought and establish a collective leadership based on revolutionary tasks in the real world. A Marxist-Leninist Party in China will reject the idealist, religious, monarchist idea of an heir and develop M-List leaders in struggle within and without the Party. Such a Party with such leaders in China requires a protracted, bitter struggle.

We are also asked if this means we no longer consider discussion between H&S and leading forces in China and Albania beneficial to M-Lism. We had such discussions in Peking and Tirana in 1964, 1965, and 1966. While we have always had the greatest consideration shown us as far as housing, travel and other aspects of hospitality, we have never felt that equality, in the M-List sense of mutual respect for ideas and criticism, was upheld in Tirana or Peking-- even before the Titoite "cultural revolution". We are not likely to receive nor would we likely accept any such invitation in the future unless more than representatives from two countries participated.

We did receive an invitation to participate in National Day celebrations, October 1, 1968, in the People's Republic of China and in "organized conferences of national and world representatives for the purpose of coordinating world-wide struggle".

We received the letter postmarked Hong Kong, signed by Li Chia Ming, very late in September. We had little time to discuss it. We did consider the possibility that the letter was a fraud and discussed other negative aspects of the invitation. We gave most serious consideration to the very slim chance of having any type of frank comradely discussion in a meeting influenced by those now in state power in China. We decided that our obligations to the Afro-American people, to the revolutionary movement in our country and the world outweighed all other factors. Even the slightest chance of getting Vietnam on the agenda at an international meeting was worth the effort. We sent one of our members to Hong Kong as requested.

Before the plane touches Hong Kong's airport the huge new Gulf and Mobil oil tanks attract attention. Many US warships are serviced in Hong Kong for attacks on Vietnam. US troops on rest and recreation from Vietnam are there in large numbers.

Also in Hong Kong are many large stores selling goods from the People's Republic of China. The employees in these stores, and of the stores selling Mao's books and of other similar enterprises, have their own schools and benefits denied the masses of Hong Kong.

Our delegate had an opportunity to chat with several forces holding responsible positions in enterprises featuring Mao's slogans, busts of Mao, and numerous pictures of Mao. All were asked if they knew of any struggle in Hong Kong for Vietnam and against US imperialist forces. None knew of any. Neither did anyone else. The Mao-thought forces and US imperialism are both granted special privileges by the British rulers in Hong Kong. US imperialist and Mao's forces co-exist very peacefully there. As pointed out in our last newsletter, a deal between the "cultural revolution" leaders and US imperialism is developing.

The Mao forces have almost eliminated the works of Lenin and Stalin from the book stores they run in Hong Kong. One of the reasons left revisionism gained its temporary victory in China is that the writings of Lenin and Stalin were never popularized in the ranks of the Party or among the people.

At the Travel Service Organization in Hong Kong, which services travellers to the PRC, our delegate raised some problems resulting from the trip. One of the staff advised our delegate to go to the US legation. His supervisor said he would criticize him for this advice. Is it possible that an organization oriented against US imperialism would offer such "advice" in the first place?

Our delegate did not get into the PRC. No international conference was held. Mao continues to issue edicts like the Pope, although even the Pope called an ecumenical meeting. The people in the travel agency claimed they had never heard of Li Chia Ming or the invitation. They also indicated we were not the only ones from the US to have been deceived by such an invitation.

The trip cost H&S a great deal of money. It has left us in bad shape financially. H&S has never, in its more than seven years of publication, made any of the desperate appeals for funds so familiar to CPUSA supporters. We have received contributions but most of our funds have come from subscriptions, people close to us, or out of our own pockets. If we have erred it is not in the direction of the revisionists who try to make a fast dollar out of their activities. We have erred in not broadening our financial efforts, in not asking our readers for more assistance, in not projecting a long-range funds policy.

H&S has been the only force upholding a M-List policy advocating the right of self-determination in the Black Belt. Is it not clear today that this correct and principled policy has contributed to the Afro-American liberation struggles? H&S is the only publication consistently upholding a M-List policy on struggle against white chauvinism among the white workers and middle class. H&S has never painted roses over problems in the world Marxist movement. We try to tell it like it is.

H&S has never relied on financial support from those in state power in countries which formerly built socialism. We have never offered unprincipled agreement to receive such funds. We rely on the sacrifices of our readers, our supporters, ourselves.

Can a few of our readers dig down deep and mail us a hundred dollars? Can a few others mail us fifty? Do other readers have understanding enough to pay for their subscriptions for several years in advance knowing that attacks from US imperialism might mean reaching people in ways other than the newsletter before the sub runs out? We trust that more than a few will reply to our appeal, that many readers will contribute. In this way we can continue and enlarge our work to lay the basis for a Marxist-Leninist Party in the US.

One of US imperialism's great assets is the opportunism of today's "Marxists". Your funds can help speed the development of a new, genuine Marxist-Leninist Party carrying forward the revolutionary work of Lenin and Stalin.

Please send postal money-orders or cash--no checks. Thanks in advance.

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