

APPENDIX IV:

ON THE REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION DELIVERED BY COMRADE KHRUSHCHEV TO THE TWENTIETH PARTY CONGRESS

The following report was given by a trade union section/organizer of the Communist Party, USA in 1956, shortly after the reports of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) were received in the U.S. It is presented here because it contains a thorough refutation of the spurious ideological theses that were the first overt

(This report was begun within days of the receipt here of the reports from the 20th Congress. It was finished a few days following the printing in the U.S. of the so-called "secret report." It was delivered in appropriate bodies and forwarded to appropriate committees. It is reproduced here exactly as then given and with no changes. However, two small additions were made in response to questions then raised and as a result of the discussions. These are additions made in the course of giving the report and are included here, clearly indicated by being enclosed in parentheses.)

I choose to write out my discussion of the report largely because of the present necessity to organize my several objections to its conclusions in as clear and as Marxist a way as I am capable of. I am hampered, of course, as is everyone by the yet insufficient documentation of many of the conclusions, and, also, I am hampered by personal limitations, insufficient research in the classical documents of Marxism-Leninism, and a knowledge of the material relations in the capitalist and socialist worlds that is more superficial than profound. Nevertheless, my objections to the report are based on my present understanding and a serious examination of those documents I have seen.

My objections are as follows: The formulation on the present "non-inevitability of war," a difference in the assessment of reasons for the lessening of tensions through Soviet success in peace actions, a question on developments in former colonial countries and the so-called "zone of peace," a difference in principle, perhaps minor, on a question of Party organization, and a disagreement both as to method and content on the re-evaluation of Stalin.

In addition, tentatively and timidly, I venture a pair of formulations: One, on an aspect of the road from bourgeois democracy to socialism in countries recently liberated from colonial domination, and, the other, on peaks and lulls of the revolutionary movement in capitalist countries. These are tentative and timid because I have no basis for an extreme confidence in my ability to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism no matter how diligent and serious my attempt. In no sense are they offered in the spirit of, "You are wrong, Comrade Khrushchev; this is the

indication of the revisionist takeover of the Central Committee of the CPSU. This paper is also printed to indicate that struggle against the revisionist line in the CPUSA did occur at that time; although not as well organized or widespread as necessary. The person who wrote the report is presently a leading member of the RU.—Ed.

correct way to approach the question." They are offered because I have arrived at them in the process of trying to understand the world situation through a consideration of the report of Comrade Khrushchev.

Before I begin, a word on dogmatism. It is absolutely true that dogmatism has no place in Marxism; in fact, they are ideological enemies. There are no sacred cows, no unchanging principles of action in Marxism. This could not be otherwise—Marxism is based on an understanding of the universality of change, and Marxism, if it is not to be reduced to sterile formulas, can be no exception to that universality. As relationships change in a concrete and qualitatively different way, so change the laws of the interaction of these relationships, and so are changed the necessary courses of action to further develop the partisan struggle of the working class.

There are many examples of this change in the hundred year old history of Marxism. Socialism in one country, the advance to socialism in those countries where the contradictions are most severe as opposed to the idea that socialism will come first to the most developed capitalist countries, the distinction between moribund and expanding capitalism, the role of the peasantry in the proletarian revolution, are only a few of the many developments in Marxist theory and practice that have occurred.

Moreover, in addition to change in life producing change in practice, there is also the advancement of information and science, including Marxist science, making it possible for Marxists of a later day to examine more concretely and more thoroughly certain aspects of revolutionary struggle than was possible for earlier Marxists. So if I have objection to some of the theses in the report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it is not mere difference from the more traditional formulations that disturbs me. Rather, my concern is directed to whether or not the report fully establishes the basis for replacement of the old formulation with the new.

The Inevitability of War

In regard to the thesis of Comrade Khrushchev that war is no longer inevitable: It seems to me that the picture he paints is a rosy, unrealistic

one, not supported by the laws of capitalist development or deterioration. He cited two reasons why war is no longer inevitable: The growing strength of the socialist world, and the strength of the world peace forces including the "zone of peace."

There is a third point that Comrade Khrushchev raises in the earlier section of the report on relaxation of tensions and which applies here, though Comrade Khrushchev may not have so intended. This third point is the growing awareness of capitalist circles as to what war would mean and their knowledge of the invincibility of the Soviet Union. I will discuss this also, even though Comrade Khrushchev does not list it as a specific factor in his argument, because when others maintain the thesis on "non-inevitability", this point is always brought in to buttress the case.

It is true that the points Comrade Khrushchev raises act as deterrents to war, but Comrade Khrushchev must answer other questions before he can say that war is no longer inevitable. In fact, there is a glaring contradiction between this point in the report and the parts immediately preceding where he points out how the situation in the capitalist world market has become aggravated; how the contradictions between the imperial tendencies of the chief world powers is bringing them to more and greater conflict; how Anglo-American conflicts have deepened, as have the conflicts between Britain and Japan and Germany; how West Germany and Japan have almost regained their pre-war positions.

No, it is not enough to stress the growing peace strength, or that of the socialist world. What about the fascization of a major capitalist power—is that ruled out as no longer possible? I know that fascism is not inevitable anywhere, but the uneven development of capitalism includes the uneven development of the resistance to capitalism. Can it be held that it will, not can, always be stopped? Or is war still not inevitable if a major capitalist power turns to fascism? Nowhere in the entire report is fascism mentioned, and that, it seems to me, is a glaring weakness of the discussion of peace.

Lenin speaks of imperialism as "the epoch of wars and revolution." Does Comrade Khrushchev's formulation mean that capitalism in major crisis will no longer have the alternative of war but will proceed immediately, nation by nation, peacefully or otherwise, towards social revolution?

It is one thing to make bold new theses. One does not have to be a Marxist to do that. It is quite another thing to make a thesis and establish it on the basis of understanding all the phenomena of social intercourse. I think that Comrade Stalin in *Economic Problems of Socialism* made a much sounder evaluation of the peace question today, more Marxist in that he sees all the phenomena seen by the Central Committee but also recognizes what is basic in capitalist relations. In section six of this profound

work is what I believe to be a masterly presentation of the real relations of the capitalist world and a specific answer to most of the points raised by Comrade Khrushchev. I would like to quote all its few pages but will satisfy myself with its last paragraph:

"What is most likely is that the present-day peace movement, as a movement for the preservation of peace, will, if it succeeds, result in preventing a particular war, in its temporary postponement, in the temporary preservation of a particular peace, in the resignation of a bellicose government and its supersession by another that is prepared, temporarily, to keep the peace. That, of course, will be good. Even very good. But, all the same, it will not be enough to eliminate the inevitability of war between capitalist countries generally. It will not be enough, because for all the successes of the peace movement, imperialism will remain, continue in force—and, consequently, the inevitability of wars will also continue in force."

"To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism."

As to the role of the "zone of peace", I believe that Comrade Khrushchev makes the mistake of regarding what is a temporary phenomenon based on the situation of the moment to be, of necessity, durable and lasting, but I will discuss this more fully when I deal with developments in the former colonial countries. In any case, even if, for the purposes of argument, we grant that the liberation of the colonial countries removes these countries from the orbit of capitalism with respect to war and into the front ranks of the peace fighters, it does not affect, except to make more desperate, the development of the contradictions between capitalist powers.

The point about the growing awareness in capitalist circles of what war would mean is simply not to the point. Yet everyone who wishes to argue against the inevitability of war makes it. There is good reason for this because in capitalist countries there is both conscious and unconscious knowledge on the part of the people that, in fundamental matters, they have very little to say about the policy of the government, and hearing important spokesmen of the bourgeoisie laud and proclaim a strengthened military policy, including the policy of "preventive war", need the assurance that the bourgeoisie does not desire war before they can think wars not inevitable.

Though Comrade Khrushchev does not make this point directly, he makes it indirectly by citing it as a reason for the lessening of tensions, and the concept carries over. Incidentally, it is not a reason for the lessening of tensions either. To quote from the report: "Under the impact of these incontestable facts, symptoms of a certain sobering up are appearing among influential Western circles. More and more people are realizing what a dangerous gamble war is," etc., how it would lead to socialism, how there would

be no victor in an atom war, etc.

This position is shockingly similar to Browder's "intelligent" capitalists. Comrade Khrushchev's statement of a growing awareness on the part of capitalist leaders is true perhaps—but what has that to do with the inevitability of war or, for that matter, with the lessening of tensions? Do capitalist powers always act according to their own best interest? For example, was it in the best interest of American and British capitalists to build up Germany and Japan before the Second World War? Far from it—nor is the present arms buildup of West Germany and the attempt in Japan in the best interests of any other national capitalist class, yet it is being implemented.

There are many other examples from the history of capitalism to show that capitalists do what brings them the most immediate profit—not what is in their own best interest. The nature of capitalism is such that this cannot change while capitalism exists—if it could the question of the socialist reorganization of society would not be so near its solution.

Comrade Khrushchev should be able to understand this—it requires only a little extension of the understanding that he shows elsewhere in the report. Speaking of the attempts of present day bourgeois economists and politicians to deny the necessity of capitalist crisis, and ridiculing their thesis that government regulation can prevent absolutely the certainty of crisis, he says:

"The state is powerless to do away with the objective laws of capitalist economy, which lead to anarchy of production and economic crises. Crises are inherent in the very nature of capitalism, they are inevitable." (my emphasis)

And the objective laws of capitalist economy also lead to war. Yes, Comrade Khrushchev, wars and crises are "inherent in the very nature of capitalism, they are inevitable."

The thesis that wars are no longer inevitable might be more convincing had there not occurred an uninterrupted series of wars and military engagements from World War II right down to the present day. It is true that peace forces have succeeded in limiting and stopping many of these wars, but their continuing occurrence is hardly cause for optimism.

Comrade Khrushchev states that imperialism leads to war and that will continue as long as imperialism exists. But his conception that the present peace forces can stop every war from occurring seems to me incompatible with the real relations between capitalist powers. Much of the world is lost to imperialism, that is true; the peace forces grow, that is true; but, on the other hand, the general crisis of capitalism matures to deep and profound crisis, to convulsions, one might say. Can it be held that imperialism in its decline will be less bloody than in its heyday? This seems hardly likely.

Of course, as Stalin proves, war against the Soviet Union is not inevitable, though that, too, is a danger. Of course the peace forces can do much to limit and contain and even stop a particular war, can be a material force in saving the world from atomic destruction. I am confident that the socialist camp and the peace forces will score many successes in the fight for peace, and that this necessary fight will lead to a peaceful world. Can it be said that the peace forces in the United States can prevent our war makers from taking us to war as they did in Korea? We will reach that point—we are not at it.

A word on the reasoning of Comrade Khrushchev and his departure from the Marxist-Leninist method. In developing his idea of the non-inevitability of war, he begins by separating the development of war into its economic and social aspects.

"People usually take only one aspect of the question and examine only the economic basis of wars under imperialism. This is not enough. War is not only an economic phenomenon. Whether there is to be a war or not depends in large measure on the correlation of class, political forces, the degree of organization and the awareness and resolve of the people. Moreover, in certain conditions the struggle waged by progressive social and political forces may play a decisive role."

From this point he shows how in previous wars these progressive social and political forces were weak, but that now they are strong and capable of playing a decisive role. His argument is interesting, and his separation of war into these two aspects may be generally correct, but his conclusions are incorrect precisely because of the correctness of his analysis. As a matter of fact, if wars are not inevitable he must throw into the ashcan of history not only Lenin's thesis of the inevitability of wars under imperialism, but, also, the method of dialectical materialism. Because the basis of capitalist economic relations produces the experience of the catastrophes of war, the peace movement develops, just as the experience of exploitation produces the trade union movement. Just as the National Association of Manufacturers and the trade union movement are elements of the superstructure of capitalism, so, too, are military organization and the peace movement.

Interaction is the essence of the relation between basis and superstructure; that is why peace forces can postpone, limit, even stop wars at certain points. But Comrade Khrushchev, which is decisive, basis or superstructure? It is true that superstructure can topple basis, but when that happens the basis is replaced by a new one. Recalling the victorious slogan of the Bolshevik revolution in his own country, "Peace, Land, and Bread," Comrade Khrushchev can see a case of superstructure toppling basis, where the struggle for peace was an important driving force for the replacement of the bourgeois order by the socialist order. People will

fight for peace because they must and "peace will triumph over war", and in that process capitalism will pass from the world stage. No, Comrade Khrushchev's thesis that within the framework of existing imperialism war is not inevitable is essentially a thesis that the superstructure may be stronger than the basis, an idea not compatible with dialectical materialism.

I end this point with a quotation from a letter of Engels to Conrad Schmidt, October 27, 1890:

"What these gentlemen all lack is dialectic. They never see anything but here cause and there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites only exist in the real world during crises, while the whole vast process proceeds in the form of interaction (though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most elemental and most decisive) and that here everything is relative and nothing is absolute—this they never begin to see." (my emphasis)

(Some comrades claim that I have misunderstood the nature of the claim of the Central Committee; that in question is only a war involving the Soviet Union. This is incorrect—for no new thesis is necessary here as Stalin has demonstrated that at the 19th Congress. Others claim that my misunderstanding lies in that the claim of non-inevitability is intended only for major or world wars, whether or not they involve the Soviet Union, and is not intended to cover the multitude of small wars. This too is incorrect because such a meaning would make the claim ridiculous in that small wars can grow into large ones. In any case, both of these claims are without foundation. The Central Committee can be wrong—as I think they are—but they are not illiterate. They are perfectly capable of saying what they mean.

(The comrades are more correct who criticize my presentation in that I fail, just as Comrade Khrushchev does, to distinguish between wars. These comrades are perfectly right. There are wars and then there are wars, or as Marxists have said for a century—there are unjust wars and there are just wars. Even if it were possible to create the capitalist utopia where no set of national capitalists would war with any other, where all differences are settled in The Hague to the satisfaction of all, no one on earth, not even "Communists," can prevent an oppressed people at the limit of their resources from taking up arms against their oppressor. As for me, I would not like a world where war against the imperialists was not possible. I would not like it, and I do not believe that it exists—outside of dreams.

(These comrades are right. A proper discussion of war in modern life should begin with the discussion of just and unjust wars and go on from there.)

Reasons for the Lessening of Tensions

Comrade Khrushchev's report leaves the im-

pression that the reason for the lessening of tensions on a world scale is the "new look" in Soviet foreign policy. I would not discount for one moment the significance of the actions of the Soviet Union in foreign affairs, nor am I criticizing in any way the handling of this policy compelling the capitalist world in greater and lesser degrees to cooperate in the lessening of tensions. It is beautiful to behold and a positive accomplishment.

But one must look, it seems to me, beyond adroitness in the handling of foreign affairs to see why this adroitness is meeting with such success. Soviet foreign policy is, I believe, well and ably undertaken, but the reason for its present success is a change in the world situation. Upon the conclusion of World War II and in the years immediately following, all capitalist nations became more or less, and mostly more, under the domination of the United States. They could not help this situation for a number of reasons: They were forced to relinquish markets because they could no longer supply them; in order to retain the maximum of positions they still held they had to permit the United States to "help" both in regard to armaments and the service of markets; moreover, with the increased prestige of the socialist world throughout the capitalist nations and the growth of large Communist Parties within them, these nations feared an imminent social revolution unless they could avoid immediate crisis.

American capitalists, licking their chops, made the most of this opportunity, tying the question of aid very intimately with the growing American control of the foreign and domestic markets of the former capitalist giants. But this situation has changed—from a position of dependence to one of increasing sharp rivalry in the capitalist world. This manifests itself in many ways, one of which is to begin to limit and oppose the foreign policy of the United States, which, under the slogan of "uniting the free world against Communism", has made and is attempting to solidify with much success many inroads into the markets of other capitalist nations.

In this framework trade with the socialist world is assuming greater importance for these countries. This is a fulfillment as yet only partial of the prediction made by Stalin in *Economic Problems of Socialism*. Also, as Stalin points out, no matter what these nations may publicly say, they know they are in no danger of being attacked by the Soviet Union, that the United States, and not the Soviet Union, limits their capacity for profit taking.

Since at the moment the contradictions between the other powers are less than their common chafing under the American bit; moreover, since the contradictions of capitalism have not matured to major capitalist crisis, war between capitalist powers is not on the immediate agenda. In this framework, the sabotage of "free world" policy as set by the United States is to

the immediate best interest, that is, increased profits, of the capitalist nations engaged in struggle with the American capitalist class.

I, of course, highly admire the way the Soviet Union is conducting its foreign affairs in utilizing and developing the contradictions between capitalist states to promote peace, but the major reasons for the successes are the developing contradictions. Of course, the "active and flexible" foreign policy—Comrade Mikoyan's phrase—contributes to and enlarges the area of success. However, should one proceed from and persist in an incorrect estimate of the world situation—then adroitness can't help.

(I have not discussed the change in foreign policy of the Soviet Union vis-a-vis Yugoslavia. When the Cominform documents of the dispute with Yugoslavia were published I agreed with them. My tendency as of this moment is to think that those decisions were correct at least in their basic particulars. Since those documents are not presently available to me for study in the light of the events of today, and since the discussion in the Central Committee report is not very thorough in this particular, I cannot be certain in my belief.)

Peaceful and/or Parliamentary Transition to Socialism

Is it true that peaceful transition to socialism is possible? Of course it is. Given the appropriate conditions—which may occur—it is possible. However, the example of Hungary after World War I is no example. It is true that a government led by Communists came to power by parliamentary means, if you will, but it was extinguished by the counter-revolution before it could move to socialism. As yet, Czechoslovakia comes closest; though this was neither parliamentary nor peaceful, there was little violence. In the remaining European People's Democracies, the governments set up by victorious armies (hardly peaceful) were led by parties and individuals committed to the establishment of socialism. Nevertheless, in the abstract sense, peaceful transition to socialism is a possibility.

However, I do not agree with the way Comrade Khrushchev places the question because he places it as an immediate question in the present world situation. No genuine Communist Parties "advocate" violence. They work for the peaceful development of socialist actions. But they recognize the facts of life and history, that "force is the midwife of the new society"—Marx's phrase—that force is brought to bear by the capitalist class against the manifestation of the people's will to establish a socialist society or even lesser goals.

Had Khrushchev merely been reiterating the statements of Marx and Lenin that peaceful transition was possible in order to point out to the world that force comes from the exploiters, not the people, and that the people must overcome this force, one could have no objection.

But it is quite different with the claim of Comrade Khrushchev, for he purports to see something new in the present situation to the effect that "the historical situation has undergone radical changes which make possible a new approach to the question." Here again we have the same facts cited as in the non-inevitability of war argument. Moreover, the impression is given that it is on the order of the day in a number of countries. He does not say where, except to state that where capitalism is still strong and has a huge military police apparatus it is not possible.

I try to think of what countries he can be referring to—surely not Guatemala or Cuba, not Taiwan or South Korea, not South Vietnam or Malaya, not Spain or Portugal. I think he must have been referring to France or Italy, and perhaps to Indonesia, India, and Burma. These last three countries I will discuss later in connection with the colonial question. Let us take France and Italy—what does he mean?—where capitalism is weaker—surely capitalism is stronger in France or Italy than it is in Guatemala or South Vietnam. Surely capitalist power is more entrenched in those areas where feudalism has long gone out of existence than in those areas that are still semi-feudal.

In this argument I believe that Comrade Khrushchev makes a number of serious errors indicating that, apparently, he does not understand the history of the Marxist development of the question. He seems to see the accession to power of socialism as occurring when leadership of the "overwhelming majority of the population is won by the working class"—mind you, without mentioning its Communist vanguard. And it is clear that he does not think a majority must be behind the Communists—any coalition of working class parties would suffice. He seems to rewrite and forget Lenin wholesale.

What are the conditions for the accession to power of socialism? Lenin laid them down, and, in my opinion, they still apply. There must be a deep-seated bourgeois crisis, in which the power of the bourgeoisie is drastically curtailed, wherein they can no longer govern in the same old way; there must be a consciousness among the whole people that things cannot go on as before; and, finally, the majority of the working class must support its advanced revolutionary vanguard, the Communist Party. All of these factors must be present; if not, the crisis will be resolved some other way. Comrade Khrushchev seems to expect the development to proceed in ordinary political ways, but the truth is, certified to by history and Marxist science, that deep-seated bourgeois crisis is necessary to and responsible for the victory of socialism.

As a matter of fact, Comrade Khrushchev confuses two questions—the seizure of power by the working class with the transition to socialism once in power. He goes back and forth between the two points as if they are the same point. For in-

stance, his recollections of Lenin's position indicates this, and I quote from the report:

"It will be recalled that in the conditions that arose in April 1917 Lenin granted the possibility that the Russian revolution might develop peacefully, and that in the spring of 1918, after the victory of the October Revolution, Lenin drew up his famous plea for peaceful socialist construction."

In the first instance, April 1917, Lenin is referring to the coming to power of the working class, in the second instance to the transition to socialism once the working class has consolidated power—they are not related or similar or identical as Comrade Khrushchev implies. If his recollection of the April Theses of Lenin is correct, then it must have been in order to affirm the Marxist position on violence, that the working class does not seek and will not initiate it, and that they possibly could, given the necessary impotence of the capitalist class, achieve power without it. I say if his recollection is correct because on page 197 of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, we find this following quote from *Russian Revolution*, a book written by Lenin and Stalin,

"The peaceful period of the revolution has ended", said Comrade Stalin, "a non-peaceful period has begun, a period of clashes and explosions."

Bearing in mind Lenin's contention that the bourgeois revolution can be quickly transformed into socialist revolution, a position he maintained prior to 1917, this quotation from July of 1917 seems to indicate that in April, Lenin was referring to a peaceful period in the development of the socialist revolution, a period between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions. There is a good deal of difference between the concepts of a peaceful period in the revolution and a peaceful revolution.

In any case, Lenin demonstrated his thorough dialectical brilliance shortly after that in August 1917, with the publication of that profound Marxist development of how socialist power will be achieved and consolidated, *State and Revolution*, in which he points out that it is philistine and not revolutionary to expect that violence will be avoided, and how important it was to recognize the inevitability of the use of violence by the bourgeoisie against any attempt by the working class to achieve power. To separate the vanguard of the working class from its reformist backdrag, Lenin maintained, clarity on this question is of supreme importance.

Comrade Khrushchev does not contribute to clarity and feeds reformist illusions. Beyond that, his claim is frivolous, for in no capitalist country of the world is the question of socialist power on the agenda. Not even in France and Italy with their mass Communist Parties and their tremendous support in the population do they raise

socialism as an immediate question. How could they—this is only possible in intense capitalist crisis.

Of course, they develop a socialist perspective, distribute socialist propaganda, show how they do not seek violence, and show how it might possibly be avoided. Perhaps they go too far in this respect; in any case, the overwhelming odds are against it, as Marx and Lenin have so convincingly shown. Of course, if the crisis finds the bourgeoisie so bankrupt they can offer no resistance whatever, the transition will be peaceful. But who can postulate that at this time and for this next situation? To predict that this will occur in this next period of intense crisis, and as a guide to action for that period, seems foolhardy to the extreme, and I, for one, can see no necessity to so revise Marxism at this time.

In spite of Comrade Khrushchev's mixing of the two questions, the transition to socialism once the working class has state power in its hands is quite a different matter. Except for a quote from Lenin where the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" is used, Comrade Khrushchev avoids the phrase—he uses such terms as "transform the parliament to an instrument of the people's will," "to secure fundamental changes", "people's democracy as a form for reconstructing society on socialist lines", etc. This can hardly be an accident, and is, I believe, a throwback to liberal bourgeois political ideology.

The importance of the doctrine of proletarian dictatorship in order to maintain a truly revolutionary party, a party not held back by reformist illusions and reformist betrayal—this is the history of the developing Marxist ideology in all countries. To give it up now as a tenet of Marxism is to give up part of our science that has proven out in practice. Especially do I consider that the practice of Comrade Khrushchev in sprinkling his theses with quotes from Lenin, as if to imply that he and Lenin are in agreement when, in fact, they stand at opposite poles, is not a correct practice. For instance, the quote he uses from Lenin that includes the idea that each country will develop "one or another variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat", he extends to mean one or another variety of socialist organization, and implies that in China and in Eastern European countries, they do not have the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In addition, I would like to remind Comrade Khrushchev that the idea that Leninism was a specific contribution to the Russian Revolution only, was a scientific description of the specific features of the Russian revolution and not applicable to the world revolutionary movement, was maintained by rightists and Trotskyites of his own country and has been decisively rejected, with good cause, by the revolutionary movements of the Soviet Union and the whole world. Personally, I believe that the using of quotes from Lenin to contradict the essence of Leninism is in poor taste.

I submit the following quotations from Lenin and maintain their present applicability:

From The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky:

"By so 'interpreting' the concept 'revolutionary dictatorship' as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky beat the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. The renegade Bernstein has proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky."

and again from the same work:

"The historical truth is that in every profound revolution, a prolonged, desperate resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years enjoy important practical advantages over the exploited, is the rule. Never—except in the sentimental fantasies of the sentimental simpleton Kautsky—will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority, without making use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or series of battles.

"The transition from capitalism to communism represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this hope will be converted into attempts at restoration."

and from *State and Revolution*:

"The forms of bourgeois states are exceedingly variegated, but their essence is the same: in one way or another, all these states are in the last analysis inevitably a **dictatorship of the bourgeoisie**. The transition from capitalism to Communism will certainly bring a great variety and abundance of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be only one: the **dictatorship of the proletariat**."

Of course, in the foreseeable future, when the socialist world has grown to such an extent that only isolated capitalist nations of little strength comprise the capitalist world, then, in these nations, it will probably be possible to speak of the peaceful and parliamentary transition to socialism. If Comrade Khrushchev had made the point that this growth of socialism and isolation of capitalism had already proceeded to the extent that a small country such as Finland, let us say, whose economy is already well integrated with that of the Soviet Union, could proceed to socialism in a peaceful and parliamentary way, such a thesis might be worthy of examination of the points it raises. I do not believe that even this would be presently correct, but at least it would be in the necessary direction.

In any case, history records many disputes between Liebknecht, Lenin, and the entire Bolshevik Party against the centrists and the right wing of the German Social Democratic Par-

ty and the Mensheviks. Comrade Khrushchev's remarks are in support of a position long exploded by revolutionary Marxists and the judgement of history. It is absolutely correct to wage a vigorous and sharp parliamentary struggle, to participate, in most cases, in bourgeois parliaments, and wage therein a vigorous defense of the immediate needs of the people. Not to see the importance of parliamentary action is anarchism, a trend in the labor movement now insignificant and defeated.

But, on the other hand, a position of reliance on parliamentary tactics is opportunism, is characteristic of the so-called Socialist Parties of the world. What is the duty of a Communist in a bourgeois parliament? To aid the developing people's struggles, to expose the capitalists and their agents, to lay bare the corruption and control of parliament by the capitalist class, to render every possible aid to the struggles of the people, to use the parliament as a forum for publicizing actions and demands of the people in one area so they can be taken up by others and a mass movement built.

The role of parliamentary action is important, but it is secondary to the movement of people in action on their own behalf, which is primary. Not until people take matters in their own hands is fundamental success achieved. The boycott in Montgomery, Alabama has more significance than the introduction or passage of any law, though I would not negate the importance of such legislative activity. Revolutionary struggle as in Montgomery raises the whole level of the movement away from simple and naive reformism to a point where demands can actually be won. The demand of equal treatment on Montgomery's buses was only the trigger for this movement which represents at present the highest point in the march of the Negro people for equality and dignity.

Comrade Khruschev states that his position does not mean that the Communist position has become identical to the reformist one, but, search until midnight, they do not differ, and his statement has no meaning, is simply a declaration. If a bourgeois parliament on the basis of reforms that have been wrung from the bourgeoisie, popular representative elections, etc., can move to socialism, then the reformists are correct, reforms do lead to socialism, and the Communists have been wrong for a hundred years.

To think that a bourgeois parliament can go this far is rosy optimism in the extreme and a complete lack of understanding of the realities of life under capitalism. This lack of understanding is shared by many in capitalist countries, including many honest members of the working class. But it was not to be expected from the Central Committee of the world's first socialist state.

Developments in Former Colonial Countries

I have previously stated that in discussing the "zone of peace" embracing the former colonial countries, Comrade Khrushchev makes the mistake of regarding a temporary phenomenon based on the situation of the moment to be, of necessity, durable and permanent.

It is true that following World War II, a number of colonial countries successfully accomplished a breakaway from imperial domination. In most of these countries, this breakaway has been accompanied by carrying into effect the bourgeois revolution within these countries. Because they have but broken away from a harsh colonial domination of, in some cases, more than a hundred years, they have no great love for their former oppressors and are not anxious, for the most part, to engage in alliance, military or otherwise, with them. This in spite of the fact that in most of these countries, the former oppressor exercises more or less economic control.

In some of these countries, Pakistan and the Philippines, for instance, where imperialist domination is the most intense, these countries are entangled in imperialist military alliances. But, in general, most of the former colonies have declared themselves neutral in the cold war, and have made creditable contributions to peace. One country, India, has been an important initiator of peace actions, and the Bandung Conference which included countries in military alliance with imperialism, as well as People's China, was nevertheless able to agree on a program of unity against colonialism and for peace, one of the most important peace actions of the past year.

All of this is impressive and of immense significance. Why, then, do I say it is temporary? I say it is temporary because all of these countries will shortly be the scene of intense class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and peasantry, and the bourgeoisies of these countries will make alliances with imperialism in order to maintain their existence. Between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution will be but a relatively short span of time in most of these countries. I do not believe that it can be otherwise, for these countries came late to independent capitalism, most have very large populations and a very backward agriculture, and capitalism in these countries cannot succeed in consistently and materially increasing the standard of living, cannot satisfy the needs and aspirations of the people kindled by their bourgeois revolution and the successes of world socialism.

In these countries capitalism will not remain in power long, and, while it remains, its actions will be determined by the class struggle within. It will not remain long, but it will not vanish tomorrow either. Let us recall China's bourgeois revolution shortly after the socialist revolution in the Soviet Union. There, too, a capitalist China, under the

leadership of Sun Yat Sen, newly freeing itself from foreign domination and advancing against feudalism, sought and received the friendship of the Soviet Union. But this changed materially with the developing betrayal by capitalist interests of the revolution, by the alliance with feudal elements and with imperialists, and the bloody suppression of the popular will for emancipation and progress.

Of course, the situation is very different today. The infant Soviet Union could give but little aid to China; the mighty Soviet Union can give a great deal of aid to all the newly freed countries. The situation is materially different but its essence remains the same—transition from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution. Also, the space between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions is partly and perhaps decisively determined by the strength and maturity of the revolutionary Communist movement. In Russia the space was short; in China much longer and did not take place until a Communist movement of strength and maturity was built from scratch. In some of these countries strong Communist movements already exist, in others they do not, and this will determine, in part, the speed of transition.

This, then, is the formulation I tentatively raise, perhaps it is not original: the bourgeois organization of the newly freed colonial countries is basically unstable; the contradictions between the developing popular aspirations and economic organization of society must quickly mature to sharp crisis. Not everywhere, if anywhere, will socialism be immediately victorious; in most cases, a protracted period of revolutionary struggle will follow. Of course, socialism will eventually triumph and then the "zone of peace" will be lasting and of superior quality.

Peaks and Lulls of the Revolutionary Movement in Capitalist Countries

Both in the section on war and peace and on transition to socialism, Comrade Khrushchev seems to forget the crisis nature of change. Thus, in speaking of countries where capitalism is still strong, it is possible for him to say: "There the transition to socialism will be attended by a sharp class, revolutionary struggle." As if it will be a walkover anywhere and accomplished without struggle.

The truth is that the world moves, and so old and discredited ideas accumulate new features. The truth is that in every lull in the revolutionary activity of the masses, in every period when capitalism seems to have a new life, these ideas are reborn and refurbished with new features. The truth is that the present period is one of lull in the revolutionary activity of the masses of the capitalist world.

Marx and Lenin and Stalin have noted time and time again that the development of proletarian consciousness and proletarian activity is not known for its smoothness, is not evolutionary

in development. There are periods of intense revolutionary activity of the masses; there are lulls where there is very little revolutionary activity. In economic crisis and following defeat in war, there is a peak in revolutionary activity; following a defeated revolution or in periods of relative capitalist prosperity, there is a lull.

It is in these periods of lull that these ideas are revived. Bernstein says that Marx was OK for his time but, comrades, we must not be dogmatic, times have changed, and Comrade Khrushchev says Lenin was absolutely right in the conditions of his time, but, comrades, down with dogmatism, there are new conditions. Granted that the existence of a powerful socialist world is a new condition of important magnitude, capitalism, though diminished in area, power, influence, and stability, is still capitalism.

In accordance with the law of uneven development of capitalism, peaks and lulls are not alike for different countries even at the same time. And the present lull is a lull with a difference, a lull in which the bourgeoisie has been generally unable to succeed in the tactics of isolation and harassment of the left, a lull in which important colonial victories have been achieved.

These differences from previous lulls show the real weakness of capitalism in this period in spite of its apparent strength. Despite attacks, the French and Italian Communist Parties have held their own. Only in the United States and in some other countries have the harassment and repression borne fruit for the bourgeoisie in the isolation of the left and defections from its ranks. But even in the United States where revolutionary activity of the American working class is at rock bottom minimum, the Negro people are striking giant blows for liberation.

Comrades, this lull is about to pass from the scene; imminent capitalist crisis will change the spreading influence of these ideas. But because we are in a lull period now, these ideas are, it seems to me, very dangerous. Not so much because of the ideas themselves—they will be blown out by the struggle of people in their own behalf—but because of the crippling effect they have on the present class conscious militants.

In a similar period of lull, the period of the Stolypin reaction, 1908-1912, following the defeat of the 1905 revolution, how did the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin adapt their tactics to the period? Did they revise Marxism to conform to the lull, did they present ideas of peaceful progress? No, they did not; they stressed what was revolutionary in Marxism, they trained and steeled their comrades in revolutionary struggle, and history records who was able to lead the people to socialism when the corner was turned.

In spite of the self-admitted isolation of the Bolsheviks, in spite of severe defections from the ranks, they systematically maintained and developed every possible tie with the masses, they fought against Menshevik, opportunist ideology,

they trained and steeled their membership, and strengthened the discipline of their organizations. These are the tested and found-successful methods for the development of a Marxist Party in periods of a lull in revolutionary activity.

It is for these reasons that I believe the ideas of Comrade Khrushchev harmful. Why train revolutionaries when there will be no revolution? Why engage in revolutionary struggle for peace and socialism when war is not inevitable and socialism will drop from the skies? Why study Marx and Lenin when they are out of date? Unless a struggle against these ideas develops in the ranks of the Communist Party, the coming period will find us ill-prepared, and should we win leadership of the people on the basis of these ideas, we will lead them to defeat.

On a Matter of Party Organization

Some may think this a minor matter, but to me it is a principled question that strikes directly at Communist ideology and Communist morality, and, also, is one with the opportunism of the major theses of the report.

In the section of the report on Party organizational work, Comrade Khrushchev makes a number of correct statements on the responsibility of Party organizers to the job of increasing production both on collective farms and in industry. Pointing out that the position "that Party organizational work is one thing and economic and government work is another" is incorrect and harmful, he correctly stresses the close ties organizational work should have with production, and calls for more concern and more responsibility for production on the part of Party officials. From that point he goes on to say:

"Evidently, Comrades, it is necessary to raise the material responsibility of leading personnel for the job entrusted to them so that their wages would to a certain extent depend on the results achieved. If the plan is fulfilled or overfulfilled, they should get more, if not—their wages should be reduced. Some may object that this principle cannot be applied to Party officials, for their functions lie in the organizational and ideological spheres, and are not tied up directly with the results of economic activity. But can Party organizational work be considered successful if it does not have a beneficial influence on production?"

It is not the principle of increased pay for increased production that I object to, and I do believe that Party organizational work should be directly beneficial to production in a socialist land. But that Party workers should receive increased pay for beneficial Party work I will not grant. As a matter of fact, it is an insult to the Party and its organizers. Shades of Dave Beck! He thinks it's quite alright for his take from the union to be expressed in hundreds of thousands of dollars, because—hasn't he improved the financial position of his union by much more than that?

No, a Communist organizer is not and should

not be moved to the ever-increasing improvement of his own work by the hope or promise of financial gain. Such individuals are not Party organizer material. A Communist, and certainly a Communist organizer, must be devoted to the improvement of his own work in order to contribute to the general improvement of the life of his people, to the improvement of society. I cannot see how this idea could possibly be raised by the Central Committee of a Communist Party. Is such a proposal consistent with motivation of devotion and sacrifice to the people's interest? Is this a proposal for "people of a special mold"?

The American Communist Party can still remember those who joined it during the revolutionary upswing of American people in the 1930s to get a job in the growing trade union movement or, overestimating the revolutionary possibilities in the situation, wanted to get in on the ground floor with a good thing. These individuals are no longer with us, and better so.

This proposal I do not see at all—I do not see how it can be seriously raised.

On the Reevaluation of Stalin

Before I go into the substance of the reevaluation of Stalin, a word on its method of presentation. I do not see how it could have been more clumsily handled than it was. At one fell swoop to so feed the slanders of world capitalism, to damage the great and growing prestige of the Soviet Union among men and women of good will everywhere, to strike a blow at the influence of the fraternal parties in capitalist countries and without consultation with them—these were certainly not the aim of the Central Committee.

And yet these are the fruits of their work. Could not the experienced comrades of the Central Committee foresee this? True it is that open discussion of our mistakes is beneficial to the development of our work, but is it necessary to so raise and carry out the discussion so that, at least, all the initial effects are harmful, to produce a self-inflicted crisis in every fraternal Party? Perhaps the American Communist Party was by way of coming into crisis regardless; nevertheless the present atmosphere is not one that can produce a reasoned resolution, especially in view of the major theses of the report.

The substance of the discussion of the role of Stalin will possibly be argued and counter-argued for a long time. I make only a very few points. The so-called Secret Report is a very subjective document; it is, especially the last two-thirds, as seen through the eyes of Comrade Khrushchev. While I am in no position to refute any of its allegations, yet I cannot accept them, at least in the import they are given.

There is too much objective evidence, not only in the glorious march of socialism in the Soviet Union, but also in the works of Comrade Stalin himself, to so readily permit me to accept the theme of Comrade Khrushchev as gospel. His early works, *Marxism and the National Question*,

the best, the very best short, simple and profound exposition of the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, the polemics against right and left deviations on the road to socialism; on questions of agriculture—these are only a few of his many theoretical contributions.

The implication is that he was alright when young, but as he grew older deterioration set in. We know that this is not an uncommon occurrence and would be perhaps easy to believe were it not for the fact that shortly before his death, he produced two magnificent works, *Marxism in Linguistics* and *Economic Problems of Socialism*. The first is a significant contribution not only to questions of linguistics, but is an original Marxist development of the role of base and superstructure. And the second is the only serious and important work on the transition to communism.

Comrade Mikoyan questions the last work on the basis of a formulation of a shrinking world capitalist market and asks—has it shrunk?—no, production has gone up in capitalist countries. Perhaps Stalin's formulation is incorrect, but, Comrade Mikoyan, I wouldn't bet on it. The not remote future will settle that point and I will wait.

In addition, Stalin authored some of the best attacks on the "cult of the individual", and his articles on collective work are inspiring. Then what do we have—someone who preached well but practiced badly? Maybe so. I can postulate that a great theoretical physicist might beat his children, but I find it difficult to comprehend that a genius in social science can produce sound and original work dedicated to human advancement without a genuine love for humanity, with self-glorification as his guiding impulse, with a care for self above his fellow. On this basis it is possible that the next great advancement in Marxist science will come from a thorough scoundrel. I do not see it—there is a unity to the whole man; to be great in this field seems precisely not possible for a villain.

Of course, as well as unity, there is diversity to the whole man, and even the greatest will have faults, perhaps serious ones. Mao Tsetung called Stalin "the greatest genius of our age." He was a genius but a mortal one and I am sure he made mistakes.

Comrade Togliatti and Comrade Dennis feel that the Central Committee should have been more self-critical, that the mistakes were not only Stalin's but the Central Committee's also. Reasoning in the same way but from the opposite direction, to my mind Stalin deserves criticism for the fact that the Central Committee he so recently departed from could produce such un-Leninist theses as are detailed in their 20th Congress Report.

Stalin was very sharp, perhaps too sharp in polemic. I suppose it was not for nothing he received the name Stalin. When the policy, and I believe it was collective, was determined that it was necessary to remove the influence of enemy ideology from the growing socialist country, he carried out the policy—is the word ruthlessly?—I

am sure that injustice was done and there were "crimes against Soviet legality." I do not pass these deaths off lightly. I suppose that some injustice was inevitable, perhaps there was a great deal too much. I do not pass it off lightly but I can't help noting that socialism has brought forth in the Soviet Union a mighty land, and a certain hope for humanity.

It would be pleasant to be able to blame Beria for these "crimes against Soviet legality" exclusively, but one can't do that—it's too simple, and I can't help asking one question. A number of trials in a number of countries, open trials where the defendants have confessed, have been declared frame-ups and "crimes against socialist legality." About these trials a number of questions have remained unanswered, notably why the defendants did not deny their confession in court. So I ask Comrade Khrushchev why wasn't the trial of Beria an open trial—was this not a "violation of Soviet legality"?

Beria was a member of the Central Committee and occupied one of the most important posts in the Soviet Union. I think that his trial was the first such closed trial of such a high official—even under Beria himself I don't think that this took place. But even if they had occurred previously—wasn't it necessary to break with all that? And only recently and following the 20th Congress, four important officials of the Party were convicted in a closed trial. When the Central Committee makes the point that over-confidence in Stalin was an illusion shared by many, they should be more sensitive to the discrepancies between their words and their deeds.

As to Stalin's role in the war: I believe that the strategy Stalin used was to engage the German Army directly at the first attack, to hold them back as long as possible while the Soviet people moved the industry piece by piece beyond the Ural Mountains. This was the greatest movement of industry in military history and was accomplished, all in all, swiftly. Then the Soviet Army retreated, holding at key points.

Comrade Khrushchev seems to imply that proper preparation and proper tactics would have stopped the Nazi army at or near the border. I wonder. To my mind this strategy, whether it was Stalin's or was a collective one, was masterly, and furthermore indicated the high degree of confidence placed in the Soviet people to carry out such a complex and arduous task, a completely unprecedented task. That it was accomplished was a decisive factor in the eventual successful conclusion to the war, and I agree with Comrade Khrushchev that the major credit belongs to the heroic and dedicated Soviet people.

I think that a belief in the cult of the individual is a grievous fault, and should be struggled against and overcome. Nor do I think that the adulation of even a great man as if he were divine should be perpetuated. I cannot argue

with the points Comrade Khrushchev raises in this respect; I have no knowledge beyond Stalin's own statements to contradict it.

Nevertheless, even if true, I feel compelled to acknowledge my indebtedness to Comrade Stalin for the help his works have given me in the study of Marxism. And, also, I agree with Comrade Togliatti that the "cult of the individual" can be no explanation of injustice, that the errors of a man are his, but that the errors of a socialist collective can not be one man's.

Let me make a hypothesis. Suppose that the Central Committee, instead of carrying out the reevaluation in the way it did, had said this:

"Comrades, once the Soviet Union was an isolated bastion of developing socialism surrounded by enemies. At that time it was necessary to be harsh to our enemies, of which not a few existed in our own land. In our determination to jealously guard our Soviet land we committed certain serious excesses, and, in that situation, it was possible for certain self-seekers to make a business of accusation. But, Comrades, this is no longer the case. Our Soviet land is no longer isolated but is part of the mighty camp of world socialism, and our enemies within our borders are few indeed. The cold war is a daily failure, and bright are the prospects for peace and socialism. Enemies are still enemies, and they will be curbed; but now it is more important to develop Soviet legality to new heights, to make it impossible for the innocent to be convicted. In this process we will examine all our past actions, will rehabilitate the innocent wherever that is possible, and restore the good name of all who were unjustly convicted. In the necessary period of repression of our foes the Central Committee headed by Comrade Stalin made many errors. We now examine these errors to prevent recurrence here, and as a help to our fraternal parties in the socialist world who now travel the road we've covered, which they travel under more favorable circumstances. On the basis of our experience may they avoid those errors that have been ours."

Do you think that this is a false or a pretty way to frame the question? I think it would have been more correct, and, certainly, would not have had the same effect. Honest people the world over would have been impressed to admiration. Just as the Soviet peace policy has found admirers in the hundreds of millions in all lands, so this policy would have helped them to understanding, on the road to socialist action.

In Conclusion

The reverberations of the 20th Congress have had a profound effect on the American Communist Party. Many honest comrades are severely shaken. The most of these perhaps agree with the theses and the reevaluation as presented, and are shocked that it has occurred. To them it

has rocked the logic of their own lives; of their years of devotion they ask the question, "What for?" and, at least temporarily, many of these are stunned to inaction.

Others, like me, disagree with the theses and reevaluation and are shocked that the Central Committee is making what we believe to be very sad errors. To these, too, the road forward is not clear. How are we to meet this crisis, how are we to stem the tide of the loss of membership and activity?

Reaction has rid us of the personal opportunists we had in our ranks. We cannot afford to lose these comrades who are in grave doubt. We cannot afford to lose them because they are very honest and sincere, and because they have shown courage and integrity by remaining Communists through a very trying period. For the sake of our Party, for the sake of the developing American struggles, we must make every effort to keep our losses low.

The questions raised by the 20th Congress are very important and they will be decisively settled. But they will not be settled tomorrow, and there is a danger that before these and many troubling questions of the national policy of our Party are settled, our casualties will be too great to bear. How to move forward in this situation? I believe that the most fruitful policy we can follow is a determined policy to develop the role and extend the influence of the Party club. This is always correct, but at this point it becomes an absolute necessity.

We must appeal individually to our comrades to find the answers themselves in the work of the

basic organizations, to systematically develop our ties with the working class, to hammer out the courses of action in the sphere of the individual club, to study the classics, and to build our party unity in practice. We must discuss the questions that arise in the course of our work not to the point of bickering and not to the point of unanimous agreement on everything, the devil take the dissenters.

These are not just words. Even if we can't agree on all questions of grand strategy, we can probably agree quite readily on the very next step in our basic organizations to extend our influence and deepen the content of our work. In this respect we must cherish our press, we must improve its use value to the basic organizations, and build its readership. And with all the difficulties, we must find others who will work with us, join our ranks, and start our Party again on the process of growth.

We are spending a lot of discussion on how we can formulate an over-all policy for our national Party that, presumably, will end our "isolation" and increase our strength. Maybe we'll succeed. But at the same time, and even primarily, let us begin at the other end to make contact with the people, to take part in and to initiate successful struggles in our shops and neighborhoods, in the life of our cities, and in the countryside.

In this I know we can succeed. And through our errors and our successes we will hammer out a correct national policy also. We must take a turn, and I think this is a necessary step.

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