

Revisionist and Trotskyist Deviations on the National Question

In this era of imperialism, the eve of socialist revolution, the international proletarian socialist movement and the national liberation democratic movement are the two great historical currents moving to seal the doom of imperialism, paving the way step-by-step for the final victory of socialism world-wide and opening the road to the final goal — communism.

The national question in this era of imperialism has become part of the general question of international proletarian socialist revolution. National liberation movements and democratic revolutions “are pounding and undermining the foundations of the rule of imperialism and colonialism, old and new, and are now a mighty force in defense of world peace. In this sense, therefore, the whole cause of the international proletarian revolution hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the people in these areas.”² This was especially true during the period of temporary capitalist stabilization after World War II.

These revolutionary national liberation movements and democratic revolutions include not only the third world countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, but also the national movements in the heart of U.S. imperialism. They deal blow after blow to U.S. imperialism, giving tremendous impetus to the proletarian socialist revolution in the United States in particular. Given this period of destabilization of U.S. capitalism, when the prospects for socialist revolution and the danger of world war and fascism are both rising, it demands of genuine Marxist-Leninists to develop even more, defend and implement the correct line, policy and tasks in relation to national movements, and oppose all forms and shades of opportunism in the international communist movement.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL: REVISIONIST SOIL

Imperialism has given rise to the split in the international communist movement between the genuine Marxist-Leninists and the opportunists. Among the opportunists, we find basically two trends departing from

and hostile to Marxism. These are the old revisionists (led by Bernstein) and anarchists, who transformed into the right imperialist economists of the Second International (the social-chauvinists and Kautskyites) and “left” imperialist economists. Today they have become the modern revisionists and Trotskyites. As Lenin repeatedly taught, “The fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up with the fight against opportunism.”² The national question, being an essential part of the general question of international proletarian revolution under imperialism, is necessarily an aspect of the demarcation between opportunists and revolutionaries. There are two main incorrect trends, principally modern revisionism and secondarily Trotskyism, and both are international in extent. We must persistently grasp Lenin’s teachings and the revolutionary traditions of Marxism-Leninism to fight them, and inseparably bind that fight to the fight against imperialism.

The Khrushchev clique of modern revisionists has used different revisionist arguments to oppose national liberation movements in the third world and to violate the national sovereignty of other countries. Their arguments have included absolutizing peaceful coexistence as the main component of a socialist foreign policy, their misconception of a “new era” ushered in by nuclear weapons and the “danger” of national liberation struggles sparking nuclear war, their illusion of the “reasonableness” of the U.S. bourgeoisie, their arguments about “limited sovereignty of socialist countries” and their “export revolution” line. As the Communist Party of China (CPC) summed up in their polemic against Khrushchev, “In a word, the nostrums of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) for the national liberation movement have been concocted to make the people believe that the imperialists will give up colonialism and bestow freedom and liberation upon the oppressed nations and people, and that therefore all revolutionary theories, demands and struggles are outmoded and unnecessary and should and must be abandoned.”³

The Trotskyites, following their treacherous namesake who tried both to undermine Lenin’s and

Stalin's leadership and to wreck the October Revolution before and after its success, are nowadays attacking all genuine Marxist-Leninists, especially Mao, and in essence siding with modern revisionism. They have become agents of U.S. imperialism in the class struggle at home and abroad.

Imperialism: World Front of Revolution Forged

Thus if we don't persistently fight against modern revisionism and Trotskyism, not only will we be unable to fight the U.S. imperialists and successfully prepare for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the United States, we will fall right into their ranks.

U.S. opportunism, including opportunism on national questions, takes nationally specific forms according to the nationally specific character of the superstructure and economic base. But in the final analysis, it draws ideologically, politically and theoretically from the two main international trends of opportunism — modern revisionism and Trotskyism. Forms of opportunism in this country are fed by them and can be traced back to them.

Doing this helps give us a broader theoretical orientation to develop and carry out our line on the national question. We must expose and criticize the pertinent, essential features of modern revisionism and Trotskyism on the national question, to unfold their interconnections with opportunism in the United States. Doing this, we will not lose our heads in the minute arguments, muddled justifications and demagogic sophistries that opportunists always make.

It will help keep us ideologically and politically vigilant and meticulous if we draw out the class and ideological content and basis of modern revisionism and Trotskyism to define how the opportunists in the United States fall into the same trends, despite nationally specific forms and characteristics. Only in this way can we grasp the dialectics of the *universal class* and ideological basis and content, and the *nationally specific* forms and characteristics of opportunism.

To grasp the significance of the question, we must understand the political implications of the treacherous and bankrupt lines of modern revisionism and Trotskyism in relation to U.S. opportunists' lines. We then appreciate how seemingly minor differences now can become unbridgeable differences in the future. It will help us sum up and analyze if we grasp what material conditions, twists and turns in the development of the revolutionary movement, and zig-zags of bourgeois reactionary dual tactics have given rise to modern revisionism and Trotskyism, and how they apply to the movement here in the United States.

Let us now trace the historical development of the Second International's opportunism and social-

chauvinism and of the "left" imperialist economism and Trotskyism on the national question and link it with the opportunist lines in the United States.

Capitalism's development from a rising force into the era of imperialism had implications for the contradictions in the world situation and the course of proletarian socialist revolution. As Stalin summed up, the three fundamental theses of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution in the era of imperialism were: 1) "Intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the international proletarian front in the 'metropolises'; 2) . . . intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolution against imperialism in the external, colonial front; and 3) . . . that under imperialism wars cannot be averted and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable."⁴

These basic changes under imperialism also affected the character and aim of the national movements. Stalin summed up the national question had merged with and become part of the general course of proletarian revolution. He said, ". . . the vague slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has been replaced by the clear revolutionary slogan of the rights of nations and colonies to secede, to form independent states. . . . the organic connection between the national and colonial question and question of the rule of capital, of overthrowing capitalism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . the element of the actual (and not merely judicial) equalization of nations as one of the conditions necessary for securing fraternal cooperation between the laboring masses of the various nations."⁵

Prior to the era of imperialism, the line of demarcation in the international revolutionary movement concerned the course of the proletarian revolutionary movement under capitalism. Think of the Narodniks' opportunist line of not recognizing capitalism and the Mensheviks' line (*tailing* the Russian liberal bourgeoisie) of "recognizing" but apologizing for capitalism. In the era of imperialism, we must deal with national questions as part of the course of proletarian revolution, and since it has taken on that characteristic, the struggle against the revisionists has been integrally bound up with the struggle against opportunist lines on the relation between the national movements and the proletarian socialist revolution. Opportunism as an apology for imperialism and social-chauvinism as the negation of the national movements were bound into one.



Colonialism as “Progressive Civilizing Force”

One of the first major struggles against the revisionists of the Second International on the national colonial question under imperialism took place at the Congress at Stuttgart in 1907. Imperialist plunder and violence were intensifying and the colonies in the East were rising up. Lenin remarked that “Up till now their decisions have always been an unqualified condemnation of bourgeois colonial policy as a policy of plunder and violence,” but when the revisionists headed by Bernstein and Van Kol tried to push “the Congress did not in principle condemn all colonial policy, for under socialism, colonial policy could play a civilizing role.”⁶

The revisionists justified themselves with the claim that the imperialist countries were advanced and civilized and colonial policy was therefore progressive and civilizing; hence it was an important tool for social progress and world civilization, particularly for the colonies. They tried to cover their sophistry by creating a bogus struggle “against the radicals for their barren, negative attitude, their failure to appreciate the importance of reforms, their lack of a practical colonial programme, etc.”⁷

Bernstein further synthesized and pushed for the acceptance of a “socialist colonial policy” saying that as long as human society existed there would be colonialism because both the civilized and barbarous exist, and under socialism, the working class still needs a colonial policy to exercise its civilizing role.

Lenin, leading the revolutionary left, exposed this as “a direct retreat toward bourgeois policy and a bourgeois world outlook that justifies colonial wars and atrocities.” He exposed Bernstein’s demagoguery about “reforms” in the “colonial programme”: “Socialism has never refused to advocate reforms in the colonies as well, but this can have nothing in common with weakening our stand in principle against conquests, subjugation of other nations, violence, and plunder, which constitute ‘colonial policy’.”⁸ To advocate a “socialist colonial policy” is to liquidate the distinction between imperialism and socialism, side with the imperialists and become social-imperialists.

The Real Essence of Imperialism

The theoretical bankruptcy and political treachery of such opportunism and social-chauvinism lie in seeing the world as “civilized” Europe and “savage” Asia. The vanced” while those in Asia were “backward” and without bearing on world revolution. They even said without bearing on world revolution. They even said that the movements in Asia had a reactionary character in opposing civilization with barbarism. They belittled the democratic wars in “backward” Asia as unnecessary.

They out-and-out sided with the imperialists who

used the same demagoguery of “civilized” versus “savage.” Their view diametrically opposed Lenin’s line on imperialism “that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed... forms the *essence* of imperialism” and that this difference is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism.”⁹ Following Lenin’s understanding, the national liberation movements and wars of liberation of the oppressed nations affect the progress of the proletarian socialist revolution in the oppressor nations by undermining the same enemy; the national colonial question is part and parcel of the proletarian socialist revolution and the proletariat must support national liberation struggles as component parts of the world socialist revolution.

Lenin exposed the Second International revisionists by saying, “However, the opportunists had scarcely congratulated themselves on ‘social peace’ and on the non-necessity of storms under ‘democracy’ when a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian revolution was followed by revolutions in Turkey, Persia and China. It is in this era of storms and ‘repercussions’ in Europe that we are living.”¹⁰ And, he said, “That is why the focal point in the Social Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism, and is *deceitfully* evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky.”¹¹

Due to Lenin’s leadership, correct resolutions were passed in the Stuttgart Congress and the Copenhagen Congress, culminating in the Basle Manifesto in 1912 which called for opposing imperialist wars of aggression and utilizing the crisis in case of war to hasten the downfall of imperialism. But opportunism and social-chauvinism were already rampant and when the war broke out in 1914, the revisionists totally betrayed the Basle Manifesto and fully degenerated into public traitors of the proletariat.

In “The Collapse of the Second International” Lenin traced how “in the conditions of war of 1914-15, opportunism leads to social-chauvinism, its logical conclusion,” and how they have the same economic base, same ideological and political content and how the old division of socialists into opportunist and revolutionary trends corresponded by and large to the new division into chauvinists and internationalists. “The idea of class collaboration is opportunism’s main idea,” he wrote, “. . . sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in another word, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the mass of the proletariat.”¹²

Internationalism Vs. Chauvinism

The economic base of opportunism was “the special features in the period of capitalism’s development,

when the comparatively peaceful and cultural life of the privileged workingmen 'bourgeoisified' them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses."

"The war has made such an alliance particularly conspicuous and inescapable. . . . The imperialist war is the direct continuation of and culmination of this state of affairs, because this is a war for the privileges of the Great Power nations, for the repartition of colonies, and domination over other nations, to defend and strengthen their privileged position as a petty bourgeois 'upper stratum' or aristocracy (and bureaucracy) of the working class — such is the natural wartime continuation of petty bourgeois opportunist hopes and corresponding tactics, such is the economic foundation of the present-day social imperialism."¹³

Kautsky, who previously at the Stuttgart Congress took a centrist position on Bernstein's "socialist colonial policy," now headed the Centrists and used new tricks to deceive the masses. On the one hand, the Centrists pretended to oppose the war, while on the other they apologized for the chauvinist slogan "defend the fatherland," saying that a genuine internationalist should recognize everybody's right to defend their own fatherland. Their position on the national question and the right of self-determination used the same trick. As Lenin said, "They recognize that right in a patently hypocritical fashion, namely, without applying it to those very nations that are oppressed by their own nation or by her military allies. The most plausible formulation of the social-chauvinist lie, one that is therefore most dangerous to the proletariat, is provided by Kautsky. In word, he is in favor of the self-determination of nations. . . . In deeds however, he had adapted the national programme to the prevailing social-chauvinism, distorted and docked it; he gives no precise definition of the duties of the socialists in the oppressor nations, and patently falsified the democratic principle itself when he says that to demand 'state independence' for every nation would mean demanding 'too much'. . . . The principal question, the one the imperialist bourgeoisie will not permit discussion of, namely, the question of the boundaries of a state that is built upon the oppression of nations, is evaded by Kautsky, who to please that bourgeoisie has thrown out of the programme what is most essential."¹⁴

Wars of Liberation Vs. Social Pacifism

By late 1916 and early 1917, when the belligerent imperialist bourgeoisie were exhausted by the war and the dissent of the masses was rising, the imperialists

sought a "peaceful" settlement among themselves to divide the world and to dispel the mounting revolutionary situations in the aggressive countries. Answering the imperialists' needs, the opportunists and chauvinists developed social pacifism.

Kautsky again became the chief representative advocating "disarmament." He preached that even under capitalism, war could be prevented and peace maintained through disarmament, treaties and international courts. The line struggle on war and peace was a continuation of the line struggles during the Stuttgart Congress and Zimmerwald Congress. During the Stuttgart Congress one of the delegates, Herve, "advocated a semi-anarchist view by naively suggesting that every war be 'answered' by a strike or uprising. He did not understand, on the one hand that war is a necessary product of capitalism, and that the proletariat cannot renounce participation in revolutionary war, for such wars are possible and have indeed occurred in capitalist societies. He did not understand, on the other hand, that the possibility of 'answering' a war depends on the nature of the crisis created by that war. . . . The essential thing is not merely to prevent war, but to utilize the crisis created by war in order to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie."¹⁵

The last point was the essential point Lenin amended to Bebel's original proposal which was then passed. During the later struggle about the Zimmerwald Manifesto of 1915, Lenin also exposed the opportunist pacifist line: "The petty bourgeois democrats, to whom any thought of the class struggle and of the socialist revolution was wholly alien, pictured to themselves a Utopia of peaceful competition among free and equal nations, under capitalism. Advocating "social peace" and the non-necessity" of democratic wars, it was inevitable that "in examining the immediate tasks" of the social revolution, the Prodhonists totally "negated" the national question and right of nations to self-determination.¹⁶ The weakness of the Manifesto lay in its compromising character, its failure to adopt the only revolutionary slogan — "turn the imperialist war into a civil war."

The line running through previous struggles and Kautsky's social pacifism negates the distinction between just and unjust wars, and the fact that as long as imperialism exists, there will be inter-imperialist war and imperialist wars of plunder as well as wars of resistance and liberation. Lenin exposed the treacherous line expressed in the "disarmament" slogan, saying, "One of the principal premises advanced, although not always definitely expressed, in favor of disarmament is this: we are opposed to war, to all war in general, and the demand for disarmament is the most definite, clear, and unambiguous expression of this point of view."¹⁷

Recognizing the inevitability of war under imperialism and distinguishing between just and unjust

wars, Lenin wrote, "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism. There will be no wars in socialist society; consequently, disarmament will be achieved. But whoever expects that socialism will be achieved without a social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a socialist." The same goes for democratic war against imperialism and for national liberation and self-determination.

Kautsky: Peace at Any Price

Kautsky conjured up the theory of "ultra-imperialism" to hide the imperialist contradiction and contradiction between oppressed and oppressor nations, and to further justify his bourgeois pacifism. According to him, imperialism is not a necessary stage of capitalism, but rather a policy the capitalists may or may not adopt. Then "an internationally united finance capital is formed in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capitals," inter-imperialist contradictions can be avoided and permanent peace maintained. Countering him, Lenin pointed out that "the only objective, i.e., real, social significance of Kautsky's 'theory' is this: it is a most reactionary method of consoling the masses with hopes of permanent peace being possible under capitalism, by distracting their attention from the sharp antagonisms and acute problems of the present times, and directing it towards illusory prospects of an imaginary 'ultra-imperialism' of the future. Deception of the masses — that is all there is in Kautsky's 'Marxist' theory."¹⁸ In the name of "permanent peace," Kautsky rejected proletarian socialist revolution and oppressed nations' wars of national liberation.

The real theoretical bankruptcy of the Second International revisionists on the national question boils down to the "theory of the all-importance of the productive forces" and the "theory of class collaboration." According to the first, monopoly capitalism is more advanced than feudalism or semi-feudalism and the advanced level of production and development of capitalism progressive and civilized, while feudalism and semi-feudalism's backwardness is reactionary and barbarous. Revisionists conclude that "Europe is advanced" and "Asia backward." They fixate on the proletarian class struggle (which for them means class collaboration) in advanced capitalist countries and liquidate the "repercussions" of the national liberation movements in colonial countries on the international proletarian revolution. They justify imperialist colonial plunder and a "socialist colonial policy," and repudiate colonial anti-imperialist struggles in the name of "civilization" and "social progress."

As class collaborationists, they side with their "own" bourgeoisie and defend their "fatherland's" sacred state boundaries based upon the oppression of nations. They cut the class content out of every issue: from democracy, on which they fail to make any

distinction between bourgeois democracy and new democracy or proletarian democracy; to war and peace, on which they fail to distinguish between imperialist wars of aggression and inter-imperialist wars, between wars of liberation and proletarian revolutionary civil wars. They make the same mistake on the question of reforms such as equality and the right of self-determination of nations. They sink into bourgeois reformism, thinking that the national question can be solved even under imperialism, and into bourgeois pacifism, imagining that the national question can be solved through social peace and making wars "unnecessary." The culmination is the revisionist theory of "ultra-imperialism," a thoroughly rotten view of the course of proletarian revolution.

At the heart of their political treachery is liquidation of the national question in relation to the preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat, gutting the national liberation movements of their revolutionary potential and their significance to the struggle for socialism and communism. If we don't give support to and ally with these revolutionary struggles, imperialism cannot be undermined, the proletarian socialist revolution cannot succeed and the cause of socialism and communism is betrayed. But for the revisionists, the importance of "peace" and "social progress" outweigh genuine socialist revolution.

The revisionists' ideological betrayal rests in their chauvinism on the national question in particular and their general retreat to bourgeois ideology, opposing the stand of proletarian internationalism. Their class base is the labor aristocracy and petty bourgeoisie trying to defend privileges bestowed on them by their "own" Great Power imperialist bourgeoisie.

The larger conditions of the 19th century aiding their degeneration were the relatively peaceful development of capitalism up to that time and then the sharp turns of imperialist war and imperialist predatory peace at the dawn of imperialism. These factors pushed the revisionists from having merely a "short-sighted" and "faint-hearted" recognition of imperialism into being out-and-out apologists for the bloodsuckers.

SAME THINKING IN NEW FORMS

As we shall see, the present-day revisionists' incorrect positions on the national question, although specific conditions and forms differed, come down to the same essence theoretically, politically and ideologically.

Since the collapse of the Second International, certain developments in the world situation and the international communist movement conditioned the rise of new forms of revisionism on the national ques-

tion. One was the victory of Leninism on imperialism and the national question and the thorough exposure of the Second International social-chauvinists, both the outright chauvinists and the Centrist Kautskyites.

Second, the hard historical facts of the heroic struggles of the national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America, especially since World War II, demonstrating that these "rear areas" of imperialism have taken the lead as raging anti-imperialist struggles, particularly during the post-war temporary capitalist stabilization. Thus the modern revisionists "dare not completely discard the slogans of support for the national liberation movements, and at the same time, for the sake of their own interests, they even take certain measures which create the appearance of support."¹⁹

Third, the success of the national liberation movements coupled with the imperialists' sinister designs and needs made the imperialists replace old-style direct colonial rule with neo-colonialism. Modern revisionists correspondingly changed from apologists of old colonialism to apologists of neo-colonialism.

Two Wholes + Three Peacefuls = Revisionism

Despite their differences with the Second International revisionists in terms of specific conditions, the modern Soviet revisionists are basically the same in theoretical, political and ideological content. In the era of imperialism, the fundamental line of demarcation is still over the course of proletarian revolution and its relation to the national question. Revisionists *have* to attack and revise Lenin's teachings on imperialism, the nature of the national question under imperialism, and the relationship of the national question to proletarian revolution.

The modern revisionists do exactly that. Like their political forefathers, their confusion centers on two theories, the fallacy of the all-importance of the productive forces and the theory of the dying out of class struggle (a continuation of the theory of class collaboration applied to socialism). The height of their "creative" revision is the "two wholes" — the "party of the whole people" and the "state of the whole people" — and the "three peacefuls" — peaceful coexistence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition.

According to their thinking, developing the national economy and level of productive forces in the Soviet Union is the principal task; class struggle and continuing the socialist revolution in all spheres are no longer necessary. And since "there are no classes in the Soviet Union," the proletarian party and the dictatorship of the proletariat are largely transformed into the party and state of "the whole people."

Externally, the contradictions in the world are reduced to the contradiction between modes of pro-

duction — monopoly capitalism and socialism — and the competition between the two modes of production is the determining factor. Supposedly to prevent "thermonuclear war" and the "annihilation of mankind" the two systems should coexist and compete, thereby peacefully transforming imperialism into socialism. The revisionists prattle on about the "final phase" of imperialism and the "new stage" of the national question.

Victories of great historic significance have been won by the national liberation movements of Asia, Africa and Latin America. But imperialism has not been overthrown and the tasks of fighting imperialism are far from complete. Indeed imperialism has been modified into a more pernicious and sinister form — neo-colonialism. Seeing state independence won by many oppressed nations but blind to neo-colonialism, the revisionists conclude that "colonialism has disappeared or is disappearing from the present-day world. . . and that the abolition of colonial rule has already entered the 'final phase'. . .";²⁰ This is a treacherous whitewash of U.S. imperialism.

In this "final phase" of imperialism, the revisionists' imaginations have transformed everything — the character and aim of the national movements, the principal contradiction between imperialism and socialism, the decisive role of the productive forces, the danger of thermonuclear war, and so on *ad nauseum*. It is indeed instructive to note that all opportunism on the national question starts by revising the fundamental laws and character of imperialism. Think of the Revolutionary Communist Party's (RCP) caricature of the "third period" or the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)'s (CP(ML)) retreat to the first period.

Peace Through Struggle

For the modern revisionists of the CPSU, the "final phase" of imperialism has ushered in a "new stage" of the national question. They oppose wars of national liberation, echoing Katusky's lies about "social peace" and "non-necessity of 'democratic' wars" and "peaceful competition among free and equal nations under capitalism." The justification by the notorious Khrushchev is that: "Any small 'local war' might spark off the conflagration of a world war" and "today, any sort of war, though it may break out as an ordinary non-nuclear war, is likely to develop into a destructive nuclear-missile conflagration." Thus, "we will destroy our Noah's ark — the globe."²¹

This is diametrically opposed to the idea that "world peace can be won only through struggle by the people of all countries and not by begging for it. . . by relying on the masses of people and waging a tit-for-tat struggle against the imperialist policies of aggression and war." This was the line put out by the CPC in 1963 in the polemic "Two Different Lines on the Question of War and Peace."²²

The line of the modern revisionists is a total repudiation of the fundamental distinction between just and unjust wars and the communist stand of supporting just wars. It is a through-and-through repudiation of the line that wars of national liberation are inevitable so long as the imperialists and their lackeys try to maintain their brutal rule and suppress revolutions of oppressed nations.

Necessary Communist Support

It liquidates the revolutionary potential of the national liberation movements and their positive effect on the international proletarian socialist revolution. It also liquidates the communist task to support liberation struggles as part of the immediate and universal preparation in oppressor imperialist countries for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Compare this revisionist prescription with the RCP's fear of a violent national revolution in the Black Belt South, their fear of it getting "out of hand," their fear that it will be "contradictory to the interests of the proletariat." Recall the CP(ML)'s begging their "liberal bourgeoisie" and state apparatus to achieve "actual realization" of this and that reform for the Afro-American people, for fear of "racial riots" and the "recoil of the liberal bourgeoisie."

The reactionary lines of the modern revisionists can be seen in Khrushchev's treating the Algerian national liberation struggle as France's "internal affair." Echoing their Soviet brethren, the French revisionists supported the reactionary imperialist policy of "national assimilation" by saying that the peoples of the French colonies were "naturalized Frenchmen." The French even tried to intimidate the Algerians, saying that "any attempt to break away from the Union of France will only lead to the strengthening of imperialism. Although independence may be won, it will be temporary, nominal and false. . . . Algeria is an inalienable part of France."²³

Soviets' Great-Power Chauvinism

On the other hand, there is Brezhnev's infamous "theory of limited sovereignty" of socialist countries (other than the Soviet Union, of course). The precedent for violating other countries' sovereignty was Prague Spring, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet revisionists coined the "Brezhnev Doctrine," giving themselves the right to intervene at will any time or anywhere they saw socialism "threatened." This social-imperialist policy assumes socialist nations have only a "limited" sovereignty.

The doctrine was explicitly stated by Sergei Kovalev in *Pravda* on Sept. 25, 1968: "There is no doubt that the peoples of the socialist countries and the Communist Parties must have freedom to determine their country's path to development. However,

any decision of theirs must damage neither socialism in their own country nor the fundamental interests of the other socialist countries nor the worldwide workers' movement, which is waging a struggle for socialism. This means that every Communist Party is responsible not only to its own people but also to all socialist countries and to the entire communist movement. Whoever forgets this on placing sole emphasis on the autonomy and independence of Communist Parties lapses into one-sidedness, shirking international obligations. . . . The sovereignty of individual socialist countries cannot be counterposed to the interests of world socialism and the world international movement."²⁴

This is not only another example of the revisionists' great-nation chauvinism, but also a concept that fundamentally opposes the interests of socialism in the era of imperialism.

CPC: Correct Socialist Relations

In essence, the Brezhnev doctrine represents a revisionist programmatic cover-up of the source of the problems in socialist countries — all in the name of "imperialist plots." It detracts attention from the internal basis of the problems and from finding solutions for them. The line of "limited sovereignty" also represents out-and-out opportunism on the issue of relations between socialist states. In its polemic against the revisionist line of the CPSU led by Khrushchev, the CPC said:

"Relations between socialist countries are international relations of a new type. Relations between socialist countries, whether large or small, and whether more or less developed economically, must be based on the principles of complete equality, respect for territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and must also be based on the principles of mutual support and mutual assistance in accordance with proletarian internationalism.

"Every socialist country must rely mainly on itself for its construction.

"In accordance with its own concrete conditions, every socialist country must rely first of all on the diligent labor and talents of its own people, utilize all its available resources fully and in a planned way, and bring all its potential into play in socialist construction. Only thus can it build socialism effectively and develop its economy speedily.

"This is the only way for each socialist country to strengthen the might of the entire socialist camp and enhance its capacity to assist the revolutionary cause of the international proletariat. Therefore, to observe the principle of mainly relying on oneself in construction is to apply proletarian internationalism concretely.

"If, proceeding only from its own partial interests,

any socialist country unilaterally demands that other fraternal countries submit to its needs, and uses the pretext of opposing what they call 'going it alone' and 'nationalism' to prevent other fraternal countries from applying the principle of relying mainly on their own efforts in their construction and from developing their economies on the basis of independence, or even goes to the length of putting economic pressure on other fraternal countries — then these are pure manifestations of national egoism.

"It is absolutely necessary for socialist countries to practice mutual economic assistance on the principle of complete equality, mutual benefit and comradely mutual assistance.

"It would be great power chauvinism to deny these basic principles and, in the name of 'international division of labor' or 'specialization', to impose one's will on others, infringe on the independence and sovereignty of fraternal countries or harm the interests of the people."²⁵

Damage to Socialism Worldwide...

Just as important, the fight against imperialism is tightly interwoven with a socialist state's foreign policy. This includes the relations between socialist states based on mutual assistance and proletarian internationalism, the support of national liberation struggles and countries' independence, and the policy of peaceful coexistence. The imperialists are driven by their economic systems to constantly violate the sovereignty of other countries in order to export their capital and find new markets and sources of raw materials. The socialist policy of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems exposes the imperialists who can never follow this policy and look for any excuse to violate other countries' independence.

The theory of "limited sovereignty" in fact undercut the socialist foreign policy of peaceful coexistence and the Soviet revisionists in fact helped the imperialists off the hook.

The Soviet Union's outright reactionary policies towards countries such as Afghanistan, Eritrea and Angola are very self-serving and short-sighted. The root of their revisionist line is the theory of "exporting revolution" to other countries, supposedly to create conditions for socialism all over the world and thus bring about communism much faster. It's baloney—the line in practice actually back-fires and delays the process. The most profound lessons are found in the experiences of the Eastern European countries.

During the anti-fascist war, the Soviet Red Army sacrificed a great deal to liberate many Eastern European countries, with the exception of Yugoslavia and Albania. State power was virtually handed to the local communists and resistance forces on a silver platter, and the internal basis of these parties was weak. They

did not learn through trial and error to apply Marxism-Leninism in their own conditions. As a result, after state power was handed to them, Soviet leaders including Stalin had a certain attitude towards them. This attitude was later systematically consolidated into a programmatic revisionist policy of limited sovereignty—the so-called "Brezhnev Doctrine."

... And to Internal Development

These policies have not helped the development of the internal basis—leadership, the subjective factor—for socialism in different countries. If anything, the revisionists have complicated and postponed it. Dependency has increased: the Soviet leaders seem to like this because of their chauvinism, because of their short-sighted ideas of communism and worldwide revolution's development, and because dependency justifies a set of expedient practices and doctrinaire habits. This same line led to the invasions of Afghanistan and Czechoslovakia, and to the continued need to station troops on Eastern European soil. Of course the Soviet Union is still paying the price for that outlook.

(In Poland the party has not developed a self-cleansing process, so workers themselves have to shake it up. Fortunately, they are organizing and taking care of the situation by overthrowing the existing party leadership. If the Soviet Union were to repeat their actions in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, they would only further discredit socialism and hold back the cause worldwide. Those invasions were helpless efforts to compensate for past errors and only compounded the problem. So far, the Soviets have chosen for practical reasons not to send troops into Poland. The Polish army is much stronger and more nationalistic than the Czech. Also, the Soviet Union is tied down in Afghanistan. This restraint may be a healthy sign. It could mean they are learning from historical experiences, their backs forced to the wall. Subjectively, however, they are still holding to a revisionist line of "limited sovereignty" and unless they repudiate it programmatically, they are bound to repeat their mistakes.)

Trapped, Exposed, and Isolated

The Soviet revisionists claim that to defend socialism they must extend their borders. They claim this lesson from the earlier period of Nazi invasion. That's why now they want to draw boundaries far beyond the existing ones. The concern is understandable but the practice has turned into its opposite. In the era of imperialism, it is a chauvinist line that confuses countries fighting against imperialism and keeps them from trusting socialism.

The CPSU offered the same argument for invading Afghanistan. They said the former regime was

CIA-backed, so they had to block the imperialists' path to the Soviet border. This is false and indeed they interfered with the local people's sense of justice and national sovereignty. It is a most unfortunate situation where the mightiest socialist country in the world is trapped, fighting forces which have historically been stepped on by imperialism and have been struggling many centuries for genuine independence. It has led to a self-imposed isolation—reflected in a recent United Nations vote, where over 100 countries voted against the Soviet Union.

The concern to defend what was the sole socialist country from 1917 to the 1940's has turned into a reactionary policy which directly conflicts with national liberation struggles, the direct reserve of the working class worldwide. The Soviet Union's chauvinist line is particularly harmful at this time, when U.S. imperialism is retreating and trying to regroup before unleashing new, overt wars of aggression. Its continuing acts of aggression are mainly through the "Carter Doctrine" of subversion, in Chile and El Salvador for example, and not by outright occupations of the U.S. Army. Under such circumstances, the open presence of Soviet armed forces abroad stands out like a sore thumb.

Those are still partial policies of the Soviet Union, although they could continue and expand. As a whole, Soviet policies such as aid to Cuba and Mozambique exemplify proletarian internationalism and do help those countries. There is every sign that in Angola, for instance, the government group under Movement Popular for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) leadership has steered an independent course—after the Soviet Union and the United States opportunistically maneuvered and pitted one liberation group against another like they were gambling on horses. The Angolans work with the United States, for example with Gulf Oil, trying to build up their economy on its own footing. And in Zimbabwe, ZANU (Zimbabwean African National Union) has a correct line of using U.S. aid for economic growth to safeguard its political power.

"Assimilation" Equals Liquidation

Domestically the Soviet revisionists also hold theoretical positions which are in essence liquidationist and chauvinist. Examples include reducing the national question under socialism to various "ethnic" questions, linguistic communities and various forms of the race question. Indeed, opportunists here show similar respect for U.S. imperialists' state sovereignty and forced assimilation policy, denouncing the Afro-American nation's right of self-determination in the Black Belt South. The RCP fabricates a theoretical justification that self-determination is a negative demand, in the name of "one state, one revolution... within the same state boundary." They say that a "larger socialist state will provide a much

stronger material base for meeting the needs and demands of the Black people." Race theories like the Line of March's support the imperialist forced assimilation policy to liquidate the national question and the right of self-determination. The CP(ML) substitutes integration for a revolutionary strategy and programme on the national question. The dead hand of Kautsky still guides them, their banner inscribed with his infamous call to "defend the fatherland."

Soviet revisionists and U.S. opportunists reduce the political struggle to economic struggle and restrict it to the imperialist superstructure. Opposing the national liberation movements' revolution for political independence, the revisionists denigrate their role as mere "economic tasks."

"The leaders of the CPSU have also created the theory that the national liberation movement has entered upon a 'new stage' having economic tasks as its core. Their argument is that whereas 'formerly, the struggle was carried on mainly in the political sphere,' today the economic questions has become the 'central task' and 'the basic link in the further development of the revolution.'"²⁶ This is part of their theory of the all-importance of the productive forces and dying out of class struggle, as well as their "three peacefuls." For them, "the national liberation movement is developing under conditions of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems and that peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition 'assist the unfolding of a process of liberation on the part of the peoples fighting to free themselves from the economic domination of the foreign monopolies.'"²⁷

Myth of Imperialism's "Reasonableness"

State power is the central question of revolution and the central question for the national democratic movement. The revisionists liquidate this question—on the one hand reducing it to economic tasks, and on the other calling for reliance on the imperialists' "reason." This is Khrushchev's prescription: "elimination of colonialism through the United Nations." Trying to play up to Western imperialist countries' "reason and farsightedness," he campaigned that "the revolutionary people of Asia, Africa and Latin America should not and cannot themselves eliminate colonialism, but must look to the United Nations for help."²⁸ At that time, the United Nations was dominated by the imperialists headed by the United States. In essence, Khrushchev was asking the imperialists to give up imperialism. This is in line with the Kautskyite theory of "ultra-imperialism" which held that imperialist colonialism was nothing more than a preferred policy that could be eliminated through their "reason and farsightedness."

The revisionist family tradition is carried on by

U.S. opportunists. Line of March's race theory liquidates the revolutionary potential of the national movement and its importance to the all-rounded preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Line of March reduces communist work to economic tasks and economic struggle to "equalize wage differentials" and "other differences in economic condition," pitting black workers against white. The CP(ML) appeals to the imperialist superstructure and the "reason and far-sightedness" of the "liberal bourgeoisie" to grant the oppressed nation reforms and eliminate national oppression. The theory of the all-importance of the productive forces, which is at the core of the modern revisionists' methodology, is also loyally upheld by the RCP throughout their analysis of the national question.

Liberation Struggles at Storm Center

In the name of proletarian leadership and the leadership of socialist countries, the modern revisionists reduce the four fundamental contradictions in the world to imperialism versus socialism and replace proletarian internationalism with social chauvinism. They ignore and belittle the contradiction between oppressed nations and imperialism by focusing myopically on the contradiction between imperialism and socialism and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This liquidates the revolutionary thrust of the national liberation movements.

In the *General Line* polemic against the CPSU in the late 50's, the CPC gave a concrete analysis of why the storm center of world revolution is Asia, Africa and Latin America. The CPC pointed out that while the contradiction between socialism and imperialism is sharper, "Marxist-Leninists must not regard the contradictions in the world as consisting solely and simply of the contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp."²⁹ As to the other aspect, the CPC affirmed in theory and in practice the historical current of proletarian revolution and the role of proletarian leadership in the national movements.

But the sinister intent of the modern revisionists' assertion that the national liberation movement should be "led" by the socialist countries and the working class movement in the advanced capitalist countries is nothing but an attempt to repudiate the national liberation movements' revolutionary role and justify substituting chauvinism for internationalism.

While this specific line takes on a seemingly "left" facade, similar to Trotsky's revisionism on the "need" for proletarian leadership in the national movement is basically both right in form and right in essence, consistent with the rest of their rotten lines. As the CPC wrote, "Another idea often propagated by the leaders of the CPSU is that a country can build socialism under no matter what leadership, including even that

of a reactionary nationalist like Nehru. This is still farther removed from the idea of proletarian leadership."³⁰

This liquidation of proletarian leadership in the national movement is also carried on by U.S. opportunists. For instance, the CP(ML) tails the national bourgeoisie in the Afro-American movement and tails black capitalism. The August 29th Movement, now part of the League of Revolutionary Struggle, although its incorrectness stems from narrow nationalism and vulgarized third worldism, nevertheless also negates proletarian leadership in the Chicano movement.

The modern revisionists have attacked the CPC's incorrect analysis of the three worlds, but from a racist angle. According to the revisionists, the CPC's analysis creates "racial and geographical barriers." But in describing this, they reduce the national question in the context of the contradictions under imperialism to a question of racism. "When they peddle the 'theory of racism,' describing the national liberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America as one of the colored against the white race, the leaders of the CPSU are clearly aiming at inciting racial hatred among the white people in Europe and North America, at diverting the people of the world from the struggle against imperialism and at turning the international socialist movement away from the struggle against modern revisionism."³¹

Seeking help from racism, the most reactionary of all imperialist theory, is indeed a common error. The national question of the minority nations and national minorities in the Soviet Union is also reduced to a racial question, conjuring up a new ethnic theory similar to that of the United States bourgeoisie. The fruit of modern revisionism is manifold: an all-round revision of Marxism; an all-round repudiation of Lenin's theory of imperialism and proletarian revolution; peddling the theory of the all-importance of the productive forces and the theory of class collaboration and the dying out of class struggle; practicing social-imperialist policies and chauvinism; opposing the wars of national liberation, recognizing imperialist state sovereignty and forced assimilation; repudiating the right of self-determination; reducing the political struggle to economic tasks and relying on the reasonableness of imperialism; and liquidating the real proletarian leadership in the national liberation movement.



“LEFT” ECONOMISM JOINS RIGHT

Other than revisionism, there is another, larger trend departing from and hostile to Marxism. As Lenin pointed out, in “Differences in the European Labor Movement,” the development of capitalism, its rate and degree of different spheres of the national economy, its dialectical process of development, the influence of bourgeois ideology, the impact of bourgeois reactionary tactics and the class composition of the movement are conditions for two main trends departing from Marxism — revisionism and anarchism. But since the defeat and isolation of classical anarchism and the rise of imperialism, the anarchists’ place has been taken by the “left” imperialist economists, whose line is the flipside of the right imperialist economists, Kautskyite revisionism and social-chauvinism.

Lenin characterized the two forms of economism: “Now a new Economism is being born. Its reasoning is similarly based on the two curvetts: ‘Right’ — we are against the ‘right to self-determination’ (i.e., against the liberation of oppressed peoples, the struggle against annexations — that has not yet been fully thought out or clearly stated). ‘Left’ — we are opposed to a minimum programme (i.e., opposed to struggle for reforms and democracy) as ‘contradictory’ to socialist revolution.”³³

We have traced the development of right imperialist economism to modern revisionism on the national question. Now let us trace the development of “left” imperialist economism and Trotskyism on the national question, and see how the “left” attack joins the right attack, with Trotskyism flipping both ways.

For the “left” as well as the right economists, revisionism on the national question is an integral part of revisionism on the character and laws of imperialism. The central theme can be characterized thus: imperialism is the negation of democracy and democratic demands cannot be realized under imperialism; therefore, the fight for democracy in general (that is, reforms or the minimum programme) and self-determination in particular must be opposed since it is contradictory to socialist revolution.

Reforms: Impossible or Revolutionary Fights?

As Lenin said of Kievsky, a prominent “left” economist, the “real source of all his mishaps” and his “basic logical error” lay in believing: “Imperialism is a highly developed capitalism; imperialism is progressive; imperialism is the negation of democracy —

‘hence,’ democracy is unattainable under capitalism. Imperialist war is a flagrant violation of all democracy, whether in backward monarchies or progressive republics — ‘hence,’ there is no point in talking of ‘right’ (i.e., democracy!). The only thing that can be ‘opposed’ to imperialist war is socialism; socialism alone is ‘the way out’; ‘hence,’ to advance democratic slogans in our minimum programme, i.e., under capitalism, is a deception or an illusion, befuddlement or postponement, etc. of the slogan of socialist revolution.”³⁴ Lenin hit the nail on the head when he described the economists’ problem — “a lack of understanding of the relationship between capitalism and democracy, between socialism and democracy.”

Hypnotized by bourgeois reactionary “liberal” tactics, the revisionists divorce the fight for reforms from socialist revolution. Lenin, in exposing revisionism, showed the class content of bourgeois democracy, pointed out imperialism’s political reaction and the need to link the struggle for reforms to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The “left” economists distort the meaning of the statement that monopoly capitalism (imperialism) is the change from democracy to political reaction. They claim a “logical contradiction between two social categories,” imperialism and democracy; and negating the imperialist bourgeoisie’s use of liberal reformist tactics, conclude that no reforms are possible under imperialism. But imperialism passing from democracy to political reaction means that bourgeois democracy is no longer progressive (as it was in its rising period, replacing feudalism), and the political superstructure of capitalism is reactionary all along the line, corresponding to the transformation from “free competition” to “monopoly.” It means that even when the bourgeoisie use democracy and reform, it is only a crafty and more deceptive way to serve their reactionary rule.

As for the “achievability” of democracy under imperialism, “All democratic demands are ‘unachievable’ under imperialism in the sense that politically they are hard to achieve or totally unachievable without a series of revolutions.”³⁵ Those democratic demands in the partial programme are politically hard to realize and can only come about inasmuch as the proletariat puts up a consistent fight; success is the exception rather than the rule, and the bourgeoisie usually distorts the reform, tries to focus the proletariat exclusively on the reformist struggles, and takes back the gains of reforms whenever possible.

Democratic demands in the basic programme (representing proletarian democracy under socialism) cannot be achieved without socialist revolution. Moreover, although democracy is an illusion under capitalism in general and imperialism in particular, “At the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, creates democratic institutions, aggravates the antagonism between imperi-

alism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy."³⁶ The "left" economists are totally blind to this. Within an overall framework that caricatures Marxism, revises the character and laws of imperialism, and distorts the relations between imperialism and democracy, they liquidate the revolutionary fight for reforms and for self-determination.

With More Democracy, More Clarity on Enemy

The "left" economists invariably conclude that democratic demands are opposed to the slogan of socialism and that the fight for a minimum programme contradicts socialist revolution. They slip from a distorted view of the relation between imperialism and democracy to a distorted view of the relation between socialism and democracy.

Lenin detailed the proper relation between democracy and socialism, both on the issue of proletarian democracy and on the issue of linking democratic struggle under imperialism to the socialist revolution.

Combating the right's "above-class" democracy and the "left's" distortion of socialism, Lenin explained that socialism will fully develop proletarian democracy for the oppressed classes to continue socialist revolution to communism. "Socialism can be implemented only *through* the dictatorship of the proletariat, which combines violence against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the minority of the population, with full development of democracy, i.e., genuinely universal participation of the entire mass of the population in all state affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. . . . The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not the lack of rights."³⁷ "The Marxist solution of the problem of democracy is for the proletariat to utilize all democratic institutions and aspirations in its class struggle against the bourgeoisie in order to prepare for its overthrow and assure its own victory."³⁸

For a developed capitalist country, the task is not, as the rightists advocate, to "consummate" bourgeois democratic reforms, nor, as the "left" advocates, to liquidate democratic struggles as unattainable and contradictory to socialist revolution. The correct task is to link the democratic struggles for the partial demands in a revolutionary way with socialist revolution. For oppressed nations, with semi-feudal and/or semi-colonial conditions which call for a two-stage revolution, communist work cannot be reduced to "economic tasks." The content is not to "appeal to the reason and civilizing role of imperialism" as the right advocates, nor to liquidate the minimum programme

as the "left" advocates, but to fight for a revolution of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, new democratic national liberation, to open the wider path to continuing the socialist revolution. The "left" economists liquidate struggles for democratic demands in both the socialist revolution and national liberation movement. Applying this cockeyed view of the relationship among imperialism, democracy and socialism, to the national question under imperialism, they see the national question as an unrealizable democratic demand contradictory to socialist revolution — they oppose it, and thus liquidate the national movement's revolutionary role. "For socialism is impossible without democracy because 1) the proletariat cannot perform the socialist revolution unless it prepares for it by the struggle for democracy; 2) victorious socialism cannot consolidate its victory and bring humanity to the withering away of the state without implementing full democracy."³⁹

Deadly Separation of Politics from Economics

The central theme of the liquidationist position is that "self-determination is impossible under capitalism and superfluous under socialism." They conjure up a "new period" of the national question in a "new stage" of imperialism, whereby "national wars are no longer possible in the era of imperialism," and "the trend of development is towards the merging of the nations."⁴⁰

First of all, this reflects an erroneous understanding of imperialism. According to Kievsky, "The whole era can therefore be designed as the era of finance capitalism of which imperialism is the corresponding foreign policy system." Lenin criticized him: "The important thing is that Kievsky proclaims imperialism to be a foreign policy system. . . a wrong repetition of Kautsky's wrong idea."⁴¹ There is a common thread in both Kautsky's and Kievsky's lines on imperialism as a "preferred policy." Though they draw their conclusions from two different angles, they both separate politics from economics. Kautsky ignores the fact that monopoly capitalism, because of its economic base and the economic laws governing the development of capitalism, means imperialist plunder, violence, and subjugation of both "backward" agricultural countries and capitalist countries; he concludes that "permanent peace" can be maintained by international cooperation among finance capital and that national equality will be attained through social peace and free economic competition. Kievsky repudiated the fact that imperialist economic plunder and subjugation can be carried out upon "politically independent" democratic states, because under bourgeois democracy "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely. . . in the form of direct corruption of officials. . . in the form of an alliance between government and stock exchange" (Engels) in their own coun-

try as well as "can 'freely' buy or bribe the freest democracy or republican government and the elective officials of any, given an 'independent' country."⁴² Thus Kievsky concluded that self-determination is "unachievable" under imperialism in the same absolute economic sense as "abolition of crisis" is impossible under capitalism.

Lenin formulated the problem: "That question is the relations of economics to politics: the relations of economic conditions and the economic content of imperialism to a certain political form."⁴³ The "left" economists, distorting the relation between imperialism and democracy, opposed the national liberation movement's goals of self-determination and democratic revolution as unattainable.

Secondly, their line on the character and laws of imperialism negated inter-imperialist contradictions and the laws of uneven development of capitalism. They negated the fact that imperialist countries developed unevenly, with rises and declines, alignment and realignment, contention always being absolute. The imperialists' entanglement, constant contention, and changes in relations of forces can be utilized by the national liberation movement through a series of revolutions. Lenin hit them: "It would be absurd to deny that some slight changes in the political and strategic relations of, say, Germany and Britain, might today or tomorrow make the formation of a new Polish, Indian and other similar state fully 'practicable.'"⁴⁴

Thirdly, their line negated the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. "...capitalism develops unevenly, and objectively reality gives us highly developed capitalist nations side-by-side with a number of economically slightly developed or totally undeveloped, nations. P. Kievsky has absolutely failed to analyse the *objective* conditions of social revolution from the standpoint of the economic maturity of various countries."⁴⁵ Ignoring the differences, Kievsky negated that "in those areas, as a rule, there *still* exist oppressed and capitalistically undeveloped nations. *Objectively*, these nations will have general national tasks to accomplish, namely, *democratic* tasks, the tasks of *overthrowing foreign oppression*."⁴⁶ Hence they liquidated the necessity of a two-stage revolution for these countries, and pictured the minimum program of democratic revolution as contradictory to socialist revolution.

Liquidation from the "Left"

Moreover, they made no distinction between the specific content of the slogan of "defense of the fatherland," i.e., patriotism, as applied to the oppressor nations. Using the demagoguery of "monism" they opposed this slogan "in general." As Lenin pointed out, this was posed "in a *basically incorrect* and *unhistorical* way" and "the position of the pro-

letariat with regard to national oppression... in oppressing and oppressed nations... is not the same, not the same *economically, politically, ideologically, spiritually*, etc."⁴⁷ Equating the national sentiments fueling national liberation movements with the social-chauvinist slogan, the economists gutted their anti-imperialist revolutionary content and dismissed their positive effects on the proletarian socialist movement in capitalist countries and the unity of the two movements.

Just as they liquidated the question of democratic struggle *both* in relation to fighting against imperialism *and* to building socialism, they also liquidated the question of self-determination of oppressed nations.

Kievsky said, "The right of nations to self-determination is one thing in the era of the formation of national states, as the best form of developing the productive forces at their then existing level, but it is quite another thing now that this form, the national state, fetters the development of the productive forces. A vast distance separates the era of the establishment of capitalism and the national state from the era of collapse of the national state and the eve of the collapse of capitalism itself."⁴⁸ Lenin pointed out, "Running through the article is Kievsky's basic doubt: why advocate and, when we are in power, implement the freedom of nations to *secede*, considering that the trend of development is towards the *merging* of nations?"⁴⁹

The irony lies in that there is indeed a vast time difference between the era of formation of bourgeois national states and the era of merging of nations. And exactly because of this, there are different types of countries with respect to right of self-determination; the oppressed nation's rights must be supported in order to unite the national liberation movements with the proletarian movement in the oppressor nations, to ensure the victory of both and to create the basis step-by-step for the free merger of nations under socialism. "We do so not because we favor secession, but only because we stand for free, voluntary association and merging as distinct from forcible association. That is the only reason!"⁵⁰ This applies to both stages of the overthrow of the oppressor imperialist bourgeoisie, and the period after socialist revolution. "In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the proletariat of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede."⁵¹



Now we can see the theoretical nonsense and practical chauvinism of the "left" economist claim that "self-determination is impossible under imperialism and superfluous under socialism."

Inability to Pose Political Questions"

With all their reductions and equations, the economists were like math wizards. They reduced the national question of oppressed nations under imperialism to some "negative demand." Kievsky said: "For that reason we limit ourselves, in respect to the colonies, to a negative slogan, i.e., to the demand socialists present to their governments — 'get out of the colonies!' Unachievable within the framework of capitalism, this demand serves to intensify the struggle against imperialism, but does not contradict the trend of development, for a socialist society will not possess colonies."⁵²

But after opposing the right to self-determination, repudiating democratic revolution, this slogan "get out of the colonies" had indeed been reduced to a real negative and non-revolutionary slogan. Without drawing from it the political significance and political tasks for the masses in both the oppressed and oppressor nations, the slogans "get out of the colonies" and "intensify the struggle against imperialism" remained empty phrases. "Inability to pose *political* questions" — that is the heart of their economism.⁵³ The ability to link the national question — this demarcates both the right and "left" economists from the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists.

To summarize, distortion of the relationship between imperialism and democracy, between socialism and democracy; opposing democratic struggles in general and self-determination in particular as contradictory to socialist revolution; separating politics from economics in relation to imperialism and national oppression; ignoring inter-imperialist contradiction and the law of uneven development of capitalism; making no distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations; repudiating the unity between revolutionary repercussions of the national liberation movement on proletarian socialist movements; opposing the right of self-determination even under the dictatorship of the proletariat as superfluous and contradictory to the historical trend of nations merging; and negating the relationship of the national question to the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism — these constitute the "left" economists' opportunism on the national question.

No Great Wall Separating "Left" and Right

Trotsky and many opportunists in the U.S. communist movement inherited this opportunist trend. Trotsky

openly negated the different degrees of maturity for socialist revolution in different countries, opposed democratic revolution to the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, and negated the victory of socialism in one or a few countries. The Trotskyite Progressive Labor Party denounces all nationalism and bourgeois ideology and all national movements as reactionary, in spite of the "left" economists' opposition to "defense of the fatherland" in general. The Trotskyite race theory of different groups liquidates the national question and right of self-determination in the name of class analysis and socialist revolution, and cuts the slogan "fight against racism" down to an empty phrase. The RCP's argument that right of self-determination is a "negative demand" because it might very well prove "impossible" and be a "step backward" is in the economists' spirit of "impossible, superfluous." They also denounce the national sentiments of Afro-Americans as NOT "applied internationalism."

There is no great wall separating the two opportunist trends in general and their lines on the national question in particular. First, they are both blind to the revolutionary potential of the national liberation movement and separate the national question from the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and communism — the same political betrayal. Secondly, they both ideologically substitute social-chauvinism for proletarian internationalism using the class standpoint of labor aristocrats and the petty bourgeoisie.

Thirdly, they both resort to the theory of productive forces. As Lenin pointed out, "[They have] the same economist refusal to see and pose *political* questions. Since socialism creates the economic base for the abolition of national oppression in the political sphere, *therefore* our author refused to formulate our *political tasks* in this sphere! That's ridiculous!"⁵⁴ This is the economic determinism, the theory of productive forces, that runs through their line of reasoning: seeing self-determination and the minimum program as "economically unachievable," that the national state "fetters the development of productive force." Indeed, their caricature of Marxist-Leninists on imperialism rests on the same revision of Marxism-Leninism as the right's. Like Kautsky, they think of imperialism as a "foreign-policy system" and negate inter-imperialist contradiction and uneven development of capitalism. Indeed, their "merging of nations" under socialism by force and decree amounts to the same "socialist colonial policy" as the Bernstein revisionists'.

Same political betrayal, same ideological and class base, same theoretical bankruptcy! Under certain conditions, their "left" in form and right in content would even flip to right in both form and content. They "distinguish *two* eventualities: 1) the socialist revolution has begun. In that event, they say: 'immediate expropriation of the banks,' etc. 2) The socialist revolution has *not* begun, and in that event we shall have to

postpone talking about these good things.”⁵⁵ Fixated on “their version of socialist revolution only in the Western capitalist countries, unable and unwilling to muster great forces, they,” as Lenin described, “were unattentive to the conditions for preparing and developing the mass struggle, were driven to despair and to anarchism by the lengthy delays in the decisive struggle against capitalism in Europe. We can see how short-sighted and faint-hearted this anarchist despair is.”⁵⁶ Especially in the face of the sharp turns of imperialist wars, fascist repression, and temporary setbacks, they would give in to fear. Based on their idea that imperialism is in principle contradictory to democracy, they would “postpone talking about these good things” of preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and flip to defend bourgeois democracy. In the case of oppressed nations, they would shrink from their “ultra-revolutionary” socialist revolution to the position of tailing the national and comprador bourgeoisie, all under the convenient pretext that “it is absurd to advance the slogans of a worker’s party for countries where there are no workers.”⁵⁷

History Defeats Trotskyite Lines

In fighting both the right and “left” economists, Lenin exercised excellent leadership. He led the genuine left internationalists to turn imperialist war into civil wars and later founded the Comintern. He led the Russian Bolsheviks to utilize the war crises successfully to pass from the February democratic revolution onto the October socialist revolution. With the successful establishment of the first socialist state and dictatorship of the proletariat based on the worker-peasant alliance, moving forward to eliminate internal reactionaries and protect against imperialist subversion, in the international context of intensified imperialist crisis and upsurge of international proletarian movement and democratic national liberation movement — Trotsky, the long-time enemy of the Bolsheviks, stepped up his vicious attack on Marxist-Leninists and actively organized against the revolution.

Before the October revolution, Trotsky had attacked Lenin’s theory of the proletarian dictatorship based on worker-peasant alliance and of the victory of socialism in one or a few countries. After the October revolution, Trotsky slandered the Soviet power as not being dictatorship of the proletariat. He expected it to be short-lived without socialist revolutions in the Western European countries. This Trotskyite theory of “permanent revolution” brought together the treacherous traditions of both Menshevism and “left” economism and magnified them tenfold. Trotsky attacked Lenin’s general theory of international proletarian revolution under imperialism and the relation of the national question in particular.

Two basic and interrelated features characterize Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution. First is

disbelief in the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat based on worker-peasant alliance and democratic dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry and other oppressed classes. He substituted his own twisted version of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

By 1905 Trotsky had already “advanced the slogan of ‘no tsar, but a workers’ government,’ that is, the slogan of revolution without the peasantry.”⁵⁸ In 1915, during the war, again “proceeding from the fact that ‘we are living in the era of imperialism,’ that imperialism ‘sets up not the bourgeois nation in opposition to the old regimes, but the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeois nation,’ he arrived at the conclusion that the revolutionary role of the peasantry was bound to subside, that the slogan of the confiscation of the land no longer had the same importance as formerly.”⁵⁹

His liquidation of the peasant’s revolutionary role in the first stage was an attack on Lenin’s strategy for democratic revolution, using the demagoguery of socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Polemicizing against the Narodniks and Plekanov, Lenin had already forcefully shown the inevitable vacillation of the peasantry; that “in the first place it is essential to draw a *line of demarcation* between ourselves and all others, to single out the proletariat *alone and exclusively*, and only *then* declare the proletariat will emancipate all, that it calls on all, invites all.”⁶⁰ Unlike Trotsky, Lenin also distinguishes the petty bourgeoisie’s vacillation from the liberal bourgeoisie’s, the objective of the revolution’s first stage from that of the second stage — and consequently, the necessity to rally the peasantry as the direct reserves of the proletariat in the democratic revolution. Lenin remarked, “Trotsky has not realized that if the proletariat induce the non-proletarian masses to confiscate the landed estates and overthrow monarchy, then that will be the consummation of the ‘national bourgeois revolution’ in Russia; it will be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry!” From the Bolsheviks, Trotsky’s original theory has borrowed their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat, while from the Mensheviks it has borrowed ‘repudiation’ of the peasantry’s role. . . . Trotsky is in fact helping the liberal labor politicians in Russia, who by ‘repudiation’ of the role of the peasantry understand a *refusal* to raise up the peasants for the revolution!”⁶¹

Shallow Understanding of Socialist Dictatorship

Trotsky refused to mend his ways even after the socialist dictatorship was an accomplished fact in the Soviet Union. Peddling the same bankrupt line, he

said, "The Russian revolution whose immediate objectives were bourgeois in nature, could not, however, stop when these objectives had been achieved. The revolution would not be able to solve its immediate bourgeois problems except by placing the proletariat in power. And the latter, upon assuming power, would not be able to confine itself to bourgeois limits of the revolution." But under this pseudo-revolutionary facade, he pushed a counter-revolutionary line, "On the contrary, precisely in order to ensure its victory the proletariat vanguard would be forced in the very stages of its rule to make deep inroads not only into feudal property but in bourgeois property as well. In this it would *come into hostile collision* not only with all the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of its revolutionary struggles, but also with *the broad masses of the peasantry*, with whose assistance it came into power. The contradiction in this position of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelming peasant population could be *only* on an international scale, in the arena of the world proletarian revolution."⁶²

Due to the socialist character and further class differentiation within the peasantry during the second stage of revolution, Lenin outlined the strategic plan that the semi-proletariat (poor and lower-middle peasants) who still comprised the broad masses or peasantry, rather than the entire peasantry, were the direct reserves of the proletariat; he also said that the minority of rich petty bourgeois peasants (kulaks) were neither the direct reserves nor the target of revolution like the bourgeoisie, but to be "paralyzed" in their "instability."

After the victory of revolution, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, aided by the Kautskyites, pushed for bourgeois "equality" and "freedom" in the name of "democracy" for the majority. Lenin analyzed that as long as commodity production existed, there would be class distinctions and differences between workers and peasants. Conditioned by commodity production, a peasant "is half worker and half huckster" and "you cannot change a habit and abolish it overnight." The point was to rally the support of and educate the broad masses of peasantry to consolidate and strengthen the dictatorship to continue the revolution to communism.⁶³

"The issue is this — which of the main forces, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, these intermediate sections will join. There *cannot* be any third way."⁶⁴ Overall, the rich peasants "will try their luck in alliance with the capitalists and landlords against the workers, against the poor, but such peasants are a minority. The majority of peasants will prefer an alliance with the workers against the restoration of capitalist rule."⁶⁵ In the midst of intense class struggle, "the masses of the toilers and exploited can be educated, trained and organized around the proletariat," and

they "as a body can display, for the first time in history, all the initiative and energy of tens of millions of people who have been crushed by capitalism." That is why in order to consolidate and strengthen the proletarian dictatorship, it must be based on allying with "*all toiling and exploited people*, who have been disunited, deceived, intimidated, oppressed, downtrodden and crushed by the capitalist class, come under the *full leadership* of the only class (the proletariat) trained for that leadership by the whole history of capitalism."⁶⁶ Lenin explained further: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a special form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletariat strata of working people (petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.) or the majority of these strata, an alliance against capital . . . It is an alliance between firm supporters of socialism and its vacillating allies, sometimes 'neutrals.'"⁶⁷

Trotsky: No Need for New Democracy

Obviously Trotsky's "hostile collision with the broad masses of peasantry" was more than an incorrect position on the "peasant question"; it was an all-sided attack on the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat. Trotsky's "left" ideas on the national question were an inevitable extension of his theory of permanent revolution applied to "backward," (i.e., semi-feudal, semi-colonial, and colonial) countries.

Trotsky: "With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nations above the peasant masses."⁶⁸ Behind this facade was a denial of new democratic revolution: "That the new Chinese revolution can overthrow the existing regime and transfer the power to the masses of people only in the form of dictatorship of the proletariat; that the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry,' in contrast to the dictatorship of the proletariat which leads the peasantry and realizes the program of democracy, is a fiction, a self-deception, or what is still worse — Kerenskyism or Kuomintangism. Between the regime of Kerensky and Chiang Kai-shek, on the one hand, and the dictatorship of the proletariat on the other, there is no half-way, intermediate revolution regime and there can be none."⁶⁹

To repudiate new democracy in semi-feudal, semi-colonial oppressed nations is, as Lenin tagged it, "skipping" an historically necessary stage of revolution that is based on dialectical and historical materialist analysis of oppressed nations' class and na-

tional contradictions. Attempting to defend this leap, Trotsky muddled his own sophistry and exposed himself: "One stage or another of the historical process can be proved to be inevitable under certain conditions, although theoretically not inevitable. And conversely, theoretically 'inevitable' stages can be compressed to zero by the dynamics of development, especially during revolution, which have not for nothing been called the locomotives of history."⁷⁰ By a mere swish of his pen, Trotsky made these "locomotives" defy all scientific theory and transcend history!

Trotsky was definitely confusing "stages" and "periods" of revolution, a most fundamental distinction in Marxist-Leninist science. The "theoretically inevitable stages" that he thought could be "compressed to zero" were merely twists and turns within a certain stage: "For example, in our country the proletariat 'skipped' the stage of democratic parliamentarianism, granting the Constitutional Assembly only a few hours, and even that only in the backyard. But the counter-revolutionary stages in China can in no way be skipped over. The present counter-revolutionary stage in China (1927), however, was historically in no sense 'unavoidable.'"⁷¹

Confusing revolutionary stages with periods invariably led Trotsky to confuse strategy corresponding to a certain stage and tactics (corresponding to a certain period within a stage), make a mockery of the science of strategy and tactics with his "transitional program" for "backward countries," and "compress" two stages into one. Trotsky: "Colonial and semi-colonial countries are backward countries by their very essence. But backward countries are part of a world dominated by imperialism. Their development, therefore, has a combined character: the most primitive economic forms are combined with the last word in capitalist techniques and culture. In like manner are defined the political strivings and the proletariat of backward countries: the struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and bourgeois democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against world imperialism. Democratic slogans, transitional demands, and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in the struggle, but stem directly from one another. . . . As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic program . . . to summon and unite with the farmers. . . to oppose the workers to the 'national' bourgeoisie. Then at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can be and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of proletarian policies."⁷²

Here Trotsky was combining the two objectives of the

two stages of revolution into one stage, reducing the question of strategy (which should be based on the standpoint of different classes in relation to the principal contradiction of each stage) to merely a question of different "steps" of "transition," different degrees of "mobilization" and "levels of consciousness" as judged by his own subjectivism.

Trotsky's "compressed" strategy was this: "An alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry. . . (which can be realized in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie."⁷³ First, his alliance between the proletariat and peasantry is a sham, as we have shown. Second, the national bourgeoisie is not part of the target of democratic revolution and the policy should not be one of "irreconcilable struggle" but one of revolutionary policy toward their dual character. Trotsky denied the existence of the national bourgeoisie (quoting "national" and calling them "national-liberal bourgeoisie") and treated them the same as the liberal bourgeoisie during the socialist revolution in Russia. He rejected a conditional alliance with them against imperialism, feudalism and the comprador bourgeoisie, slandering such alliance as Kerenskyism and Kuomintangism. It all adds up to a treacherous line on oppressed nations' democratic revolutions.

This theory of permanent revolution and transitional program had nothing in common with and in fact undermined Lenin's theory of continuing socialist revolution and revolution by stages, despite Trotsky's shameless attempt to associate with Lenin by using terms like "permanent" and "transitional."

Lenin upheld continuing socialist revolution. He held that the democratic revolution must be linked to, opens the door for, and must pass directly to, the socialist revolution. In fighting the Kautskyite revisionists, who saw a great gulf between the two, Lenin pointed out: "The proletariat will *immediately* take advantage of this liberation of bourgeois Russia from tsarism, from the agrarian power of the landlords, not to aid the rich peasants in their struggle against the rural workers, but to bring about socialist revolution in alliance with the proletariat in Europe."⁷⁴ "To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese wall between the first and second. . . means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarise it, to replace it by liberalism."⁷⁵ Following the victory in the second stage, communists should persist in continuing revolution under socialism. This theory of continuing socialist revolution is in dialectical unity with the theory of revolution by stages, being based on historical materialist analysis of the class contradictions and development of subjective and objective factors of revolution.

SIMPLE ANSWER: WORLD, PERMANENT REVOLUTION

But Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" and his "transitional program" were a rejection of revolution by stages, and thereby betrayed the course of continuing socialist revolution. As Stalin pointed out: "Consequently, Lenin fought the adherents of 'permanent' revolution, not over the question of uninterruptedness, for Lenin himself maintained the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, which is an enormous reserve of the proletariat, because they failed to understand the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat."⁷⁶

In relation to the national question in particular, Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution totally negated the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. He liquidated these facts about colonial and semi-colonial nations: the national oppression imposed by imperialism on the oppressed nations determines that the target of revolution is imperialism in counter-revolutionary alliance with the feudal landlord classes and comprador bourgeoisie, that the bourgeoisie is differentiated into comprador and national (the latter is not the target but has a dual character), that the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie are the direct reserves, and that the proletariat must lead to first go through the new democratic stage.

Trotsky neatly substituted for this class analysis of the national question: "The development of the world revolution eliminates the question of countries that are 'mature' or 'immature' for socialists in the spirit of that pedantic, lifeless classification given by the present program of the Comintern. Insofar as capitalism has created a world market, a world division of labor and world productive forces, it has also prepared world economy as a whole for socialist transformation."⁷⁷ In one stroke of his pen, the "theoretician" reduced the national question to a simple "pedantic" problem.

Trotsky offered this consolation for his liquidationism: "A backward or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing, the democratic revolution to its conclusion. . . the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution."⁷⁸ But here Trotsky tries to deny that a backward country can have successful revolution, and his "final analysis" was his only analysis: "The contradiction in the position of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population

could be solved *only* on an international scale, in the arena of the world proletarian revolution."⁷⁹ As Stalin said, "According to this plan, there is but one prospect left for our revolution (if the world revolution is fated to arrive with some delay): to vegetate in its own contradiction and rot away while waiting for the world revolution."⁸⁰

This question of world revolution brings us to the second basic feature, which is an attack on Lenin's theory of socialism in one country. Trotsky presumed "international revolution," simultaneous socialist revolution in the capitalist countries of Europe.

Before the victory of the October Revolution, Trotsky had eagerly advocated: "Without direct state support from the European proletariat (i.e., European proletariat has seized state power), the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain itself in power and to transform its temporary rule into a lasting socialist dictatorship."⁸¹ In his 1917 "Peace Program," he sloganeered about the United States of Europe, which objectively opposed the victory of socialism in a single country. To justify himself in the face of hard fact, he actually attacked the October Revolution after its success: "But while we hold our ground as a state politically and militarily, we have not arrived, or even begun to arrive, at the creation of a socialist society. . . . As long as the bourgeoisie remains in power in the other European countries we shall be compelled, in our struggle against economic isolation, to strive for agreements with the capitalist world. But real progress as a socialist economy in Russia will become possible *only after the victory* of the proletariat in the major European countries."⁸²

Socialism in a Single Country?

According to Trotsky, "The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it can no longer be reconciled with the framework of the national state. . . . The development of the world revolution eliminates the question of countries that are 'mature' or 'immature' for socialism. . . . Insofar as capitalism has created a world division of labor and world productive forces, it has also prepared world economy as a whole for socialist transformation."⁸³ This is supposed to be the economic analysis of imperialism proving that the world is ready for socialist revolution all at once! On the other hand, he added, "The world division of labor, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technology, the dependence of the productive forces of the advanced countries of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials, etc., etc., make the construction of an independent socialist society in any single country in the world impossible." Therefore, "the theory of Stalin. . . not only sets up the democratic revolution mechanically in contrast to the

socialist revolution, but also makes a breach between the national revolution and the international revolution."⁸⁴

Lenin had struggled previously against this "left" economist slogan of "United States of Europe," and developed the theory of victory of socialism in one or a few countries. "Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organizing their own social production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world — the capitalist world — attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against capitalism, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states."⁸⁵ He further elaborated this theory in *Imperialism, Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and Stalin summed it up: "Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression by a handful of 'advanced' countries, whose inter-contradictions lead to the world front of imperialism becoming easily vulnerable to revolution, and to a breach of this front. . . where the chain of the imperialist front is weakest, that is to say, where imperialism is least consolidated, and where it is easiest for a revolution to expand. . . In view of this, the victory of socialism in one country, even if that country is less developed in the capitalist sense, while capitalism remains in other countries, even if those countries are more highly developed in the capitalist sense — is quite possible and probable."⁸⁶ Stalin further clarified, "It goes without saying that for the *complete* victory of socialism for a *complete* guarantee against the restoration of the old order, the united efforts of the proletariat in several countries are necessary."⁸⁷

Clearly, Lenin and Stalin consistently upheld using the victory of socialism in one or a few countries to aid the development of the world revolution of the international proletariat and oppressed nations, and unite the international proletarian front to ensure the complete victory of socialism over imperialism worldwide. This is in dialectical unity with Lenin's theory of victory of socialism in one or a few countries, just as his theory of continuing socialist revolution is in dialectical unity with his theory of revolution by stages. There is nothing in common with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution in spite of Trotsky's "left" phrasemongering about "world capitalism" and "international revolution." Indeed Trotsky's vulgar materialism gave rise to many errors: he liquidated the law of uneven development of capitalism (both among imperialist countries and between oppressor and oppressed nations), lost faith in the hegemony of the proletariat, became blind to the support given to the Soviet proletariat by the European proletariat and the oppressed nations, and tried to prevent and slander both the upsurging proletarian socialist

revolution and the democratic revolution — all in anticipation of his grotesque "permanent revolution."

"Left" Dooms Liberation Struggles

Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution as applied to the national question under imperialism is a repudiation of not only its anti-feudal revolutionary content, but also its anti-imperialist character, aiding proletarian socialist revolution worldwide and opening the door to the second stage of socialist revolution. It slanders all national movements as bourgeois reactionary movements, denouncing Kerenskyism and Kuomintangism; it liquidates the revolutionary role of the peasantry and the utilizing of the conditional alliance in the united front with the national bourgeoisie; and it ignores the uneven development of capitalism, inter-imperialist contradiction and the essential distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations.

Trotsky's "left" attack on Leninism on the national question continued the tradition of "left" economists. They based their theories on the same theory of productive forces and caricature of Lenin's teachings on imperialism, and came to the same repudiation of national liberation and democratic revolution. Trotsky developed a more complete and more sinister system, Trotskyism. For example, the "left" economists distorted relations between imperialism and democracy, between democracy and socialism, and claimed the impossibility of "democratic slogans" and "national war under imperialism." According to them, "socialism is the only way out" for oppressed nations. Trotsky carried their theses a step farther: democratic revolution is doomed to failure and there can be no intermediate step to socialist dictatorship. Trotsky carried the economists' "monism" of tasks into an identity between 'mature' and 'immature' nations, indicating a single world socialist revolution. Trotsky carried the economists' undermining the right of self-determination as impossible under socialism to outright opposition to national liberation democratic revolution as "national socialism" doomed to fail. At the same time, Trotsky deceitfully paid lip service to the right of self-determination.

It is imperative to criticize Trotskyism, including "left" economism, in exposing opportunism on the national question. Line of March's "race theories" that liquidate the national question and right of self-determination in the name of "logical-historical" analysis; PLP's denunciation of all national movements and nationalism as reactionary bourgeois movements and ideology; RCP's submerging and smothering the national question under their program for the proletariat, the "monism" in their one socialism within one state boundary, their reduction of the right of self-determination to a "negative

demand," — all these are examples of how the dead, stinking spirit of Trotsky still haunts the U.S. communist movement.

Trotsky insisted that "all backward countries can be determined by the formula of the *permanent revolution*," and that "their present program is completely applicable to colonial and semi-colonial countries, at least to those where the proletariat has become capable of carrying on independent politics."⁸⁸ Here because of the national question, the relations between partial and basic demands in a one-stage socialist revolution differ from the relations between the minimum program (New Democracy) and maximum program (socialism) in a two-stage revolution. But the Trotskyite flip-flop logic exerted itself just the same. As we have said, Trotsky "compressed" the two stages into one socialist revolution. So his program for "backward countries" then covered a whole range of mixed-up hodge-podge: "agrarian reforms," "national liberation," "soviets," and "dictatorship of the proletariat."⁸⁹

From the "left" he attacks democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, the minimum program, and united front with the national bourgeoisie. From the right, especially during temporary setbacks and sharp turns of the revolutionary movement, he would offer justification and consolation that the proletariat has not "become capable of carrying on independent politics," lower the program to zero-level and, as Stalin said, ask the revolution "to vegetate in its own contradiction and rot away while waiting for the world revolution." This was most vividly demonstrated by the Chinese Trotskyite Wang Ming, who, after the total bankruptcy of his left line on liquidating peasant revolts and "all struggle/no alliance" with the national bourgeoisie, flipped to the right line of giving up revolution through "all alliance and no struggle" with the national and comprador bourgeoisie, waiting for the worldwide revolution. Trotsky himself flipped from the "left" attack on the Comintern's People's Front to fight fascism to the rightist begging and tailing social-democrats to defend bourgeois democracy.⁹¹

Self-Determination: Unifying or Separating?

Trotsky paid occasional lip service to the right of self-determination of the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South. He said, "I don't propose for the party to advocate, I do not propose to inject, but only to proclaim our obligation to support, the struggle for self-determination if the Negroes themselves want it."⁹¹ Behind this faint-hearted and short-lived support was an attack on the CPUSA's line of supporting the right of self-determination: "The CP's attitude of making an imperative slogan of it was false, and can only

serve to repulse the Negroes. Their only interpretation can be that the whites want to be separated from them."⁹² Trotsky here obviously did not understand that upholding and fighting for the *right* of self-determination is not one and the same as advocating political secession. But even more important, he totally liquidated the tremendous revolutionary potential of the Afro-American national movement. This flowed from his lack of faith in proletarian leadership of the national movement, repudiation of the revolutionary role of the peasantry and working masses of the oppressed nations, negation of the dual character of the national bourgeoisie and denunciation of a new democratic stage of revolution for oppressed nations.

Ruined by this theoretical impoverishment and blinded by chauvinism, he inevitably failed to see the revolutionary content and potential of the slogan for the right of self-determination, paying lip service to it only because opposition to it had been so thoroughly exposed.

His position was also an extension of his counterposing the minimum and maximum programmes. He said, "'Self-determination' is a democratic demand. . . . That the slogan 'self-determination' will rather win the petty bourgeoisie instead of the workers — that argument holds good also for the slogan of equality. . . . It is possible to say that the liberal demand just as well as the democratic one in the first instance will attract the petty bourgeoisie and only later the workers."⁹³ Here was the obstacle to multi-national unity, the step backward! "If the situation was such that in America common actions existed between the white and the colored workers, that the class fraternization had already become a fact, then perhaps the arguments of our comrades [i.e., American Trots who argued against the right] would have a basis — I do not say that they would be correct [mark the spineless wiggling!] — then perhaps we would separate the colored workers from the white if we commence with the slogan 'self-determination'."⁹⁴ This was diametrically opposed to the Marxist-Leninist position that in order to build genuine multi-national proletarian unity, it is first necessary to consistently educate the white workers to support the right of self-determination of the Afro-Americans and then a united multi-national proletariat must support the right of self-determination. This will unleash the revolutionary potential of the Afro-American national movement as part of the immediate and universal preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat for communism.

Liquidation of the Afro-American right of self-determination went right along with Trotsky's race theory. He declared, "The Negroes are a race and not a nation: Nations grow out of the racial material under definite conditions. The Negroes in Africa are not yet a nation but they are in the process of building a nation. The American Negroes are on a higher cultural level. But while they are there under the pressure of the

Americans they become interested in the development of the Negroes in Africa."⁹⁵ So for Trotsky, the Afro-American national question was reduced to a question of "Negroes" (both in Africa and America since they belong to the same race despite cultural differences) under the "pressure" of the white race of America. It was a question of black vs. white, and nothing to do with U.S. imperialism and the oppressed Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South!

Making White Workers the Enemy

The racist garbage that flows from this race theory is that "99.9% of the American workers are chauvinists, in relation to the Negroes they are hangmen and they are so also toward the Chinese. It is necessary to teach the American beasts."⁹⁶ "I am absolutely sure that they will in any case fight better than the white workers. That, however, can happen only provided the CP carries on an uncompromising merciless struggle not against the supposed national prepossession of the Negro but against the colossal prejudices of the white workers and gives it no concession whatever."⁹⁷ With this bogus indignation towards chauvinism, Trotsky was pushing that white workers are the enemies of the Afro-American masses. He let the real enemy, the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie and their lackeys, off the hook completely. Looking into the present-day U.S. communist movement, we see many farces staged by "white blind spot" groups and race theoreticians loyally replaying the tragedy performed by Trotsky.

Trotsky himself was pushing naked chauvinism. In answering whether the slogan for self-determination would set the Afro-Americans into motion against U.S. imperialism, he stated: "The reformists and revisionists have written much on the subject that capitalism is carrying on the work of civilization in Africa and if the peoples of Africa are left to themselves they will be the more exploited by businessmen, etc., much more than now, where they are at least with a certain measure of lawful protection."⁹⁸ You would hope that the self-proclaimed, anti-revisionist Trotsky would expose this social-chauvinist line on the "civilizing role" of imperialism. But Trotsky was only quoting it to push his own chauvinism. He immediately went on, "To a certain extent this argument can be correct. But in this case it is also first of all a question of the European workers: without their liberation the real colonial liberation is also not impossible. . . . The self-determination of the colonial peoples can in certain periods lead to different results in the final instance, however, it will lead to the struggle against imperialism and to the liberation of the colonial peoples."

In the same chauvinist spirit, Trotsky voiced his fear that the right of self-determination of Afro-Americans could lead to "different results" (a spineless way to denounce it as a bourgeois reac-

tionary national movement) and that their liberation could come only after the victory of his "permanent revolution." Prefixing imperialism with "worker" cannot make revisionism into socialism, just as adding socialism to chauvinism can only be social-chauvinism.

Opportunism's National Specificity

As Lenin wrote in 1910 in "Differences in the European Labor Movement," there were two "big trends that are departing from Marxism," revisionism and anarchism. "These departures cannot be attributed to accident, or to the mistakes of individuals or groups, or even to the influence of national characteristics and traditions, and so forth." He then laid out the basis of these departures, the rate, degree and dialectical process of capitalist development in different spheres of the economy, the influence of bourgeois ideology, the impact of the zigzags of bourgeois reactionary dual tactics, the twists and turns in the development of the revolutionary movement, and the class composition of the movement especially as it broadens out. The opportunism takes "nationally specific" forms due to nationally specific characteristics of a country's economic base and superstructure. This dialectics of general and particular is something neither the right nor "left" opportunists see. Some examples: RCP-type white chauvinism; CPML-type liberal chauvinism; "white blind spot" theories; American pragmatism in RCP's recent flip from "left" to right on the national question, from liquidationism to tailism; CP- and CPML-type entrenched faith in American constitutional democracy and its "advanced" capacity to resolve the national question through integration and other reforms; CPML's tailing their "own" bourgeoisie in conjunction with the Afro-American national and comprador bourgeoisie; various race theories exemplified by Line of March, dressed in pseudo-scientific melting-pot phrases of ethnology and urbanology; and the vulgarized "third-worldism" of the now-defunct August Twenty-ninth Movement and other narrow nationalists.

We have said that the central question demarcating the revolutionaries from the opportunists is how the national question is to be linked up to the general question of proletarian revolution in the era of imperialism. This central question also distinguishes the two incorrect trends from two different angles, in two different forms. Historically, the right trend on the national question has been tailist, tailing the opportunists' "own" bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation and the spontaneity of the mass national movement. They fight for partial demands in a reformist way, seeing every reform as an incremental step to socialism, divorcing the national question from preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The "left" trend on the national question has historically

been liquidationist, liquidating the revolutionary potential of the national liberation movement in general, liquidating the revolutionary role of the peasants and toiling masses of the oppressed nation and the dual character of the national bourgeoisie, and denouncing the spontaneous mass movement as contradictory to socialist revolution.

Overall, modern revisionism and Trotskyism are the mainstays of the right and "left" respectively, despite the flip-flops of each. The modern revisionists flip to a "left" form whenever they see fit to take an "ultra-revolutionary" posture but usually the form is right. Trotskyism is both right and "left" in form and in its total spinelessness; but insofar as it is "left" in form and flips to right from the "left," it is the mainstay of the "left" opportunist trend. Opportunism on the national question in the United States basically falls into one of these two trends, despite the different particular ideological features and theoretical justifications. Some examples: among the different race theories, some are right (CPUSA, CPSU, and Line of March) and some are "left" (Trotsky); among those who oppose the right of self-determination, some are right (CPUSA) and some "left" (RCP, PLP); as for chauvinism, some are right (CPUSA, CPML) and some "left" (RCP, presently flipping to the right again); and narrow nationalism, some are right (ATM) and some "left" (Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization).

The common line woven through both the right and "left" opportunism on the national question is their separation of the question from socialist revolution. This is why both are right in essence. They both belittle and negate the role of subjective factors of revolution, and substitute vulgar materialist theory of productive forces.

Understand Subjective Factors of Revolution

The ABC's of Marxism state that development of human society fundamentally derives from the basic social contradictions, between relations of production and productive forces, between superstructure and economic base. In class society, these basic social contradictions manifest as class contradictions and struggles. The productive forces and economic base are the "ultimate determining factors" and in general they play the principal role. But when the old relations of production obstruct the development of productive forces, the superstructure fetters the birth and growth of the new economic base, the relations of production and superstructure, through revolution, play the principal role.⁹⁹

In the United States, these two basic social contradictions have been antagonistic since just after the period of rising capitalism; in class relations, this is

manifested in the antagonism between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and between bourgeoisie and oppressed classes in the oppressed nations, with other class and national contradictions revolving around these two. These objective factors are the material conditions that have ripened and call for the dynamic role of the subjective factor, the role of force in history, to resolve the otherwise irresolvable contradiction through violent revolution to push society forward to socialism and communism.

The *concentrated expression* of this class struggle is the struggle for political state power, which is the *central question* of all revolutions, whereby the subjective factor in this revolutionary process is overall principal. Guided by advanced revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism, led by the vanguard proletarian party, the proletariat and its allies through armed seizure of state power establish the dictatorship of the proletariat; these ruptures in the superstructure (ideology and political systems are superstructural elements) make possible the changes in relations of production (for example, socialist ownership, distribution and relations among people) which in turn liberate productive forces — this is the *general law* of all revolutions. But the proletariat also shoulders the unique historical mission, to abolish all classes; its tasks do not end in establishing socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and go beyond liberating productive forces.

Subjective factors in general include idea (vs. matter), social consciousness (vs. social being), superstructure (vs. economic base), politics (vs. economics), theory (vs. practice), and conscious and organized movement (vs. spontaneous movement). Particularly for the subjective factors of revolution, revolutionary consciousness and organization are more or less the two basic and interrelated components. The science of Marxism-Leninism represents the most advanced proletarian consciousness, and the proletarian vanguard party of the new type is the most advanced proletarian organization. The questions of the role of theory and the party; the two general steps of winning over the vanguard of the proletariat ideologically and seeking forms of transition; the decisiveness of political and ideological line, and the need for organization to weld unity and transform line into material force; the strategy and tactics to accumulate revolutionary forces, strengthening the fighting capacity in consciousness and organization — all are questions of developing the subjective factors of revolution. It is this dialectics of revolution, the principal role of the subjective factors, that both right and "left" opportunists negate.



National Sentiments

Part of Subjective Factor

"The strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the nation, the proletariat and peasantry, participate in it. Whether the proletariat rallies to the banner of bourgeois nationalism depends on the degree of development of class antagonism, on the class consciousness and degree of organization of the proletariat. The class conscious proletariat has its own tried banner, and has no need to rally to the banner of the bourgeoisie."¹⁰⁰

The degree of class antagonism in the national movement is an aspect of the objective situation, which has overall ripened and calls for the lagging subjective factors of consciousness and organization in the national movement to unite with the proletarian movement to play its principal role in revolution. (While the objective factors for revolution and national liberation are in the overall sense ripe, this is not to negate the need, but on the contrary *to call for* concrete analysis of objective factors, the twists and turns of objective development and the impact of the subjective factors. This is necessary to apply strategy and tactics to concretely develop the subjective factors in different conditions of ebbs and flows, twists and turns.)

Both right and "left" opportunism on the national question are diametrically opposed to this. Seeing the national question from the viewpoint of nation-building and as a question of developing productive forces, they conclude that building small separate nation states would fetter development of productive forces, and hence counter the trend of historical development. Or they conclude that oppressed nations' mode of production is backward, hence they are politically backward and cannot possibly succeed in national liberation movements. Or they conclude that the imperialist oppressor nation, because of advanced productive forces, can absorb the national question through its civilizing role, assimilating and passing reforms.

They all oppose the right of self-determination, either outrightly or by calling it a "negative" demand. Seeing the basis of the national question merely as a question of material conditions, a vulgarization of Stalin's four criteria, instead of recognizing the class content of national oppression and resistance, they come out with different versions of the same "dissolution theory" and "race theory." They have vulgar materialist analysis that the mechanization of agriculture, the dispersal of peoples, and the "proletarianization" of Afro-Americans have transformed the national question. Being unable to pose political questions, they reduce the national movement to a fight against economic wage differentials, for abstract

formal equality for the consolation of the soul, or merely for a migration back to the Black Belt South to reconstitute the nation. Being unable to appreciate revolutionary national sentiments in relation to the subjective factors for revolution, they regard these sentiments as irrelevant to the basis of the national question, or worse still, treat them as roadblocks to class consciousness, obstacles to multi-national proletarian unity. They are blind to white chauvinism and narrow nationalism as long as there are appearances of militant fightback actions.

Hasten Universal and Immediate Preparation

To grasp tightly the subjective factors of revolution in national movements, the fundamental orientation must be the universal and immediate preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat for the cause of communism. This means always placing the national question in the larger framework of international socialist revolution, the worldwide struggle against hegemonism, imperialism and all reaction, and, for us, the framework of socialist revolution in the United States.

This preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat is "universal" in that it must run through all spheres of class and national struggle, political, ideological, economic, organizational, and cultural. It must run along all fronts of struggle and aim directly at the monopoly capitalists. While preparing in all spheres and fronts, we must also grasp the *principal* arena where class and national contradictions are the sharpest at a particular time, place and condition. The opportunists hit on one front but liquidate the others and pit one against another — for instance, pitting the fight against hegemonism with the fight against all reaction, hitting on economic struggle but ignoring the role of culture, severing the struggle against chauvinist ideology from political tasks.

This preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat is "immediate" because imperialism "has created all the objective conditions for the achievement of socialism. In Western Europe and the United States the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is to overthrow capitalist government and expropriation of the bourgeoisie is on the order of the day."¹⁰¹ As the Comintern pointed out, "The predominating influence of the so-called 'immediate demand' " feeds "the conversion of the maximum program into a figure of speech as an altogether 'final goal' . . . they are reasoning consciously or unconsciously from the assumption that the present epoch is one of relative stability for imperialist society."¹⁰² We must grasp that in the United States today it is no longer a question of consummating bourgeois democratic revolution or waiting for economic development of class polariza-

tion and antagonism. Every struggle around partial demands must be immediately a part of and directly linked to preparation for the basic program of socialism. Whether the Afro-American masses demand secession before the U.S. socialist revolution, or the socialist revolution succeeds first, for the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South the path to liberation is the dictatorship of the proletariat and other oppressed classes, and the struggles around partial demands of self-determination must be linked to preparation for socialist revolution.

Consolidation and consistency of Party activity in the national movement requires that the program of the oppressed nation point out the basic demand is democracy and right to self-determination (to which the day-to-day partial demands must be linked), and the final aim is socialism, and ultimately communism. Class struggle is the key link in the program, as Lenin emphasized: "In our draft program the inclusion of the 'peasant' demands hinges on the two highly circumscribed conditions. We make the legitimacy of the 'peasant demands' in a Social-Democratic program dependent firstly on the condition that they lead to the eradication of remnants of the serf-owning system, and secondly that they facilitate the free development of the class struggle in the countryside."¹⁰³ Although the time, place and conditions were different, the dialectics remain the same: we must apply these criteria to developing our program for the Afro-American nation, and the demands must stand for the day-to-day and the long-term interests of the Afro-American masses, being the concentrated and conscious expressions of their genuinely revolutionary aspirations. This is the only way the demands will sink deeply into the hearts and minds of the Afro-American masses, raise their consciousness, and lead the national movement. Secondly, these demands must facilitate the development of class and national struggle, pointing straight at the target of revolution, the U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie, demarcating ourselves from and isolating the social props, lackeys of imperialism, promoting the proletariat as the leaders and winning over and rallying the masses of oppressed.

Practical Questions to Answer

Program guides strategy because the function of strategy is to define how to achieve the aims in the program. The program itself also embodies strategy because otherwise "facilitating the development of class struggle" would be an empty phrase. Strategy

is composed of the objective plan for disposition of class forces and strategic leadership for its undeviating pursuit — it is the overall larger scientific plan that guides all tactics and links all spheres and fronts of struggle to preparation for the U.S. dictatorship of the multi-national working class.

Opportunists lack this larger strategy, eclectically lumping various mini-united fronts together and calling it a "united front against imperialism" strategy which is strategy-as-process; they liquidate the accumulation of revolutionary forces as preparation for dictatorship, fixating on the enforcement of one reform or another, fixating on the excitational value of this or that militant fightback. Looking for instant, palpable results, tailing spontaneous and even backward elements for popularity contests, they lose the larger orientation. Notorious examples are the RCP and CPML, as well as the "left" opportunist sects.

In our work on the day-to-day struggles in the national liberation movement, we must answer these questions: Are we building the undivided leadership of Marxism-Leninism and the Party in the national movement, in line and in organization? Are we developing the hegemonic leadership of the proletariat in the national movement, especially its vanguard, and multi-national proletarian unity? Are we rallying the support of the masses of non-proletarian toiling masses and petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed nationalities, fighting their vacillation and winning them over? Are we aiming the attack of the national movement straight at the target of U.S. imperialism? Are we exposing and isolating the social props of imperialism in fighting to win the masses over to the Party's leadership? Are we utilizing the contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism to make alliance with them, conditional on principle and maintaining initiative and independence, or at least trying to neutralize them? Based on this larger orientation, we must grasp the principal task and develop the specific tasks in each period of the national movement's development.

Opportunism has mutated to a more disguised form. Nowadays they even try to march under the banner of Marxism-Leninism and in words repudiate the cruder aspects of revisionism and Trotskyism. It is particularly important for us not to be fooled by their facade, to dissect the appearance and essence of their different political lines, drawing out the implications for strategy in carrying out our tasks of immediate and universal preparation for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the United States.

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