

the 532 of 2400 workers who attacked the work team. But a group of younger workers constituted themselves as the "real" Maoists, took up the attack on the old party committee and demanded open public discussion of the issues (The issues between the two groups, incidentally, were, according to Tannebaum, simply control of the dossiers on dissident workers and not the unfair work discipline of the old Party Secretary). Under pressure from a grouping that claimed the support of Chairman Mao, the Party Secretary agreed to the rebels' demands.

At this point, the "real" Maoists felt they had won the victory. By the end of December, the Workers Militia faithful to the old party leadership had all but collapsed, with most of its members joining the Maoists. But then, to use Tannebaum's words, "just as it seemed the rebel groups had things in hand, a wave of economism broke out over the city, engulfing Wharf No. 5 as well."

That is, after the Maoists felt that their fight with the capitalist roaders was over, a spontaneous movement began among the workers. This was not the first time that an internal party struggle in a stalinist regime sparked the working class to action. From this point on, the Maoists, who had had some popular support in their struggle with the old leadership, were consistently opposed by the workers.

As Tannebaum reports, "Some workers, when it came to criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line, were clear-headed and correct. But when they were offered bait in the form of increased wages, welfare benefits, bonuses, and so forth, which touched on individual interests over those of the collective, they did not stop to think whether there was an economic basis for these or not. ... Within two weeks over sixteen different organizations sprang up, seriously splitting the unity of the working class and bringing about a state of anarchy."

In other words, when the Maoists split the party in an attempt to take the apparatus away from the old leadership, that's just principled politics; when the working class begins to organize itself to fight for its economic demands, that's anarchy and economism.

The charge that the workers put individual interest over collective interest is belied by the solidarity which Tannebaum's own article attests to during the "economist" strikes. As for the charge that the economy could not afford such material benefits, the same Peking Review of January 1 which carries article attacking economism on the part of Shanghai workers also boasts of China's first nuclear explosion. Whether China's economic base should support material benefits for workers or nuclear weapons for the Chinese state is a question that does not seem to be discussed much among Maoists.

## SCAB ON THE PEOPLE

The rest of Tannebaum's article describes the attempts of the Rebel Group to break the dock strike, with the aid of the Red Guards sent down from Shanghai and other universities to "learn from the people". According to Tannebaum the last holdouts were among the lowest-paid categories of workers - not exactly a social stratum in which you would expect to find the parasites and landowners of the old order that Peking usually holds responsible for economism.

According to Tannebaum, the workers were finally won over by friendly persuasion. The Peking Review of January 20 tells a slightly different story. One of the ten points of the rebel groups is "Those who oppose Chairman Mao, Vice Chairman Lin Piao, and the Party Central Committee's cultural revolution group, and those who undermine the great cultural revolution or sabotage production shall be immediately arrested by the Public Security Bureau in accordance with the law." (Oh yes, I forgot to mention that the other sources of support for the "Red Rebels" besides the students were the police and the army.)

The Maoist revolution in China put in power not the working class but the cadre of the army and the party. Its class goal (which may or may not have been the conscious aim of the individual party member) was the development of the industrial and military power of the Chinese state. This goal was incompatible with the liberation of the working class, since, as Tannebaum points out in his article, the economic base for that does not exist in China isolated from the rest of the world economy.

The liberation of the working class can only come through the struggle of the working class itself - and its goal cannot be the building of a "strong China" but only a world revolution, that alone can provide the material basis for a non-exploitative society. From the point of view of the working class, the nationalist aims of the Chinese bureaucracy are, like all nationalist solutions, fundamentally reactionary.

# PL on Cuba Ernest Haberkern

"Notice first the fact that the struggle for socialism, far from being a mass struggle, is understood as a struggle by a leadership that mobilized it only in order to win. From this conception of the struggle naturally flows the conclusion that socialism is equivalent to structural change-- a state-controlled economy..."

"If socialism is merely, or even mainly, structural change, then we have no need of the concept of class struggle or class dictatorship. The structure is above classes; there is an un-class-differentiated 'people,' and the structure can serve it and is controlled by it to the extent the leaders struggle for national economic independence."

The lines above could have been written by a Trotskyist in the thirties, criticizing the "socialism in one country" line of Joseph Stalin. The whole concept of a "national socialism," in which the economic growth of the state-planned economy was the equivalent of socialism, was the distinguishing feature of Stalin's brand of socialism.

It was around this line that Stalin organized those elements in the Soviet bureaucracy who wished to pull free of the complications and risks of the European and world revolutions. For these people, the growth of Soviet industry (and the corresponding increase in the bureaucratic posts) was the measure of Socialism's victory. What is more, this growth, taking place as it did in the context of a competitive world economy, required that the working class give up those unruly habits of self-rule and organization acquired during the period of the October revolution.

It was Stalin whose name, more than any others, was connected with this collectivist bureaucracy and its nationalistic ambitions. That is why it is so surprising that the quote above comes not from a Trotskyist publication of the thirties, but from Progressive Labor, the organ of the Maoist party that has been most prominent in the attempt to resurrect Stalin as a political thinker.

Progressive Labor is not referring, of course, to the Russia of Stalin's day, nor to present-day China. They are talking about Castro's Cuba - which has chosen the wrong side in the Sino-Soviet dispute. The charges they make against Cuba, however, raise questions that go beyond this most recent split in the stalinist bloc.

PL argues: 1) that the Cuban regime is elitist, and sees the workers and the masses in general as simply raw material to be mobilized by the elite - so that it, the elite, can take power and introduce certain necessary reforms; 2) that Castro nationalized property in order to free Cuba from foreign domination, without preparing the workers to control and run the state-owned industry; and 3) that the party's "program" for the workers was work hard and produce.

It is hard to see how anyone can continue to call himself a Maoist and make those charges against Castro. What does the Chinese attack on "economism" mean, if not "keep quiet, work hard, and produce"?

International Socialists have argued from the beginning that the resistance of the Chinese working class to the "Cultural Revolution" was not just a demand for better wages and working conditions (although we support such elementary demands) but rather the first attempt in forty years at political intervention on the part of the working class. The problem for Maoists is this:

You say that the Chinese working class and peasantry are infected with economism, and have not yet reached the stage of political consciousness that will allow them to rule directly. If the Chinese masses are not yet ready to rule, then who has been running China for the last twenty years?

The usual defense of the cultural revolution is that, after twenty years in power, old militants like Liu Shao Chi, who had been disciplined and trained for rule by the People's Liberation Army struggle, had become soft. But the working class had not been involved in that struggle of the PLA against the Japanese, and played no role in the victorious fight of the PLA. Neither did the bulk of the peasantry, who remained outside the areas under the control of the Red Army until quite late.

If, as Jake Rosen's article in PL argues, the overthrow of capitalism without the conscious participation of the masses in the struggle can only lead to the installation of a new ruling class, what happened in China? It is true that the Chinese masses enthusiastically supported Mao's army, but then the Cuban masses enthusiastically supported Castro, too. The Maoists claim that Mao is now trying to arouse the

Chinese masses to conscious political struggle for socialism. If we are to take PL's criticism of Cuba seriously, then Mao is twenty years too late.

The Rosen article is even more interesting for what it leaves out than for what it says explicitly. Rosen at a number of points emphasizes the necessity of conscious participation of the workers. He repudiates the Bonapartist mobilization of the masses from above and demonstrates that it is no substitute for political action and struggle by the masses themselves. Nowhere, however, does he indicate how this independent action is in fact to take place. Also left unclear is what forms this struggle can take.

The demand that is not made in the article, and cannot be made by PL or any other Maoist tendency, is the demand for complete political freedom of agitation and organization for any grouping that does not resort to armed violence as a means of "winning over the masses. Without this completely free struggle of political factions, all rhetoric about letting the people decide remains on the level of a campaign speech by demagogic

One of the techniques favored by the Castro dictatorship against its internal critics is the witch hunt against dissidents. Regardless of the servility of its critics (and the confession of Annibal Escalante, the most recent internal opponent of Castro, was a masterpiece in this respect), no toleration of opposition is possible.

Escalante and his comrades were given sentences of up to fifteen years for distributing reprints of Soviet criticism of Castro's economic plans. Similar penalties were handed out against pro-Chinese elements in the army a few years back. The first victim of this type of attack in Cuba were July 26 militants in the factories who opposed Fidel's handing over of the trade unions to CP hacks (the CP's record against Batista was not outstanding, but it could be counted on to remain loyal to Castro in his attempt to deprive the unions of any independent power).

None of this is raised in the Rosen article. To attack the right of the monolithic party to rule without criticism would not only require an attack on Mao's methods but would also call into question PL's conception of itself.

It was PL that introduced the tactic of physical intimidation into the New Left a few years back. It was they who began the practice of attacking their opponents as counterrevolutionaries. That they themselves have been victims of such attacks in the recent past has not led them yet to any public repudiation of these methods.

All such tactics are justified by the right of the Maoist party to speak for the workers and to crush all criticism. Rosen's attack on Castro is reduced, finally, to nothing more than a criticism of bad leaders. If only the Cuban party were in the hands of a Mao, who was directing the witch hunt against the real counterrevolutionaries, everything would be all right.

This is what's wrong with the whole Maoist approach. Mao was driven into opposition to the Russians, not out of principle, but out of a nationalist conflict. As long as the Chinese believed that the Russians would, or could be pressured into, financing their attempt at rapid industrialization, they were the most outspoken champions of the Russians' hegemony on the block (just as they were and continue to be the defenders of the stalinist concept of the party).

In the general revolt against stalinist rule in 1956, the Chinese found themselves on the other side of the barricades from the Hungarian and Polish workers. They supported those whom they now call the "new Czars." It was only when their national ambitions came up against the imperialist arrogance of Stalin's heirs that they demagogically switched sides.

In this, they are no different from the "national stalinists" of Eastern Europe. The Kadars, Gomulkas, Dubceks and Titos also did not hesitate when Stalin mobilized them against the working class, but were capable of all kinds of demagogic appeals to those same workers when it was a question of preserving their own local rule against Russian imperialism.

The internal disputes of these "new Czars" are of interest to revolutionary socialists for the same reason that the similar conflicts within the capitalist class engage our attention. Internal dissension in the ruling classes have an important tactical significance. They encourage the working class to seize the initiative. If Mao's split with the Russians engenders the kind of questioning of stalinist methods that Rosen's article represents among Western radicals, it will have served some useful purpose.