

"SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM"

This optimism, which belied any **serious** assertion that there had been a thorough-going bourgeois counter-revolution in the USSR, did not survive the "non-proliferation" treaty or the border clash.

The label "social-imperialist" was used for the first time by Premier Chou En-lai to describe the USSR immediately after the Warsaw Pact intervention into Czechoslovakia in 1968. Yet this move by the USSR to prevent a bourgeois restoration in Czechoslovakia, no matter that it was done by a revisionist bureaucracy, was no different in essence than the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956—a move that had been supported at the time by the Chinese leaders.

This new class characterization of the Soviet Union by the Chinese CP, arrived at not because of any fundamental change that had taken place in the USSR but because of the increasingly hostile relations between these two great socialist countries, opened the door to a U.S.-China rapprochement. If the Soviet Union were now "social-imperialist," then the question of an alliance with one imperialist against the other was only a matter of tactics, not principle. And if the Soviet Union were "fascist," a term that began to appear in the Chinese press, then it might even be **preferable** to have an alliance with U.S. imperialism!

Yet even this logic did not cushion the shock for many loyal followers of China's line when, in the early summer of 1971, it was announced that Nixon had been invited to China. For China had attracted behind its banners many who wanted the most to fight U.S. imperialism and who hoped that a new international alliance of revolutionaries could be forged. This was the height of the war in Indochina, and U.S. imperialism was passionately hated around the world. Every day the living images were there to see: children burned with napalm and phosphorus; villages razed to the ground; bomb craters stretching to the horizon.

Nixon personified U.S. imperialism, and the question on every politically conscious person's mind was: Why did China do it?

Workers World Party had been prepared for this painful turn of events much earlier. At the 1966 Labor Day Conference of the Party in New York City, Comrade Sam Marcy had raised the possibility: "If the ideological struggle between the Chinese party and the Soviet revisionists deepens and becomes a struggle between states, then it is possible that People's China may make a pact with the U.S. against the USSR."

Then, as in 1971, our party did not oppose the right of a socialist country to conclude a pact or treaty with an imperialist nation. But there was more involved in the Nixon visit than a mere "normalization of relations" between the two states. What it signified was a broad agreement between the U.S. and People's China—undertaken at a time when U.S. imperialism was intensifying its bombing against the Vietnamese people. As we said on July 30, 1971, "The irresistible conclusion is that the Nixon invitation is a setback to the revolutionary movement."

But in analyzing why China did it, Comrade Sam Marcy wrote that it could not "be explained solely as a response to Soviet revisionist policy." Comparing this turn to that made by the Soviet party in the twenties, after the failure of important revolutionary struggles in Europe, he pointed out that the crushing defeat to the progressive forces in Indonesia in 1965, plus the inability of the Chinese party to win to its side in the struggle against Soviet revisionism any large and influential communist parties, were key factors in China's retreat to a "national" brand of socialism—where it perceived its own national interests in a way that subordinated the interests of the international revolutionary movement.

THE FALL OF LIN PIAO

The tragic end of Lin Piao, former Defense Minister and successor to Mao according to the Chinese Constitution, and the disappearance of his associates marked the end of an entire stage of the Chinese Revolution. In two wide-ranging articles in this paper on "The Cultural Revolution and the Fall of Lin Piao," Sam Marcy reviewed the lessons derived by Marxists from earlier great social revolutions. He showed how applicable were the writings of Engels on this subject to the course of events in China.

Speaking of modern bourgeois revolutions, Engels had noted that "after the first great success," the victorious class had become divided. "One half was pleased with what had been gained, the other wanted to go still further, and put forward new demands." But the radicals had been defeated in this. Nevertheless, said Engels, "the achievements of the first victory were only safeguarded by the second victory of the more radical party; this having been attained . . . the radicals and their achievements vanished once more from the stage."

This was the achievement of the Cultural Revolution, said Marcy, and of Lin Piao and the other "radicals" in China. "Their par-