

proletariat. It was prohibited from going beyond the bounds of bourgeois property relations and this weakened the revolutionary elan of the workers as well as the peasants, to whom possession of the land and factories was the only kind of democracy that had any real meaning. Where the land and the factories **were** taken by the workers, as for instance in China, Vietnam, and Cuba, it ultimately assured the success of the socialist revolution.

It is necessary to understand these antecedent developments in order to properly analyze the phenomenon of so-called Eurocommunism.

The strategically defensive outlook imposed upon the proletariat by the Stalin leadership prevailed not only in the years immediately preceding the Second World War but throughout the entire period of the war, and was in no way essentially modified at the end of the war when the French and Italian CPs were both in a position to utilize their struggle against fascism with arms in hand to also put an end to the bourgeois system of capitalist exploitation.

The partisans in Italy and their counterparts in France were armed and in a position to exercise that kind of revolutionary assault which, under the circumstances existing at the end of the Second World War, were most favorable to the revolutionary seizure of power. But the parties were not oriented in that direction at all. The class collaboration which prevailed in the late 1930s in France through the Popular Front, as well as in Spain, continued right down into the 1960s and 1970s.

CLASS COLLABORATION LONG PREDATES EUROCOMMUNISM

It is necessary to bear this in mind so that there will be no confusion over what is new in the phenomenon of Eurocommunism. It is not the element of class collaboration. It is not the element of reformism and class conciliation. Those were present over an extended and tortuous period that began with the destruction of the German Communist Party and the triumph of Hitlerism.

It is not a matter of assessing blame, it's a matter of attempting to see the evolution of European working class politics in true historical perspective. Eurocommunism is the logical culmination of a long historical process which after a period of time became inevitable.

It should be understood that Eurocommunism is not used to mean a regional federation or grouping of West European parties. None of the CP leaders embracing Eurocommunism—Carrillo of Spain,

Berlinguer of Italy, or Marchais of France—has expressed any such thought.

Nor is there any validity to the bourgeois propaganda that the struggle of the West European CPs is in reality a struggle for autonomy and independence from the domination and hegemony of the Soviet leaders. History has long ago passed this by.

There was once a time when a revolutionary break from the dominant leadership and from subservience to Soviet foreign policy would have been highly progressive and thoroughly revolutionary and in the deepest interest not only of the European workers but the revolutionary movement as a whole. But it is a sheer fabrication and a deception of the masses to claim that autonomy and independence is the issue now.

Palmiro Togliatti, the earlier leader of the PCI, introduced the concept of polycentrism (the idea of many different centers of Communist leadership) almost immediately after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956. The French and Italian CPs, and others as well, have long been "free," that is, free to conduct the affairs of the party in the spirit of reformism and class conciliation and to only tangentially support Soviet positions—such as detente, which the French and Italian bourgeoisies support.

Alfredo Reichlin, the editor-in-chief of L'Unita, declared in an editorial in the Italian Communist daily on July 10, 1976 that Eurocommunism is "the original development of thought and action in the Communist parties of Western Europe."

But there is nothing original about the rejection of the revolutionary class struggle, the renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, collaborating and covering up for the bourgeoisie. There is absolutely nothing new or original in this, nothing that the social democrats of an earlier era did not promote and practice. Nor is it specifically a European phenomenon. This phenomenon is well established in such faraway places as Japan, for instance, which also claims originality and holds to substantially the same position as do the French, Italian, and Spanish CPs.

What then is new about the phenomenon of Eurocommunism?

There is, of course, an aspect of Eurocommunism which is new and which poses the most serious threat to the workers in the West European countries. It is this: it is the transformation of the CPs from social reformist parties into social chauvinist parties with an anti-Soviet orientation. This is what is new. This is what is truly alarming.