

about Soviet "imperialism" made its way around the world as a serious thrust by the Chinese leadership, the movement people here, and the younger ones in particular, were so enthusiastic about the Cultural Revolution they found it exceedingly difficult to criticize China for its failure to first of all initiate a discussion in China itself, a failure compounded by thrusting its new position on an unwary world movement of supporters of the Chinese Revolution.

Our party wholeheartedly supported the Cultural Revolution and considers its achievements of singular significance, but not for one moment did we go along with what amounted to a complete break with Marxist methodology so far as the question of the USSR is concerned.

Evaluating the USSR in terms of a hostile social formation, as the Chinese leaders have done, amounts to a crossing of the Rubicon on a fundamental class issue.

Disastrous effects on the movement

Of course, the leaders of a workers' state may quickly change their positions on any number of fundamental questions and, by virtue of the fact that they hold state power, be able to survive it (with what damage at home, only the future can tell). But it is not at all easy for working-class movements who do not hold state power to be confronted, the way the Chinese leadership has confronted its followers abroad, with Angola—and earlier Chile, Bangladesh, etc. For the movement to hold on to positions in glaring contradiction to firm beliefs, such as in Angola, means to convert the movement into an utterly unthinking, dogmatic, and insensitive group of followers who in times of great social crisis can only become a terrible drag on the advanced elements of the working-class movement.

What else can one think after reading William Hinton's piece in the May 5 Guardian? It amounts to a call to become recruiting sergeants for the U.S. imperialist war machine against the Soviet Union. How can any communist, how can anybody with any real class consciousness, feel that this can be a correct policy for a workers' movement to follow, here or anywhere?

To impose such a strategy upon the working-class movement is an act of folly. And, even worse, it is suicidal for those in the movement who would pursue such a course.

The theoretical exponents of the theory of capitalist restoration

and social imperialism have suffered two major blows through their false generalization. Angola, of course, is the most glaring and in a way the acid test so far as support for the struggle of oppressed people goes. The other blow to their theory is, however, equally damaging from an entirely different perspective.

The capitalist economic cycle and the USSR

The last two years of the deepest and profoundest world capitalist economic crisis since the crash in 1929 have disproved the theory of capitalist restoration in the USSR. Such a deep-seated and profound economic crisis could not but be equally pervasive in the USSR if it were indeed a capitalist state, if indeed a new bourgeoisie or, as Professor Charles Bettelheim calls it a "state bourgeoisie," had taken over.

For whatever nomenclature is applied to it, the implication of such a theory is that the Soviet economy has been subjected to the same driving forces which motivate the capitalist system and which result in such devastating economic crises, unemployment, and ultimately imperialist wars.

Now, all of us must retain objectivity in observing the evolution of the USSR and not close our eyes to any possible transformation of the social system from a workers' state with a planned economy and ownership of the means of production by the workers into a capitalist state.

But if these two fundamental elements of a workers' state, along with the monopoly of foreign trade, were in reality of merely technical significance, and a market economy had actually developed to the extent where it would nullify what Engels called the criteria for the bare beginnings of a workers' state, then we should have the kind of unemployment in the USSR which no government could conceivably hide. Yet this is precisely what has *not* happened in these two crucial years of economic crisis in the imperialist world.

It is true that there is a certain amount of "unemployment," which some pro-Chinese theoreticians claim to be the indubitable proof that capitalism has, in fact, been restored. But this is the kind of unforgivable exaggeration which no serious capitalist economist, however full of hatred for the Soviet Union, has yet been able to make. The "unemployment" that exists in the USSR results from technological changeovers and the inefficiency of