

AMERICAN MAOISTS SEE "FASCIST" TAKE-OVER IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A curious editorial appeared in the June issue of Progressive Labor, organ of the American Maoists, the Progressive Labor party. Titled "Fascism Set in Eastern Europe," it begins with the announcement: "Current turmoil in Poland and Czechoslovakia has, essentially, two aspects. The first is that the political parties in power are consolidating their fascist control."

The Maoist theoreticians would have us believe that a "fascist" regime is consolidating its power in Czechoslovakia -- by increasing political democracy. Truly this is something unique in history.

Fascism is a governmental system adopted by capitalist countries in periods of extreme crisis. Its hallmark is the mobilization of the petty-bourgeoisie around a highly demagogic platform, the formation of extraparliamentary action squads and the smashing of all independent organizations of the working class. The combination of demagoguery, mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie, and destruction of the labor movement distinguishes it from more common forms of authoritarian rule in capitalist countries such as army dictatorship.

In Czechoslovakia capitalism was overthrown in 1948, as it was in the other countries of Eastern Europe occupied by the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

The capitalists were expropriated, the commanding heights of industry were nationalized, and a planned economy was established. These measures made these countries workers states. By the same token, Czechoslovakia, the other East European countries and the Soviet Union are still workers states.

In face of this reality, the Progressive Labor editorial asserts that "Naturally, the U.S. is happy to see the rapid development of capitalism in Eastern Europe."

If PL is right, then at some point between the late forties and today capitalism was restored in Eastern Europe. And by what a remarkable counterrevolution! This qualitative change in economic and social relations was accomplished without any bloodshed, without turning the means of production over to private owners, without the ousted capitalist class being reinstated, and -- even more peculiar, if that is possible -- without being noticed by the workers of Eastern Europe, or by their bureaucratic rulers, or by U.S. imperialism, or in fact by anyone except the theoreticians of PL. Even they appear to have come out of the chloroform only recently.

How do they explain the struggle which the students are putting up for socialist democracy in Warsaw and Prague? Very simply: "The students in Eastern Europe are being used by the reactionary ruling cliques to move to the right and unite with U.S. imperialism."

From this, it would have to be concluded that the students are fascist dupes if not fascists themselves! Still worse, through the use of democratic slogans, they are being mobilized by a fascist sector of a capitalist state to smash a democratic sector! A fascist coup is taking place...Or, if the regime was already fascist, then it is putting on a democratic farce to please the democracy-loving masters of U.S. imperialism, who, it is well known, will make an alliance with no country that does not put up a democratic front.

PL does not voice its slander against the students of Warsaw and Prague quite that brazenly, but the editors come close: "Action by youths, in and of themselves [sic], is not necessarily progressive....In the meantime, students in Poland, who singled out John Kennedy as their favorite statesman, can hardly be considered in the vanguard of anything but reaction." (What about students like Kuron and Modzelewsky who are not

admirers of John Kennedy and who have been imprisoned for advocating proletarian democracy and the rooting out of all vestiges of the cult of Stalin?)

After this hardly auspicious beginning, the Maoists come to the "second aspect" of the turmoil in Eastern Europe: "A second aspect is the breakup of the revisionist camp....The latest conference in Budapest was a farce."

"Revisionism," refers to currents within the world Marxist movement that advocate revising the fundamental ideas of Marx, or in practice substitute concepts that contradict Marx's fundamental teachings. The complete theoretical bankruptcy of the Maoists could hardly be better demonstrated than by their referring to "fascists" as "revisionists"; for they thus include "fascists" in the working-class movement.

Progressive Labor even spells it out: "National capitalists, aided by imperialism, will make a persistent effort to come back. Their chief route, today, has been through the communist party." They also refer to "the imperialists in Moscow."

Since the Maoists hold that fascism is so much worse than ordinary imperialism that it is justifiable to support a "democratic" imperialist country against a fascist imperialist country, we must assume they would support American imperialism in an attack on the workers states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In brief, the logic of their theory would permit them to become allies of U.S. imperialism if the Pentagon were to open an assault on their factional opponents in Moscow and agree to a deal with Peking. Such are the absurdities that flow from Mao's thought.