

**THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION
AND
KHRUSHCHOV'S REVISIONISM**

COMMENT ON THE OPEN LETTER OF THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU (VIII)

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by the Editorial Departments of *Renmin Ribao*
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无产階級革命和赫魯曉夫修正主义
八評苏共中央的公开信

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THE present article will discuss the familiar question of "peaceful transition". It has become familiar and has attracted everybody's attention because Khrushchov raised it at the 20th Congress of the CPSU and rounded it into a complete system in the form of a programme at the 22nd Congress, where he pitted his revisionist views against the Marxist-Leninist views. The Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU of July 14, 1963 once again struck up this old tune.

In the history of the international communist movement the betrayal of Marxism and of the proletariat by the revisionists has always manifested itself most sharply in their opposition to violent revolution and to the dictatorship of the proletariat and in their advocacy of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. This is likewise the case with Khrushchov's revisionism. On this question, Khrushchov is a disciple of Browder and Tito as well as of Bernstein and Kautsky.

Since the days of World War II, we have witnessed the emergence of Browderite revisionism, Titoite revisionism and the theory of structural reform. These varieties of revisionism are local phenomena in the international communist movement. But Khrushchov's revisionism, which has emerged and gained ascendancy in the leadership of the CPSU, constitutes a major question of overall significance for the international communist movement with a vital bearing on the success or failure of the entire revolutionary cause of the international proletariat.

For this reason, in the present article we are replying to the revisionists in more explicit terms than before.

A DISCIPLE OF BERNSTEIN AND KAUTSKY

Beginning with the 20th Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchov put forward the road of "peaceful transition", i.e., "transition to socialism by the parliamentary road",¹ which

¹N. S. Khrushchov, "Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 20th Party Congress", *The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Russian ed., Moscow, 1956, p. 39.

is diametrically opposed to the road of the October Revolution.

Let us examine the "parliamentary road" peddled by Khrushchov and his like.

Khrushchov holds that the proletariat can win a stable majority in parliament under the bourgeois dictatorship and under bourgeois electoral laws. He says that in the capitalist countries

. . . the working class, by rallying around itself the toiling peasantry, the intelligentsia, all patriotic forces, and resolutely repulsing the opportunist elements who are incapable of giving up the policy of compromise with the capitalists and landlords, is in a position to defeat the reactionary forces opposed to the popular interest, to capture a stable majority in parliament. . . .¹

Khrushchov maintains that if the proletariat can win a majority in parliament, this in itself will amount to the seizure of state power and the smashing of the bour-

¹ N. S. Khrushchov, *Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 20th Party Congress*, FLPH, Moscow, 1956, p. 45.

geois state machinery. He says that, for the working class,

. . . to win a majority in parliament and transform it into an organ of the people's power, given a powerful revolutionary movement in the country, means smashing the military-bureaucratic machine of the bourgeoisie and setting up a new, proletarian people's state in parliamentary form.¹

Khrushchov holds that if the proletariat can win a stable majority in parliament, this in itself will enable it to realize the socialist transformation of society. He says that the winning of a stable parliamentary majority "could create for the working class of a number of capitalist and former colonial countries the conditions needed to secure fundamental social changes".² Also,

. . . the present situation offers the working class in a number of capitalist coun-

¹ N. S. Khrushchov, "For New Victories for the World Communist Movement", *World Marxist Review*, Jan. 1961.

² N. S. Khrushchov, *Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 20th Party Congress*, FLPH, Moscow, 1956, p. 46.

tries a real opportunity to unite the overwhelming majority of the people under its leadership and to secure the transfer of the basic means of production into the hands of the people.¹

The Programme of the CPSU maintains that "the working class of many countries can, even before capitalism is overthrown, compel the bourgeoisie to carry out measures that transcend ordinary reforms".² The Programme even states that under the bourgeois dictatorship it is possible for a situation to emerge in certain countries, in which "it will be preferable for the bourgeoisie . . . to agree to the basic means of production being purchased from it".³

✓ The stuff Khrushchov is touting is nothing original but is simply a reproduction of the revisionism of the Second International, a revival of Bernsteinism and Kautskyism.

- The main distinguishing marks of Bernstein's betrayal of Marxism were his advo-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

² "Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union", *The Road to Communism*, FLPH, Moscow, 1961, p. 482.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

cacy of the legal parliamentary road and his opposition to violent revolution, the smashing of the old state machinery and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Bernstein held that capitalism could "grow into socialism" peacefully. He said that the political system of modern bourgeois society "should not be destroyed but should only be further developed",¹ and that "we are now bringing about by voting, demonstrations and similar means of pressure reforms which would have required bloody revolution a hundred years ago".²

He held that the legal parliamentary road was the only way to bring about socialism. He said that if the working class has "universal and equal suffrage, the social principle which is the basic condition for emancipation is attained".³

He asserted that "the day will come when it [the working class] will have become numerically so strong and will be so important

¹ E. Bernstein, *The Prerequisites for Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democratic Party*, German ed., Berlin, 1923, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³ E. Bernstein, *What Is Socialism?* German ed., Berlin, 1922, p. 28.

for the whole of society that so to speak the palace of the rulers will no longer be able to withstand its pressure and will collapse semi-spontaneously”.¹

Lenin said:

The Bernsteinians accepted and accept Marxism *minus* its directly revolutionary aspect. They do not regard the parliamentary struggle as one of the weapons particularly suitable for definite historical periods, but as the main and almost the sole form of struggle making “force”, “seizure”, “dictatorship”, unnecessary. (“The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers’ Party”, *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, Vol. 10, p. 249.)

Herr Kautsky was a fitting successor to Bernstein. Like Bernstein, he actively publicized the parliamentary road and opposed violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. He said that under the bourgeois democratic system there is “no more room for armed struggle for the settle-

¹ E. Bernstein, *The Political Mass Strike and the Political Situation of the Social-Democratic Party in Germany*, German ed., Berlin, 1905, p. 37.

ment of class conflicts”¹ and that “it would be ridiculous...to preach a violent political overthrow”.² He attacked Lenin and the Bolshevik Party by comparing them to “an impatient midwife who uses violence to make a pregnant woman give birth in the fifth month instead of the ninth.”³

Kautsky was hopelessly afflicted with parliamentary cretinism. He made the well-known statement, “The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government.”⁴

He also said:

The parliamentary republic — with a monarchy at the top on the English model, or without — is to my mind the base out of which proletarian dictatorship and socialist society grow. This republic is the

¹ K. Kautsky, *The Materialist Interpretation of History*, German ed., Berlin, 1927, pp. 431-32.

² K. Kautsky, *Social Democracy Versus Communism*, Rand School Press, New York, 1946, p. 117.

³ K. Kautsky, *The Proletarian Revolution and Its Programme*, German ed., Berlin, 1922, p. 90.

⁴ K. Kautsky, “New Tactics”, *Neue Zeit*, No. 46, 1912.

“state of the future” toward which we must strive.¹

Lenin severely criticized these absurd statements of Kautsky's.

In denouncing Kautsky, Lenin declared:

Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery*, and that it should win power afterwards. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy; it is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution. (“Greetings to the Italian, French and German Communists”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 30, p. 40.)

Lenin made the pointed comment that Kautsky's parliamentary road “is nothing but the purest and the most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words”. (“The State and Revolution”, *Selected Works*, FLPH,

¹ K. Kautsky's argument quoted by G. K. Soselia, *Revisionism and the Marxist Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Russian ed., Moscow, 1960, p. 46.

Moscow, 1952, Vol. 2, Part 1, p. 323.) He said:

By so "interpreting" the concept "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky beat the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. ("The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. 2, Part 2, pp. 47-48.)

Here, we have quoted Khrushchov as well as Bernstein and Kautsky and Lenin's criticism of these two worthies at some length in order to show that Khrushchov's revisionism is modern Bernsteinism and Kautskyism, pure and simple. As with Bernstein and Kautsky, Khrushchov's betrayal of Marxism is most sharply manifested in his opposition to revolutionary violence, in what he does "to expunge revolutionary violence". In this respect, Kautsky and Bernstein have now clearly lost their title to Khrushchov who has set a new world record. Khrushchov, the worthy disciple of Bernstein and Kautsky, has excelled his masters.

VIOLENT REVOLUTION IS A UNIVERSAL LAW OF PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The entire history of the working-class movement tells us that the acknowledgement or non-acknowledgement of violent revolution as a universal law of proletarian revolution, of the necessity of smashing the old state machine, and of the necessity of replacing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat has always been the watershed between Marxism and all brands of opportunism and revisionism, between proletarian revolutionaries and all renegades from the proletariat.

According to the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism, the key question in every revolution is that of state power. And the key question in the proletarian revolution is that of the seizure of state power and the smashing of the bourgeois state machine by violence, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the replacement of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state.

Marxism has always proclaimed the inevitability of violent revolution. It points out that violent revolution is the mid-

wife to socialist society, the only road to the replacement of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat, and a universal law of proletarian revolution.

Marxism teaches us that the state itself is a form of violence. The main components of the state machine are the army and the police. History shows that all ruling classes depend upon violence to maintain their rule.

The proletariat would, of course, prefer to gain power by peaceful means. But abundant historical evidence indicates that the reactionary classes never give up power voluntarily and that they are always the first to use violence to repress the revolutionary mass movement and to provoke civil war, thus placing armed struggle on the agenda.

Lenin has spoken of "civil war, without which not a single great revolution in history has yet been able to get along, and without which not a single serious Marxist has conceived of the transition from capitalism to socialism". ("Prophetic Words", *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Moscow, Vol. 27, p. 457.)

The great revolutions in history referred to by Lenin include the bourgeois revolution. The bourgeois revolution is one in which one exploiting class overthrows another, and yet it cannot be made without a civil war. Still more is this the case with the proletarian revolution, which is a revolution to abolish all exploiting classes and systems.

Regarding the fact that violent revolution is a universal law of proletarian revolution, Lenin repeatedly pointed out that “between capitalism and socialism there lies a long period of ‘birth pains’ — that violence is always the midwife of the old society” (“Those Who Are Terrified by the Collapse of the Old and Those Who Fight for the New”, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian ed., Vol. 26, p. 362), that the bourgeois state “cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of ‘withering away,’ but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution”, and that “the necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of *all* the teachings of Marx and Engels”. (“The State and Revolution”,