



**NOTTINGHAM  
COMMUNIST GROUP**



**RED  
STAR**



**A MARXIST-LENINIST JOURNAL**

**50p**

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**JANUARY 1981**

# EDITORIAL

The trial of the "Gang of Four" recently staged in Peking is one of the greatest, farcical show trials in history. What was really on trial was not four individuals but the existence of socialism in China, an existence which has been under serious attack since the counter-revolution of 1976. The reactionaries in Peking are throwing every slander, lie and vile innuendo at the Four in a desperate attempt to create confusion and mislead as to the key political issues of the trial. For well over two years now they have been desperately thrashing around looking for some concrete evidence against the Four, but since they are supposed to be looking for evidence to prove that the Four are fascists it is not surprising that they have never come up with any.

Peking Review No. 2, 12th. January has a fairly long article on the trial of Chiang Ching during which, curiously enough, she is hardly mentioned. The main content of the article is that the Four were instrumental in planning an armed revolt in Shanghai. As to why they did this and whom it was supposed to be against - well, that isn't mentioned either. In fact it's a pretty crappy article but perhaps the revisionists think they've got the world so hoodwinked that any half-baked nonsense will do. Sadly, in some cases this is right. There are too many people calling themselves Marxist-Leninists who became so accustomed to using socialist China as a crutch to hold up their own ailing forms that they no longer realise the crutch has gone.

Now their heads are no longer up in the air but are stuck up Deng's backside - no wonder they aren't seeing too clearly! In this way these people, who really do think that they are of a

revolutionary inclination, are lagging behind not only the masses but the international bourgeoisie as well, for the latter have rumbled what has happened in China well enough. The Western media have been united in their attack on the Four. They haven't got any concrete evidence either but so what; don't bother too much about little concrete details like that. No, for them, and for the ruling class interests they represent, this is a great opportunity to slander and vilify socialism. They are putting out a loud and clear message to the millions of people throughout the world now under the heel of a decaying social system, that there can never be an alternative to this system.

Ever since the NCG broke with the Chinese revisionists, we have taken every opportunity to oppose them and those who support them. For a time we were the only ML group in this country who took that position, but now this situation is changing and we have come into contact with other groups and individuals who also hold our position. Because of this we have been able, in conjunction with other organisations and individuals, to organise two public meetings on the trial of the Four. The first of these meetings was held in Nottingham in January, attracted a good audience and stimulated a lively discussion. The second, which at the time of writing has not yet taken place, is to be held in London and we hope that it will attract not only those who share our view that the trial of the Four is an attack on socialism, but also those who are still wavering elements. The authentic revolutionary voice can be temporarily stifled but it can not be silenced and now all over the world ML parties and organisations are working to hold aloft the red banner which the revisionists and their running dogs have tried in vain to tear down.

In the last issue of Red Star a mention was made

of an International Conference of ML's which was held last Autumn. In this issue we have a full account of that meeting and we publish in full the communique from it. This communique is now available from Red Star Publications, priced at 25p. The communique gives a broad analysis of the current international situation and the tasks for Marxist-Leninists, but one of the major tasks for ML groups and Parties is to analyse the international question in relation to their own conditions and circumstances. "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Marxist-Leninists" is a development of the work begun by the Nottingham Communist Group over a year ago. It rejects the social chauvinism inherent in the theory of the three worlds and begins to develop a genuine Marxist-Leninist analysis.

It has always been our policy to use "Red Star" as a forum for views not necessarily our own but with which we are in general agreement. "The politics of opportunism: or how to avoid class struggle" is written by someone who would not call himself a Marxist-Leninist. Nevertheless this article is a good and lively account of the politics of opportunism and specifically as manifested by the "Militant" "SWP" and "Big Flame" organisations. These organisations are not revolutionary, they are essentially social democratic and thus their objective role is to reinforce the bourgeois world view and deny the necessity for proletarian revolution.

Finally we review the book "Protest and Survive" edited by E.P. Thompson and Dan Smith. This book has been widely discussed and sold and is hailed by some as a major contribution to the disarmament movement. Yet the book has a major weakness since it has no analysis of the causes of the increasing rivalry between the two superpowers. The behavior of the two imperialist superpowers is seen as mindless militarism and the rationale of imperialism is completely ignored. Likewise

the strategies for disarmament ignore the true nature of the bourgeois state and hold out false hopes that the bourgeoisie will certainly never grant.

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Once again we remind readers that we are anxious for articles to be sent to us and that we will seriously consider their publication.

# RAISE HIGH THE RED BANNER! A Report on the International Conference of Marxist - Leninists

For some time now there has been a growing awareness amongst Marxist-Leninists that the deep international crisis of imperialism is sharpening up and so intensifying the major contradictions that exist in the world. Hence the probability of a major inter-imperialist war in the coming decades becomes more and more likely. War is looming on the horizon and will break out unless the revolutionary struggle of the masses and the seizure of state power by them prevents it. Even if the war does break out, it will express in a very concentrated form all the contradictions of the imperialist system, and will therefore greatly increase the objective conditions for successful revolutionary struggle. In the context of this war only the Marxist-Leninists are capable of leading the struggle of the working class and other oppressed people to victory by turning the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war. This is because Marxism-Leninism is the only authentic revolutionary theory capable of bringing about and sustaining a proletarian revolution.

So this is a time of great challenge and opportunities for revolutionaries. Yet at this very time the Marxist-Leninist movement is in a state of deep division and confusion. The counter-revolution in China in 1976 brought about a great divide amongst Marxist-Leninists. There were sharp struggles about basic principles of

Marxism-Leninism and in particular their application to the current world situation. Many of the forces which had hitherto made up the international Marxist-Leninist movement have capitulated to a revisionist line in one way or another. Some have thrown themselves behind the revisionist clique in China and uphold the infamous Three Worlds Theory; a theory which is already forcing them to proclaim capitulation to their own imperialist masters in the event of World War 3. Another section have seized upon Enver Hoxha's theory and now maintain that Mao was never a Marxist-Leninist and that there never was a socialist revolution in China. A further element have fallen away from political life altogether in a state of utter demoralisation and despair. All these shades of opinion are present in this country and this is generally true throughout the world. In some countries, including this one, the genuine Marxist-Leninist forces are reduced to a handful of small groups.

The international crisis of imperialism, coupled with the crisis within the International Communist movement, make it absolutely vital that those authentic Marxist-Leninists still in existence should strengthen their unity and increase the struggle against revisionism, both old and new. It is important to develop a real pole around which those of a revolutionary inclination can group. From many parts of the world there has been a call for the unity of Marxist-Leninists and the development of the correct revolutionary line on the international situation. This desire for unity is not a subjective desire, called in order to prevent contention, but is objectively necessary if we are to avail ourselves of the great opportunities that will present themselves in the coming decades. Unity is a weapon that will enable us to deal decisive blows to the opportunists, as well as to the imperialists and their running

dogs. Such unity is not built up overnight, nor is it built up in the process of one meeting or even several. It is only built in the course of a long struggle for the correct revolutionary line. Such a line is not a fixed and finite thing. It can however, give a general overview of the most important and significant contradictions in the world at large. Deeper and fuller analysis will come when the specific conditions in each country are concretely analysed.

Of course, in order to unite, there have to be definite things to unite about; there have to be lines of demarcation that differentiate Marxist-Leninists from revisionists. This is very important at the present time when there are many organisations calling themselves Marxist-Leninist, when in fact these organisations are thoroughly revisionist. So at present, new lines of demarcation must be drawn up that will take this factor into account. In general these new lines of demarcation are apparent around the following criteria:

- 1) Marxist-Leninists are those who have broken with the Chinese revisionists, including their international line of capitulation to imperialism, and who continue to oppose Soviet-style modern revisionism.
- 2) Marxist-Leninists are those who continue to uphold the great contribution of Mao Tse-tung to Marxism-Leninism, including his teachings on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the achievements of the Cultural Revolution.
- 3) Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations are those who wage an implacable struggle for the overthrow of their own reactionary ruling class. This requires, especially in the imperialist countries, a rejection of every form of social chauvinism and the upholding of Lenin's teachings that in the eve-

nt of an imperialist war the proletariat cannot defend the imperialist "fatherland", but must strive for the defeat of its own bourgeoisie.

- 4) Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations are those who in theory and practise support the struggle of the proletariat throughout the world; support the struggle of the oppressed nations for genuine national liberation; and defend socialism wherever it exists.

These lines of demarcation, which were drawn up by the Revolutionary Party of the United States and the Revolutionary Party of Chile, are extremely important for two main reasons. The first is that a number of Marxist-Leninist organisations have denied that lines of demarcation exist and maintain that in the interest of unity all differences of political line should be subdued. Such organisations can only view ideological and political unity in a very idealistic way, since unity cannot come about by abandoning struggle, but only through struggle. It is even said by some that the Counter Revolution in China and the present attacks on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the "Gang of Four" are unimportant and should be put to one side. This is quite wrong; the defense of Mao Tse-tung and the upholding of the Chinese Revolution are both fundamental in the defense of Marxism-Leninism and in the fight against revisionism.

The second reason for the need of lines of demarcation is that it would be impossible to try to organise a meeting of any kind at which the participants had no basic agreement on the most important questions for discussion. No unity could be built at such a meeting but rather chaos would result. If the conference had to be open to each and all calling themselves Marxist-Leninist, this is exactly what would have happened because there can be no unity between

Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. As Lenin said: "Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers cause needs is the unity of Marxists, not a unity between Marxists and opponents and distorters of Marxism". The lines of demarcation were not used as a deliberate policy to manipulate and exclude, but to draw together those parties and organisations which had already achieved, usually in independence of each other, a basis from which unity could be developed. The purpose of the Conference was to begin the longer and more arduous task of deepening and concretising such agreement as already exists.

#### PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE

The urgent necessity for an international conference was realised by many organisations, but the actual concrete tasks involved in preparing for it were generally the responsibility of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States and the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile. One of their tasks was to seek out those organisations and parties which fulfilled the criteria laid down by the lines of demarcation and which could thus be clearly recognised as part of the genuine Marxist-Leninist element within the International Communist movement. This was not an easy job, but with the cooperation and participation of many organisations, those genuine Marxist-Leninist elements began to appear and the base for the conference was laid. Many of the organisations were not previously known to the RCP.US and the RCP.Chile, so, in order not to delay the conference unduly last July there were a whole series of bilateral meetings held in order to clarify and discuss the positions held by various organisations and to prepare the actual content of the conference in a more detailed way. Those organisations who could not attend in person were invited to submit documents outlining their position and

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indicating the principal questions facing the revolutionary movement. In this way the preparations for the conference were very much a joint effort and the role of the RCP.US and RCP Chile, although a leading role, was not that of precluding or stifling those important questions which needed discussion.

As a result of these bilateral meetings it became apparent that there was a necessity for some sort of text for discussion at the Conference in order to provide a clearer focus for debate. The RCPUS and RCP Chile produced a draft document entitled "Basic Principles for the Unity of Marxist-Leninists and for the Line of the International Communist Movement". In this document they addressed themselves to the questions which they considered decisive at the present time in order both to deepen and extend unity among the genuine Marxist-Leninist forces and to combat revisionism in all its many guises. This document is a long one and has three main sections.

- (1) The objective situation - Crises and the Prospects for War and Revolution.
- (2) The situation within the International Communist Movement and the struggle against revisionism and other forms of opportunism.
- (3) The basic tasks of Marxist-Leninists.

The Nottingham Communist Group has a copy of this document and is willing to make it available to comrades who may wish to see it. This draft document was circulated to participating organisations for study, comment and responses. At the same time, other organisations attending the conference were invited to submit brief documents for circulation and discussion. In this way the preparations for the Conference enabled all those participants to make their views apparent so that immediately prior to the conference all views would be known and thus a basis for development could be laid at the conference. Once this stage was reached it was possible to

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proceed to the actual organisational details necessary for such a conference.

The conference was genuinely international in scope and included participants from the United States, Turkey, France, Ceylon, Italy, England, Chile and Senegal. Some organisations were unable to attend including comrades from Afghanistan, New Zealand, Dominica, India and Iran. The objective of the Conference was to reach the highest level of political and ideological unity which would serve to deepen the debate amongst Marxist-Leninists and consolidate and broaden the international struggle against the imperialists and revisionists of all types. In order to facilitate the fullest possible debate whilst providing an organisational framework which would enable the conference to cover all the agreed agenda, a secretariat of two comrades was elected. Their role was to encourage the debates to develop in a constructive way and to sum up at the end of each item on the agenda the discussion that had taken place, the degree of agreement that had been reached, and to indicate areas where it was apparent that fuller discussion was needed.

The conference lasted five full days and each of these days was spent in concentrated political discussion. The following were the main items on the agenda:-

- 1) The situation and the Revolutionary Struggle
- 2) The question of Mao Tse-tung and Mao's thought.
- 3) The battle against revisionism and all forms of opportunism.
- 4) Revolutionary versus Reformist strategy and tactics.
- 5) Communist Unity and Organisation.
- 6) Specific Proposals.

Each organisation was able to submit a short

presentation in each agenda item and after these presentations the subject was open to debate. A great amount of the time was spent in debate and certain topics, for example the Third International, came up time and time again. In this way the agenda provided a framework for discussion but did not prevent the most important topics manifesting themselves and being discussed in a very detailed way.

For those of us whose political experience has always been confined to organisations within this country, the Conference was a fantastic experience, not only of the correct way to proceed in political and ideological struggle, but also a stirring and vital practical experience of what proletarian internationalism really is. Of course there was not complete agreement on every aspect of each agenda item, but when there was dissension this was aired in thorough but comradely way, and political principles were never abandoned but expressed concretely and struggled for with the highest degree of determination. Because of this the conference was a truly exhilarating experience for all who participated.

As the Conference proceeded it became apparent to all the delegates that it was necessary to publish some sort of statement about what had taken place. This would give information to those organisations who could not attend and also those who were in a wavering position. It would also, and perhaps this aspect is more important, proclaim to the whole world that the red banner of Marxism-Leninism was still held high as a rallying point to all those oppressed people and those of revolutionary inclination throughout the world. There was intense discussion on the form of such a statement, whether for example we should confine ourselves to those topics where there was already a great deal of unity and agreement, or whether we should

also include areas where we were now conscious that further discussion and analysis was necessary. It was agreed that we should adopt the latter approach and in this way the statement would be a true representation of what had actually taken place. This statement was prepared by comrades from two participating parties and was given to the Conference for discussion. After a very long and detailed discussion a document was agreed on which is printed below in full. The value of the Conference was appreciated by all, but it was also realised that this Conference should mark only the beginning of a new stage in internationalism. It was obvious that in the case of many crucial issues we had done little more than scratch the surface and that much of our past experience, particularly the case of the Third International, needed detailed critical summation. For this important reason, proposals for an international journal were warmly welcomed, as were suggestions for further joint activity.



## TO THE MARXIST-LENINISTS, THE WORKERS AND THE OPPRESSED OF ALL COUNTRIES

Today the world is on the threshold of momentous events. The crisis of the imperialist system is rapidly bringing about the danger of the outbreak of a new, third, world war as well as the real perspective for revolution in countries throughout the world. During the last few years revolutionary struggles have erupted, including in certain areas of strategic importance. All the imperialist powers are preparing to lead the workers and the oppressed people to an unprecedented mutual slaughter to protect and expand their empires of profit and exploitation throughout the world. The imperialist powers and reactionary ruling classes are joined in two rival bands of cut-throats and slavemasters, two blocs which are led one by the U.S. imperialists, the other by the equally imperialist USSR. This war is looming on the horizon and will break out unless the revolutionary struggle of the masses, the seizure of power by the working class and oppressed people, is able to prevent it. Still if this does break out, it will represent an extreme concentration of the crisis of the imperialist system and will heighten the objective basis for revolutionary struggle that must be seized by the Marxist-Leninists.

But at the very time when such great dangers, challenges and opportunities are placed before the workers and oppressed of all countries, a great crisis exists within the ranks of the Marxist-Leninists who have the responsibility of leading the working class and peoples in making revolution. After revisionism had clearly come to power in the USSR with Khrushchev, the international proletariat suffered a further grievous loss after the death of Comrade Mao Tsetung in 1976

with the seizure of power in socialist China by a new, counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie dragging one fourth of humanity back down the capitalist road. This great loss was further compounded by the attacks on the great contributions Mao Tsetung made to the revolutionary science of the working class, Marxism-Leninism. These attacks were not only launched by the new reactionary rulers of China, but have been joined by deserters from the revolutionary ranks, and clearly the Soviet revisionists themselves are mixed up in these attacks.

In the face of this sharpening situation, and recognizing the critical need to rise to the great challenge that this situation represents, delegates from a number of Marxist-Leninist Parties and organizations have held a meeting to discuss how to emerge and advance from this crisis on the basis of forging and uniting around a correct ideological and political line for the international communist movement. Through the course of the meeting unity was achieved on the following points, which the undersigned Parties and organizations consider important elements for the development of this line:

### I. THE CURRENT SITUATION

—Imperialism means war. This basic truth analyzed by Lenin holds particular meaning for today as another world war shapes up on the horizon. This is not a result of the desire of any particular bourgeois leader but stems from the very laws of the imperialist system.

—In the current historical conjuncture it is only the two most powerful imperialist powers, the U.S. and the USSR, who are capable of heading up imperialist blocs to go to world war. These two imperialist powers are also the most powerful bastions of reaction in the world today.

—All the other imperialist powers are also driven by their nature toward war—they are also big exploiters, thoroughly reactionary, aggressive and enemies of the proletariat and the peoples of the world.

—In the face of the growing danger of world war the proletariat and the oppressed people must develop their revolutionary struggle against imperialism and all reaction. If such a

war breaks out they must strive to turn inter-imperialist war into a revolutionary war aimed at the overthrow of the reactionary ruling classes.

—In the last few years powerful revolutionary movements have developed in a number of countries, which have greatly battered or even toppled the reactionary regimes and shaken the imperialist system. While none of these revolutionary movements has yet led to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they are another clear indication of the possibility of doing so. The objective conditions for revolution are ripening throughout the world and in some countries these conditions are already mature. But the subjective conditions, especially the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement, are lagging seriously behind the objective conditions.

## II. TASKS OF MARXIST-LENINISTS

It is necessary to rescue and build upon basic principles of Marxism-Leninism which revisionists and opportunists have done their best to obscure and bury.

—The dictatorship of the proletariat has been and remains a cardinal point of Marxism-Leninism. This principle too has been trampled on by revisionism. From the time of Karl Marx down to the present, fighting to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and to defend and strengthen it where it is established, have remained touchstone questions for Marxist-Leninists.

However, it is not correct and is especially harmful today, to fail to take into account the important experience, positive and negative, the proletariat has acquired in this respect since the time of the October Revolution. In particular the great teachings of Mao Tse-tung on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and the experience of the Cultural Revolution he led are of vital importance. Comrade Mao Tse-tung correctly pointed out that during the entire period of socialism, that is in the period of the transition to communism, classes and class struggle still exist. He pointed out the continued existence and constant regeneration of the bourgeoisie under socialism, its material and ideological base,

and the means for combatting it. Mao clearly indicated, for the first time in the history of the science of Marxism-Leninism, that the ringleaders and most important section of the bourgeoisie during the socialist period (after the socialist transformation of ownership has in the main been completed) are those leading people in the Party and the state apparatus taking the capitalist road. Mao made clear that it would be necessary to wage repeated mass revolutionary struggles, such as the Cultural Revolution, against the new bourgeoisie during the entire socialist transition.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was an unprecedented mass revolutionary movement which succeeded for ten years in blocking capitalist restoration, training revolutionary successors who are fighting today against the new capitalist rulers in China, and helped to spread Marxism-Leninism throughout the world. The fact that the Cultural Revolution did not succeed in the final analysis in preventing the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat in no way lessens its historic importance nor its important lessons for the world proletariat.

—“The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution.” This is universally true for all countries. The “peaceful road to socialism” is littered with the corpses of countless masses who were pointed down this road by revisionist betrayers.

The principle of armed struggle of the masses has also been abandoned by revisionists who replace it with putschist theses and practices or empty phrases which renounce all types of political and organizational preparations. No matter what stages the revolution may go through, the need to seize political power by the force of arms must be propagated broadly among the masses of people; the Marxist-Leninists must carry out the necessary ideological, political and organizational preparations with this goal in mind and must strive to launch the armed struggle for power as soon as the conditions are ripe. In short, communists are advocates of revolutionary warfare.

The armed struggle must be carried out as a war of the

masses and through it the masses must be prepared ideologically, politically and organizationally to exercise political power.

Whatever the necessary forms and stages of the revolutionary process the principal reliance must be based on building up the armed forces of the masses led by the party, while it is also necessary to carry out political work among the armed forces of the enemy to help disintegrate these armed forces and win over as many of their soldiers as possible in the course of the revolutionary struggle.

—The existence and the leading role of the party of the proletariat is another cardinal principle. This is expressed in an organization of the vanguard of the proletariat which must be based on a Marxist-Leninist ideological, political and organizational line on the principal problems of the revolution; which at every moment, inside and outside its ranks, combats all bourgeois and revisionist influences; which permanently practises criticism and self-criticism and centralism based on democracy; which has a conscious iron discipline, all in order to link closely with the masses, to raise, generalise and coordinate their struggles, particularly political struggles, leading them to seize power from the ruling classes. With this aim, the party must attach great importance to formulating and spreading, according to principles, a concrete strategy, line and policy in accordance with the concrete conditions of the country and the interests of the masses and their wish to liberate themselves. The party must give great attention to the illegal forms of struggle and organization, in order to preserve its independence and to educate the masses in the struggle against their enemies. From a strategic point of view, illegal forms of work are fundamental. At the same time the party must make use of legal opportunities in order to broaden its influence without falling into or promoting bourgeois democratic illusions and while preparing for the inevitable repression by the reactionaries.

The party must gain the leadership of the struggle of the masses and the revolution in practise, by correctly applying the mass line. The party must continually strengthen its leading role by ensuring that the masses and the working class continually raise their ideological, political and organizational

level and that they take over an increasingly important part of the tasks of the revolution. In this way, the party will create the conditions for an authentic dictatorship of the proletariat and likewise the final withering away of the party with the withering away of social classes, communism.

Capitalism has long ago reached its final stage of imperialism, one of the most important features of which is the pillaging of the dominated countries and the exploitation of the oppressed peoples. In doing so, imperialism also greatly expands and strengthens the gravediggers destined to overthrow it.

As Lenin analysed, the world proletarian revolution, in the era of imperialism, consists of two great currents allied against the imperialist system—the proletarian socialist revolution in the capitalist countries and the new democratic revolution in the semi-feudal, colonial, semi-(or neo-) colonial countries subjected to imperialist enslavement. There are many features in common between the revolution in these two types of countries: above all that in both instances the revolution must be led by the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party, through whatever stages, and to the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism. But there are also some important distinctions in the path of the revolution in the two types of countries.

### **COLONIAL AND DEPENDENT COUNTRIES**

In the semi-feudal, colonial, semi-(or neo-) colonial countries the revolution must in general pass through two stages—first that of the new democratic revolution led by the proletariat which leads to the socialist stage. Those who insist on making a principle of skipping this stage or eclectically combining the democratic and the socialist revolution do great harm to the revolution.

While the exact course of the revolution in any given country is dependent on the concrete conditions found there, the teachings of Mao Tsetung concerning protracted people's war are of great relevance in these types of countries. Those revisionists who attack Mao's theory of surrounding the city

by the countryside as having failed to insure the hegemony of the proletariat or dogmatically insist that insurrection in the city is the sole form of seizing power in these types of countries are in fact attacking the revolutionary struggle there.

Experience has shown that without the leadership of the proletariat and a genuine Marxist-Leninist line it is impossible to free these types of countries from imperialist enslavement, still less to advance on the socialist road. While in general it is possible and necessary to build a very broad united front in such countries, even at times involving sections of the exploiting classes, experience has underscored the importance of the Marxist-Leninists maintaining leadership and political and organizational independence, of conducting widespread education on the need to advance to socialism and ultimately communism, to combat narrow nationalist tendencies even while waging a struggle for national liberation, and exposing and combatting in the appropriate ways the bourgeoisie, even the sections with which it may be allied in this struggle against foreign imperialism and the reactionary ruling classes in power.

There is an undeniable tendency for imperialism to introduce significant elements of capitalist relations in the countries it dominates. In certain dependent countries capitalist development has gone so far that it is not correct to characterize them as semi-feudal, it is better to call them predominantly capitalist even while important elements or remnants of feudal or semi-feudal production relations and their reflection in the superstructure may still exist.

In such countries a concrete analysis must be made of these conditions and appropriate conclusions concerning the path, tasks, character and alignment of class forces must be drawn. In all events, foreign imperialism remains a target of the revolution.

### **IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES**

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels pointed out that the "workers have no fatherland". Lenin stressed that this is particularly applicable in the imperialist countries. This,

too, is not only a cardinal principle of Marxism-Leninism that must be rescued from decades of revisionist distortion but takes on special importance in the current conjuncture with the approach of a third world war. Communists combat every form of national chauvinism within the working class and other sections of the oppressed people. This means fighting against every tendency which identifies the interests of the proletariat with the interests of its "own" imperialist ruling class either in plundering people of the colonial and dependent countries or, especially in today's situation, in going to war to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie. If a third world war breaks out the proletariat must work actively for the defeat of its own bourgeoisie in the war, attempting to transform the war into revolutionary civil war and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

While the road of the October Revolution is universally applicable in the sense of the need for the armed revolution, the leadership of a proletarian vanguard party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the establishment of socialism, etc., in all countries; in addition in the capitalist and imperialist countries the October Revolution remains the basic point of reference for Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics. The Marxist-Leninists recognize that in each country the revolution will take specific forms and must analyse the concrete conditions and sum up the experience of the masses in struggle while upholding the basic Leninist line concerning the political and organizational measures necessary for the preparation for and the seizure of power by the proletariat. Again, the distortion and negation by the revisionists of basic Leninist principles in this regard is not only an historical fact but continues to be a current problem. While paying attention to concrete analysis of concrete conditions in each country, it is necessary to study and apply correctly Lenin's theses on the importance of raising the political consciousness of the working class to its historic mission and developing its political and revolutionary struggle, on the importance of the communist press, and of combatting the influence of economism while paying attention to the needs and conditions of the life of the masses. It's also necessary to study and apply Mao's teachings of the need to base oneself on the profound sentiments of the masses to liberate themselves.

### III. ON THE UNITY OF THE MARXIST-LENINISTS

The proletariat is a single class worldwide with a single historic class interest in liberating humanity from all exploitation and oppression and in ushering in the era of communism throughout the globe. For this reason proletarian internationalism is something inseparable from Marxism-Leninism and a constant need of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard in all countries. In addition to this obvious, but often forgotten, truth, the current conjuncture also demands vigorous efforts to establish the unity of Marxist-Leninists and the revolutionaries in all countries if we are to meet the tests and opportunities facing us. In fact, the need for the unity of the Marxist-Leninists is not only objectively necessary but is increasingly demanded by revolutionaries and the masses throughout the world. In this process, as in all things, ideological and political line is decisive.

As Lenin emphasized, "Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers' cause needs is the *unity of Marxists*, not unity between Marxists and opponents and distorters of Marxism"

In our view unity can only be achieved on the basis of drawing firm and clear lines of demarcation with revisionism and opportunism of all forms. These lines of demarcation are not something which have dropped from the sky or been concocted by sectarians nor can they be treated as mere topics for sterile, academic debates—they reflect the main and decisive forms in which revisionism confronts the revolutionary proletariat and the Marxist-Leninist movement in the world today.

Upholding the contribution of Mao Tsetung to the science of Marxism-Leninism represents a particularly important and pressing question in the international communist movement and among the class conscious workers today. The principle involved is nothing less than whether or not to uphold and build on decisive contributions to the proletarian revolution and the science of Marxism-Leninism made by Mao. Mao Tsetung made important developments of Marxism-Leninism in the area of the anti-imperialist

democratic revolution leading to socialism, people's war and military strategy generally; philosophy (where he made important contributions on the analysis of contradictions, which is the essence of dialectics, and on the theory of knowledge and its links with practice and the mass line), revolutionizing the superstructure and continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as in the struggle against revisionism on the practical and theoretical fronts. It is therefore nothing less than the question of whether to uphold Marxism-Leninism itself. Mao's theoretical and practical leadership represent a quantitative and qualitative development of Marxism-Leninism on many fronts and the theoretical concentration of the historical experience of the proletarian revolution over the last several decades.

We are still living in the era of Leninism, of imperialism and the proletarian revolution; at the same time we affirm that Mao Tsetung Thought is a new stage in the development of Marxism-Leninism. Without upholding and building on Mao's contributions it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general.

Closely linked to the above is the need to vigorously oppose the new revisionist rulers in China who have overthrown the dictatorship of the proletariat and are restoring capitalism. They have utterly capitulated to imperialism, and have demanded that others follow suit, at the present time under the signboard of their reactionary "strategic theory of the three worlds" which they have fraudulently tried to pass off to the ignorant as the work of Mao himself.

The Soviet revisionists and those revisionist parties historically linked to them remain bitter enemies of the international proletariat. In recent years the Soviet revisionists have adopted a more militant posture vis à vis the Western imperialist powers. This is consistent with their own requirements as a great imperialist power heading up a rival imperialist bloc. They have on several occasions intervened directly by military means or made use of the Vietnamese and Cuban revisionists who are part of their bloc, to seek to expand their imperialist domination. This is often masked as "internationalism". In some cases revisionist parties historically tied to the USSR have

promoted such counterrevolutionary lines as "peaceful roads" and "historic compromise" with the bourgeoisie; in other cases these revisionist parties prepare military coups and armed actions divorced from the masses. The rôle and nature of the revisionist parties today must be further analyzed and studied, both in particular cases and in general, but in any event it is completely clear that they stand as bitter enemies of the proletarian revolution and must be unmasked and defeated as a crucial part of developing the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and mobilizing the masses in revolutionary struggle.

The Albanian Party of Labor and its leadership have fallen completely into the revisionist swamp. Shortly after the counter-revolutionary coup in China the PLA attracted a number of genuine revolutionaries because they opposed some of the more hideous features of the Hua-Teng clique in China, especially regarding international line. Very quickly, however, they outdid even Hua and Teng in the virulence of their attack on Mao and Mao Tse-tung Thought. The PLA leaders have adopted classic Trotskyite positions on a number of questions, including the nature of the revolution in semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries, e.g. excluding people's war as a form of revolutionary struggle. More significantly their position grows daily closer to the made-in-Moscow revisionist line on a number of cardinal questions and world events, as already shown by their stand on Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, the workers' upheaval in Poland, and their attacks on Mao, which are similar to the Soviets' attacks.

The influence of Trotskyism has been strengthened by revisionism in general and has been especially strengthened recently by the coming to power of the revisionists in China and by the revisionist stands of the PLA. The organizations and Parties which endorse this communique are calling for the struggle against revisionism to be linked to the struggle against the positions of the Trotskyites, which are left in form but deeply rightist in essence, and are especially calling for opposition to the following points: their "purist", "workerist" line of negating the alliance with the peasantry or other non-proletarian forces, negating in particular the policy of a united

front against the reactionary classes in power; the negation of the possibility of seizing power and embarking on the socialist transition period in a single country; and their economist conception of the mass struggles and with regard to the way in which they see the transition to communism as consisting basically of a development of the productive forces.

The signatory organizations and Parties underline the increased danger posed by social democracy which holds power in a number of countries and which continues to serve as a Trojan horse for the interests of the Western imperialists. In addition to its usual conciliatory tactics, in some countries social democracy is attempting to form or influence armed groups in order to play a role in a situation of changing conditions. Marxist-Leninists must steadfastly combat their influence among the masses and must denounce all their tactics.

While it is not only possible but vitally necessary to take important steps now to unify genuine Marxist-Leninists on the basis of clear lines of demarcation that have emerged and in the face of the urgent tasks of the international movement, it is also necessary to carry out collective study, discussion and struggle over many important questions. This is particularly evident in relation to the necessity of developing a much fuller and deeper understanding of the history of the international communist movement. As the Chinese Communist Party pointed out in 1963 when it was a genuine communist party, in its polemics with the Soviet revisionists, with regard to the history of the international communist (and national liberation) movement there are "many experiences and many lessons. There are experiences which people should praise and there are experiences which make people grieve. Communists and revolutionaries in all countries should ponder and seriously study these experiences of success and failure, so as to draw correct conclusions and useful lessons from them". Today, in light of further momentous experiences, positive and negative, since that time, and with the present situation and the looming possibilities in mind, this orientation assumes all the more profound significance. The need to dare to ponder and analyze more deeply and penetratingly in order to act more boldly is all the more decisive.

Before modern revisionism revealed itself openly in the USSR and various other countries, there already existed within the international communist movement different erroneous conceptions which facilitated its development.

While recognizing the undeniable contributions made by the Third International to the unity of the international proletariat, to the founding of communist parties and to their struggles; and while recognizing the tremendous role played by the October Revolution, which initiated the epoch of proletarian revolutions and opened the way for the construction of socialism in the USSR, communists must endeavor to critically sum up these experiences, making it possible to explain in the light of Marxism-Leninism the seizure of power by the bourgeoisie in that country and in other socialist nations, and also making it possible to learn from the errors and deviations which were committed and to evaluate to what extent they had bearing on the degeneration into opportunism of the majority of the international communist movement. In the face of the demoralization caused by these facts among broad sectors of the masses, and given that the bourgeois sectors are taking advantage of these facts, claiming that they prove the "failure" of Marxism, it falls on us communists to show that it is not scientific socialism which has failed, and that, on the contrary, scientific socialism makes it possible for us to grasp what objective and subjective factors gave rise to these events. Among other things, we must investigate and struggle over the experiences of the Third International and the reasons which led to its self-dissolution; the way in which the relationship between the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and imperialism and the policy of forming an anti-fascist united front was handled during the last world war, and also the very reasoning behind this policy; the origin of the revisionist tendencies, such as Browderism, which spread faith in the idea that it would be possible to establish a lasting peace and improve the living conditions of the masses on the basis of agreements between the USSR and the imperialist powers who were fighting against the fascist states, and of the tendencies to conciliation which these gave rise to; the deep roots that led to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and other socialist coun-

tries, paying particular attention to the way in which the development of the class struggle was handled and the question of how the need to consistently apply the dictatorship of the proletariat was treated in those countries, to the handling of the relationship between politics and ideology, between politics and economic and technical questions, the question of the mass line, the question of the correct handling of contradictions among the people and with the enemy on the basis of mobilizing the masses, the relationship of centralism and democracy within the party and the relationship of the party to the masses. By throwing light on these questions, while staying clear of the slander of the Trotskyites and other enemies of the revolution, we will be able to draw important lessons for the development of the revolution.

In sum, in order to achieve the unity of the Marxist-Leninists, it is essential to deepen the study so as to make an evaluation of the theoretical and practical activity of the communists during the period of the Third International, the Second World War and especially the causes of the coming to power of the revisionists in the countries in which the proletariat held power, particularly in the USSR and in China.

The undersigned Parties and organizations received and discussed a major draft text prepared jointly by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. They hold that, on the whole, the text is a positive contribution toward the elaboration of a correct general line for the international communist movement. With this perspective, the text should be circulated and discussed not only in the ranks of those organizations who have signed this communique, but throughout the ranks of the international communist movement.

To carry out the struggle against revisionism and to aid the process of developing and struggling for a correct general line in the international communist movement, the undersigned Parties and organizations are launching an international journal. This journal can and will be a crucial weapon which can help unite, ideologically, politically and organizationally, the genuine Marxist-Leninists throughout the world.

These Parties and organizations signing this communique

stress the need not only to maintain contact and carry out discussion and struggle with each other but actively to seek out and develop relations with other genuine Marxist-Leninists around the globe and carry out an ideological struggle and political work to win still broader forces of the international movement and the masses to consolidate the revolutionary position and reinforce the revolutionary struggles.

The current conjuncture in the world and in the international movement presents the revolutionary proletariat, the oppressed peoples and the Marxist-Leninists with great tasks, trials and, above all, great opportunities. Marxism-Leninism, the science of the revolutionary proletariat, has always been forged and tempered in the furnace of class struggle. Today we must rise to meet the challenges before us, race to catch up with the rapid developments of the objective conditions, reconstruct the unity of Marxist-Leninists on the basis of a correct line and summing up the experience of the past, fight for proletarian internationalism—and in so doing push ahead the advance toward communism throughout the world.

*Autumn 1980*

*Ceylon Communist Party*  
*Groupe Marxiste-Léniniste du Sénégal*  
*Grupo para la Defensa del Marxismo-Leninismo (Spain)*  
*Mao Tsetung-Kredsen (Denmark)*  
*Marxist-Leninist Collective (Britain)*  
*New Zealand Red Flag Group*  
*Nottingham Communist Group (Britain)*  
*Organizzazione Comunista Proletaria Marxista-Leninista (Italy)*  
*Partido Comunista Revolucionario de Chile*  
*Pour l'Internationale Prolétarienne (France)*  
*Reorganization Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)*  
*Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*  
*Unión Comunista Revolucionaria (Dominican Republic)*

## THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE TASKS OF THE MARXIST-LENINISTS

Capitalism has reached its highest stage of development; monopoly capitalism which is the era of imperialism. More than ever before the struggle to bring about proletarian revolution will only meet with success if the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary forces in different countries are developed by fully taking into account conditions in the world as a whole. If this is not done, if the revolutionaries abandon the great tradition of proletarian internationalism, then the battle against reaction is lost before it has even really begun. The building of a revolutionary movement firmly based on the proletariat and its allies in Britain, and indeed in any other country, can only be accomplished in intimate relationship to the course of development of the struggle between revolution and reaction in the world as a whole. Thus there is a pressing need to achieve precise scientific analysis of changing material conditions in the contemporary world arena.

### THE DIALECTICAL MATERIALIST METHOD

Marxist-Leninists are dialectical materialists and our method of analysing any phenomenon is to specify, on the basis of concrete evidence, what dialectical contradictions constitute the essence of that phenomenon. We mean by this that the fundamental unities of opposed forces determining the nature of a phenomenon must be isolated and analysed. Part of such analysis is to determine which is the principal contrad-



iction that is having a decisive influence on the course of development of a phenomenon and which are the secondary contradictions whose character is being influenced by the principal contradiction. Furthermore, for both principal and secondary contradictions it is necessary to specify their principal and secondary aspects that is which aspect of a contradiction is determining its character at a particular time. This is the method of materialist dialectics evolved by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, and only its rigorous application to the concrete analysis of concrete conditions can provide a sure guide to revolutionary action.

#### FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY

Shortly after the October revolution of 1917 Lenin and Stalin claimed that there were four fundamental contradictions in the world as a whole; between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries, between the oppressed nations and imperialism and among the imperialist countries and monopoly capitalist groups. In 1963 the Communist Party of China reasserted, in the course of their polemic with the Soviet revisionists, that these were still the fundamental contradictions. However, since that time there has occurred a resurgence of revisionism in China, Vietnam, Albania and North Korea and now there is no country left in the whole world where it is clear that the dictatorship of the proletariat is still in force. Consequently the analysis put forward by the CPC in 1963 no longer applies and it is necessary to specify the fundamental contradictions again in the light of actual developments over the last two decades.

During the present period there are three fundamental contradictions in the world:

1. The contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This contradiction is not just fundamental to the advanced capitalist countries but is of central importance in China, Albania, N. Korea and the oppressed nations as well. It was Comrade Mao Tse-tung who pointed out that the principal contradiction in a country undergoing socialist transformation is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the subsequent revisionist counter-revolution in China and the disturbing developments in Albania and N. Korea have dramatically demonstrated that this is so. Most of the oppressed nations under imperialist domination have, during the period since World War II, conducted vigorous national liberation struggles against imperialist domination and exploitation. Even so, most of the national liberation movements were not under proletarian leadership with the consequence that imperialism is far from being defeated in these countries. Various comprador, national bourgeois and state bourgeois elements in the oppressed nations have, as a result of the national liberation struggles, obtained certain concessions and privileges from the imperialist powers and consequently have no wish to carry the anti-imperialist struggle any further. Thus in the oppressed nations the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is of crucial significance because it is only if the proletariat and its allies, (e.g. poor peasants), can win leadership of the national liberation movements that the hegemony of neo-colonialism can be completely destroyed. For these reasons it is correct to assert that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is now fundamental to the development of the revolutionary struggle, not just in the advanced capitalist countries, but throughout the whole world.

2. The contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism. In many respects this

contradiction has become more intense since 1963 as a result of the expansive advance of Soviet social imperialism into many oppressed nations. The anti-imperialist struggle now has to be directed against not just one but two major imperialist blocs. Furthermore, the revisionist counter-revolution in China means that it is only a matter of time before Chinese social imperialism emerges as a concrete reality. Already the state bourgeoisie in China is seeking to exercise a hegemonic influence over the countries of South East Asia.

3. The contradictions among the imperialist states. With the great advance of Soviet social imperialism during the 1970's the contradiction between it and U.S. imperialism has become much more antagonistic. Also the onset of a major world depression has intensified the contradictions between the greater and lesser imperialist bourgeoisies within each bloc. The situation is becoming further complicated and much more unstable as a result of the Chinese state bourgeoisie engaging in big power hegemonic politics.

These, briefly stated, are the fundamental contradictions in the world today in the sense that the working out of these contradictions will determine the objective material conditions within which the revolutionary struggle has to be conducted during the present period. These fundamental contradictions are the ones that Marxist-Leninists throughout the world must take into account in developing revolutionary strategy and tactics in each particular country.

The three fundamental contradictions specified here imply that in the world today there exist two qualitatively different types of countries:

1. The imperialist countries under the rule of monopoly capitalist classes. There are three groupings:

- (a) The U.S. imperialist bloc. This consists of the U.S.A. and the other lesser imperialist countries under its economic, political and military hegemony, i.e. Western Europe, Japan, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is undoubtedly the most powerful imperialist grouping in every sense and despite internal contradictions among its various bourgeoisies it nonetheless has considerable cohesion. The prospects in the present period of any of the lesser imperialist bourgeoisies in this bloc making a decisive break with U.S. imperialism are remote.
- (b) The Soviet social imperialist bloc. This consists of the U.S.S.R., its Eastern European satellites, Cuba and Vietnam. Again, while there are internal contradictions between the Russian state bourgeoisie and the state bourgeoisies of the other countries in this bloc, e.g. Rumania, these should not be exaggerated. Events in Czechoslovakia and Poland demonstrate that these elements stand together united when faced with any challenge to their power by the workers and peasants in these countries. However, the degree of internal stability in this bloc is far less than in the case of the U.S. bloc. One major factor promoting instability is the contradiction between the official "proletarian" ideology and the bourgeois reality in these societies.
- (c) The emerging Chinese social imperialism. The possibility of the overthrow of the new state capitalist regime in China is still open. An important task for revolutionaries throughout the world is to aid the Chinese workers and peasants in their struggle

against the counter-revolution. Nonetheless, the possibility that the Chinese state bourgeoisie may become entrenched for an indefinite period must be taken into account. Already the new Chinese leadership is behaving in a thoroughly hegemonist way in their relations with other countries. They have not yet developed to the point where, as in the case of the Soviet bloc, they are engaged in direct political, military and economic exploitation and domination of other countries. However, given the rapid development of monopoly capitalist relations of production within China's considerable industrial sector it is only a matter of time before full-blooded imperialism becomes necessary to ensure internal stability.

2. The oppressed nations under the domination of imperialism. These are the peoples of the former colonial territories of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Despite the fact that most of these countries have gained nominal political independence since World War II they are as much under the domination of the imperialist bourgeoisies as they ever were. In some of these countries, e.g. Latin America and India, local comprador bourgeoisies exercise state power while in others, especially in Africa, new state bourgeoisies are emerging. These tend to arise in countries where no substantial local bourgeoisie managed to develop. Instead native manageriats were created by the workings of the colonial administration and the operations of foreign companies. Such persons have adopted an essentially bourgeois outlook but lack any substantial capital basis of their own. Consequently their path to wealth and power is by means of leading popular national liberation movements which results in their achieving state power and this enables them to function as a state bourgeoisie. Typically these elements espouse some sort of "socialism" and "marxism" and thus naturally gravitate toward

ds relations with the new Soviet social imperialism rather than with the old Western imperialism. Even so, these new state bourgeoisies are quite willing to try to play off one imperialist bloc against another so as to get the best deal for themselves, e.g. Egypt, Somalia.

At present the internal disposition of class forces in Albania and North Korea appears to be in a state of flux. In international affairs both countries have taken up highly eclectic positions and one suspects that with the death of Enver Hoxha and Kim Il Sung there could well be a revisionist consolidation in both countries resulting in their absorption into the Soviet bloc. The thoroughly revisionist character of the foreign relations of both countries over the years casts doubt as to whether the dictatorship of the proletariat really exists in either of them.

### THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE OPPRESSED NATIONS AND IMPERIALISM

This has been the principal contradiction in the world since the Second World War. Furthermore, this contradiction is intensifying and its principal aspect is the oppressed nations. It is this contradiction which is having a decisive influence on the development of the other two fundamental contradictions.

There are no reasons whatsoever for believing that the struggles of workers and peasants in Asia, Africa and Latin America against oppression and exploitation are slackening. On the contrary a glance around the world today is enough to provide ample evidence of a continuing upsurge among the toiling masses of the oppressed nations. Throughout almost the whole of Latin America the comprador bourgeoisie have had to resort to the most crude military dictatorships in order to try to hold down the workers and peasants. Far from being a sign of the strength of the hegemony of

imperialism and its local agents, this is an indication of their weakness. In Africa the post-colonial regimes have proved to be utterly incapable of promoting internal development and stability in their countries and remain tied to the apron strings of imperialism. In Azania it can only be a matter of time before the masses overthrow the colonial settler regime and thus deal a massive blow to the U.S. imperialist bloc. Elsewhere in Africa the attempts of Soviet social imperialism to consolidate its hegemony are fiercely disputed, e.g. Eritrea. In Iran the overthrow of the Shah was a great anti-imperialist victory and in India there is a fresh upsurge of rural insurrection. In Indo-China it is true that the Soviet Union has stepped into the former place of the vanquished U.S. imperialism but its rule is hotly disputed as is also the case in Afghanistan.

We have not got sufficient space here to detail the rising tide of mass struggle throughout the oppressed nations. What we can briefly indicate is the very real material basis for this growing resistance. During the period 1965-75 industrial production in the so-called "developing" market economies rose by 48% per capita while agricultural production rose by only 1% per capita and food production actually fell by 20% per capita. Fairly rapid industrialisation is occurring in many of the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia but far from bringing about a rise in living standards for the great mass of the people it is actually resulting in a growing proportion of them being reduced to starvation level as subsistence peasant agriculture is destroyed to make way for the capitalist farming of industrial cash crops. Obviously, conditions vary considerably from country to country but the overall picture conveyed by the above figures is one of mass immiseration being the basis for intensifying struggle agai-

nst imperialism and its local agents.

As is so often the case throughout the world it is not the masses who are backward in resisting oppression but the revolutionaries who are backward in providing the sort of leadership that will result in these popular upsurges thoroughly defeating imperialism in their various different countries. The theory of uninterrupted revolution by stages, as most notably developed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, holds that national liberation movements can only bring about the total defeat of imperialism in their countries if they are under the hegemony of the proletariat and its party. Throughout most of the oppressed nations this has not been the case with the consequence that many bravely and hard fought struggles have not resulted in the end of imperialist domination and exploitation, e.g. Algeria, Zimbabwe. The strategic task of the Marxist-Leninists in the oppressed nations is to build genuine proletarian parties and win the leadership of the popular movements. The precise manner in which this is to be done can only be determined by the comrades in each country but what is universally valid is the necessity for there to be a distinct revolutionary party which is not submerged in the wider national liberation movement.

Sustained mass resistance in the oppressed nations is the external condition serving to exacerbate the growing crisis within the imperialist countries brought about by their own internal contradictions. The imperialist countries of both blocs are becoming more, not less, dependent on supplies of raw materials from the oppressed nations. It is thus becoming more vital than ever for the imperialists to maintain their foreign domains. As the world depression deepens, the struggle over foreign markets intensifies rather than diminishes. Also, the economic crisis in the imperialist countries makes

it even more imperative to export capital so as to try to maintain the rate of profit. However, the unstable conditions in the oppressed nations make it difficult for the imperialist powers to secure their interests. Furthermore, they are politically weakened at home by their failure to establish a firm hold over their foreign spheres of influence, e.g. the U.S.A. in Iran and the U.S.S.R. in Afghanistan. The emergence of two major imperialist blocs has allowed even comprador and state bourgeois elements in the oppressed nations to play one bloc off against the other and thus secure a greater share of the loot extorted from the toiling masses.

The oppressed nations are seething with discontent and revolt. They are no longer passive pawns in the imperialists struggle for world domination. The century of modern imperialism is drawing to a close and the upsurge among the oppressed nations is threatening the stability of the advanced capitalist countries of both blocs.

#### THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE BOURGEOISIE AND THE PROLETARIAT

The post-war boom in the U.S. imperialist bloc had petered out by the early 1970's and now these countries are in the midst of a major economic depression. This has brought about an intensification of conflict in the economic sphere and growing working class disillusionment with bourgeois reformist politics i.e. liberalism, social democracy, revisionism. Unlike conditions during the 1930's depression, the working class has not yet suffered major defeats in any of the countries of the U.S. bloc. It remains to be seen whether or not the bourgeoisies in these countries can break working class resistance to attacks on their living standards and civil rights. However, the bourgeoisie remain the principal aspect of this contradict-

ion in these countries since they are not faced with any serious proletarian threat to their positions of power. An ideological vacuum is arising within the working class as reformist illusions collapse, but there are as yet no signs of the rise of a mass revolutionary consciousness. This state of affairs presents both great opportunities and great dangers. Unless viable growing revolutionary movements are created quickly, the emergence of fascist movements with mass support is quite possible and more than likely. For some time, the bourgeoisies in these countries have been whipping up chauvinism and racism to try to prevent the working class identifying with their fellow toilers of the oppressed nations who are causing such great difficulties for the imperialists.

If anything the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is intensifying rather more rapidly in the Soviet bloc than in the U.S. bloc. This is because the type of state monopoly capitalism which has been developed in the Soviet Union and its satellites during the last twenty five years is even more prone to crisis than is Western monopoly capitalism. This is partly because its monopoly character is much more total and thus its internal contradictions are all the sharper. The instability of these countries is exacerbated by their lack of substantial spheres of foreign exploitation, the massive military expenditure necessary for their imperialist expansion and the disjuncture between the official "proletarian" ideology and the bourgeois relations actually prevailing. In this bloc the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat is most intense in the East European satellites of the Soviet Union. On the one hand the state bourgeoisies in countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia have never had much ideological legitimacy in the eyes of the workers and peasants because, unlike the Soviet

Union, the masses never did go through the experience of socialist revolution but instead had their present rulers imposed on them by the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the economic contradictions of these countries have been intensified by their subordination to the needs of the Soviet state bourgeoisie. The resulting oppression and hardship mean that dissent and opposition to the existing regimes is much more widespread and stronger among the working class in these countries than is the case in the West. Popular dissent and revolt is not yet assuming a proletarian revolutionary character but the limitations of economist reformism in countries such as Poland are likely to quickly become apparent.

Although in China the new state bourgeoisie have had the upper hand over the proletariat and its allies since 1976, the struggle for power is far from settled. There have been many demonstrations, strikes and armed uprisings against the new regime. Unlike their Russian counterparts, the Chinese masses went through the experience of the Cultural Revolution and are therefore better prepared to resist bourgeois counter-revolution. Information on the precise political mood of the Chinese masses is hard to come by, but the almost complete lack of official reporting on conditions in rural areas is interesting as is the exclusion of foreign visitors from most rural areas. It may well be the case that a very tense situation prevails throughout much of China. The new state bourgeois regime faces a much more difficult problem of ideological legitimacy than do their Russian counterparts. Their attempts to discredit the proletarian revolutionary line run into the problem that it is closely identified in the minds of the masses with the person of Mao Tse-tung who stands as a symbol of the whole Chinese revolution. It is rather as if the Russian state bourgeoisie had to try to attack and dis-

credit Lenin. In our strategic analysis we should not leave out of account the possibility of mass revolt in China and the overthrow of the state bourgeoisie. If this occurs it would make a massive difference to the international situation and enormously strengthen the revolutionary forces.

For the oppressed nations the principal contradiction is that between them and imperialism. However, this in no way nullifies the very real existence of the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in these countries. In these countries, with their complex class structures and comparatively small proletariats it certainly is necessary for the proletarian party to take the initiative in uniting the broadest possible array of class forces in the anti-imperialist struggle. In doing this, it is necessary in each country to make a careful delineation between different sections of the bourgeoisie; comprador, state and national bourgeois. There is a tendency on the part of some comrades to overestimate the revolutionary potentialities of the national bourgeoisie, simply because some sections of it in China aligned themselves with the revolutionary forces during the new democratic phase of the revolution. We should remind those comrades of the "flabby" and "vacillating" character of the national bourgeoisie (to use Comrade Mao's terms) and emphasise the fact that such elements will countenance any alliance with the proletariat only if they fear its political strength. In many countries, such as Latin America, the greater part of the indigenous bourgeoisie has had a comprador character and in many countries, especially in Africa, the new state bourgeoisie which have emerged since the second world war have shown themselves incapable of cutting loose from the apron strings of imperialism. In the oppressed nations an important task for the revolutionary forces is to expose the capitula-

tionist character of the local bourgeoisies, with their phoney "anti-imperialist" rhetoric. It is precisely because the indigenous bourgeoisies in the oppressed nations are incapable of promoting stable capitalist development that the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in these countries is intensifying.

#### THE CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE IMPERIALIST STATES

Of these contradictions the principal one is between the Soviet social imperialist bloc and the U.S. imperialist bloc. In the period following World War II, the U.S. monopoly capitalist class, in cooperation with its junior partners in imperialism in Western Europe, etc., secured an economic, political and military hegemony throughout the non-socialist world although this hegemony has always been disputed by the peoples of the oppressed nations. However, as state monopoly capitalism was developed in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, imperialist exploitation became necessary to sustain the internal economic and political stability of those countries. At first this took the form of extortionate arms sales and "aid" to underdeveloped countries. More recently, as in the case of Angola, Soviet social imperialism has taken on a more directly military and economic character. Given the global supremacy of the U.S. bloc during the post-World War II period, Soviet social imperialism has only been able to establish spheres of domination and exploitation at the expense of the U.S. bloc. Precisely because it is the "have not" imperialist bloc it has to be aggressive and adventurous to expand its domains. The strength of Soviet social imperialism is its "socialist" rhetoric, which is very attractive to the state bourgeoisies in the oppressed nations, and its military might. Its weakness is the growing intensity of its own internal economic and political contradict-

ions which spur its leaders on to more reckless adventures in order to expand and secure its foreign spheres of influence. Thus it is the Soviet bloc which is taking the initiatives and the U.S. bloc which makes defensive postures to these initiatives. The contradiction between the two blocs is becoming more antagonistic as the U.S. bloc recovers from its defeats in Indo-China and Iran and begins to take a firmer stand against Soviet encroachments on its preserves. The external condition which is serving to intensify the contradiction between the two major imperialist blocs is the rising tide of national liberation struggle in the oppressed nations. This weakens the hegemony of U.S. imperialism as in the case of Iran, while at the same time frustrating the advance and consolidation of Soviet social imperialism, as in Eritrea and Afghanistan. Furthermore, the fact that these are now the two major imperialist blocs provides opportunities for indigenous bourgeoisies in the underdeveloped countries to play them off against each other. These factors, by weakening the positions of the two imperialist powers, serve to intensify the rivalry and confrontation between the two blocs and thus bring nearer open inter-imperialist war.

From around 1974 onwards, until recently, the Chinese revisionists laid great emphasis on the contradictions between the bourgeoisies of the greater and lesser imperialist countries in each of the two major blocs. It is true that with the post-war recovery and growth of the West European and Japanese economies various conflicts of interest developed between the bourgeoisies of these countries and U.S. monopoly capitalism as well as among the bourgeoisies of the lesser imperialist countries. Furthermore, these have become intensified with the onset of a new major world depression. However, it is important not to exaggerate the intensity of such conflicts. There is a high degree of unity be-

tween the West European, Japanese, Australian and New Zealand bourgeoisies and U.S. monopoly capitalism. Faced as they are with the common threat of Soviet social imperialism there is unlikely to be any severance of their already strong military and economic ties. The lesser imperialist bourgeoisies know very well that they cannot hope to resist Soviet social imperialism either at home or abroad without the support of U.S. economic and military might. In the Soviet bloc there are also contradictions between the Soviet state bourgeoisies of Eastern Europe, Cuba and Vietnam. The state bourgeoisies of the latter countries certainly do seek a greater measure of autonomy with respect to the Soviet Union, caught as they are between the demands of their own people for more freedom and the dictates of the Kremlin to subordinate their own national development to the needs of the Soviet Union. However, these state bourgeoisies are well aware that their own regimes would not last five minutes without the support of Soviet military forces and thus they are unlikely to make any serious efforts to throw off the Soviet yoke.

As already stated, the future of China is uncertain. For the last few years, the Chinese state bourgeoisie have been entering into an alliance with the U.S. imperialist bloc against the Soviet social imperialist bloc. From the standpoint of the Chinese revisionists this move is rational since, despite their public proclamations to the contrary, the U.S. bloc is immensely more powerful, both economically and militarily, than is the Soviet bloc. In any future major war the U.S. bloc is likely to prevail and as an ally the Chinese state bourgeoisie no doubt calculates that it will have a seat at the ensuing robbers banquet. Although small in comparison with its vast population, China nonetheless has a very substantial industrial sector by world standards. Given the rapid restoration

of capitalist relations of production and given the intense drive to adopt the more advanced forces of production, China will necessarily have to become imperialist. With profits in command it will become attractive, indeed economically necessary, for the Chinese state bourgeoisie to start selling the products of its modernized defense industry abroad. Also, as the organic composition of capital of Chinese state monopoly capitalist industry rises and the rate of profit falls, other more directly economic forms of imperialist exploitation will emerge. Some comrades consider that because of China's overall economic backwardness and because of the entry of foreign capital into China, it will become a neo-colony again. This will not occur, any more than it has done in the Soviet Union, because the new state bourgeoisie are perfectly able to keep a tight control on the operations of foreign capital within China. True, they have reopened the doors for Western imperialism to exploit Chinese workers and peasants once again but, to use their expression, this development is in the nature of a "joint enterprise" between the Chinese state bourgeoisie and foreign bourgeoisies. As China's economic and military power increases and as it begins to develop its own imperialist interests, its rulers may decide it is in their interests to adopt a more independent role with respect to both of the superpowers, especially if the U.S. bloc is greatly weakened by further waves of national liberation struggle and internal upheavals. The Chinese bourgeoisie might even swap sides or maybe stand on the sidelines hoping to clean up in the aftermath of mutually destructive war between the U.S. and Soviet blocs.

#### WAR OR REVOLUTION?

Given this intensifying nexus of contradictions



on a world scale, the working class and other oppressed people are faced, in the coming period with the choice between inter-imperialist war or revolution. As the world crisis of imperialism deepens and consequently as the conflict between the Soviet and U.S. imperialist blocs intensifies, there are two possible outcomes: Either

1. The contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in at least some of the imperialist countries will become the principal one with the proletariat becoming the principal aspect, i.e. revolution breaks out.

Or

2. The contradiction between the two major imperialist powers will become the principal one, most likely with the Soviet bloc being the principal aspect, i.e. major inter-imperialist war breaks out.

Only the revolutionary insurrection of the working class in the imperialist countries can prevent a Third World War. Imperialism certainly can be and is being weakened from without by the struggles of the oppressed nations. However, it can only be finally destroyed from within by means of proletarian revolution. In the imperialist countries of both blocs, with the deepening of the world economic crisis and the intensifying conflict between the two blocs, the objective conditions for a qualitative breakthrough in revolutionary consciousness are becoming more favourable. The same conditions also favour a growth of reaction as the bourgeoisie and their agents try to whip up chauvinism and war fever to divert peoples attention from the real cause of the crisis. In the U.S. bloc the ideological grip of various species of bourgeois reformism over the great mass of the people is weakening, while in the Soviet bloc, especially in Eastern Europe, the legitimacy of the social fascist regimes is crumbling away. The task of the Marxist-Leninists in these countries is

to build, and build fast, authentic revolutionary movements and parties to lead the working class. If we fail to do so, then the grip of bourgeois reaction will tighten and the bourgeoisies will lead the masses into the unprecedented death and destruction of a new major war. We must also take into account the fact that if and as we succeed in winning over the masses to a revolutionary outlook, this is likely to have the effect of intensifying the bourgeoisies' war preparations. They could well attempt to head off the growth of revolutionary consciousness by launching a new war sooner rather than later on when their capacity to do so could be adversely affected by growing mass insurrection. It would only be necessary for revolutionary upsurges to occur in just some of the imperialist countries for the war preparations of the imperialists to be disrupted for a considerable period of time. However, it would be to the masses greatest advantage if revolution were to be made in at least some of the countries in both blocs, thus forestalling the possibility of one bloc seizing upon the others weakness to launch a sudden attack.

The primary strategic aim of the Marxist-Leninist forces must be to make the revolution prevent the war. In the oppressed nations our task is to step up the anti-imperialist struggles and win leadership of them, thus exacerbating the internal contradictions of the imperialist countries while simultaneously promoting the cause of the oppressed peoples. In the imperialist countries our task is to build revolutionary movements and parties as the vehicles of mass revolutionary insurrection. Time is not on our side and the revolutionaries, especially in the imperialist countries, must greatly intensify their efforts.

If we do not succeed in leading revolutionary insurrections in at least some of the imperial-

ist countries, then a new world war is inevitable, sooner or later. Thus we must keep in reserve a secondary strategic aim of making the war lead to revolution. Regardless of whether one imperialist bloc or the other emerged from the war as a "victor" the destruction and chaos brought about by the war would provoke massive discontent and upheaval. Provided that substantial revolutionary movements and parties had been built up it would be possible to overthrow the bourgeoisie in at least some of the imperialist countries. The likely alternative would be various forms of fascist military dictatorship as the only means by which the bourgeoisie could retain control over the surviving populations in war devastated countries. In the oppressed nations the hold of the imperialists would be relaxed, at least temporarily, and this would present a great opportunity for the national revolutionary leadership, to carry through the anti-imperialist struggle and push on to the socialist revolution. It must also be recognised that such circumstances also favour the interests of at least some of the indigenous bourgeoisies in these countries. Freed from imperialist control, they could consolidate their positions, especially in countries with a substantial industrial base such as Brazil, and promote capitalist development and, in the course of time, themselves become new imperialist powers.

The revolutionary forces must keep in mind the fact that however favourable the objective conditions may be for revolutionary action this will only transpire if we put into practice the mass line and thus provide real revolutionary leadership for the toiling masses of the world. Capitalism and imperialism will never simply collapse of their own accord. They have to be overthrown as a conscious act on the part of the working people. Furthermore, the experience of the international revolutionary movement

since the Paris Commune shows that the struggle to overthrow capitalism is going to be spread out over many generations and involves many temporary reverses and defeats. The capture of state power by the proletariat and its allies is only the beginning of a process of protracted revolutionary struggle and transformation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We have now entered a period where there are great opportunities for the revolutionary forces to seize the initiative. If we fail in this task then the cause of the working people of the world may not be able to make any significant advances for another generation or two. We need not fail and we must not fail.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

It cannot be denied that at the present time the revolutionary forces are weak in all senses - ideologically, politically and organisationally. The triumph, at least temporarily, of the capitalist roaders in China is a massive setback for the world revolutionary movement. For the first time since the October revolution in 1917 there is not a country in the world where the dictatorship of the proletariat is secure. Even so, there are no grounds for despair. With the collapse of the second international upon the outbreak of World War I the international revolutionary movement was reduced to a handful of small organisations and yet great revolutionary upsurges were not long in coming.

Already, (as reported elsewhere in this issue of Red Star), the Marxist-Leninists have begun the process of rebuilding the revolutionary movement both at the national and international levels. We must intensify our struggle against all bourgeois trends within the working class and other oppressed strata. In particular we must thoroughly expose and discredit social democracy, Trotskyism, old revisionism and new

revisionism. A vital and absolutely necessary part of the fight against opportunism of all kinds is the struggle to develop, win support for and put into practise, correct revolutionary strategy and tactics. Developing a correct strategic line for the period we have now entered is part of this task and the communique of the international conference and this article are contributions towards this goal. We must clearly and forcefully confront the working class and other oppressed people with the alternatives they face: war or revolution. While always seeking to lead the people in their struggles on all fronts we should be careful not to become bogged down in and preoccupied with day-to-day struggles of an essentially defensive, as opposed to offensive, kind. Our emphasis must be on winning the masses over to the revolutionary alternative to imperialist war.

We must step up our efforts to build revolutionary movements and parties. In some countries the Marxist-Leninists have succeeded in rising to the stage of party formation, but in many others, such as Britain, this has not yet been achieved. In the latter countries it is the duty of the Marxist-Leninists to systematically set about the task of party building. The key task in this process of political struggle is to develop a revolutionary programme that analyses the concrete particularity of the contradictions in a given country and the strategy for the conduct of revolutionary struggle in that country in relation to the world situation as a whole. In the building of proletarian parties politics must always be in command and the mistake of giving organisational unity priority over political unity should be avoided.

We appeal to all the genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries in Britain to commit themselves together with us, to the task of developing the revolutionary programme. Comrades, make haste. Time is not on our side.

## THE POLITICS OF OPPORTUNISM; Or How To Avoid Class Struggle

What I want to do in this article is to take an overview of a phenomena governing the perspectives of the radical British left - the "lowest common denominator" approach. As the name suggests, this is the procedure which reduces political practice to the "frenetic search for the get-rich quick gimmick". (1) The radical left, which has no Marxist understanding of society beyond a vague impressionist hope "that this downturn is temporary, that with the coming rise of the class struggle all the present inertia will dissolve like mists before the morning sun" (2) is reduced to an empirical analysis revolving around 'bigness'. If a campaign, strike, movement etc looks like becoming 'big' in numerical terms, the radical left will jump like a flea onto a dog, only to jump right out again when the struggle diminishes and/or they cannot control it. The basic perspective of the radical left, lies not in seeking to implant Marxism within the working class, but of numerical recruitment to a particular radical left group. Struggles are entered into, not to expedite them as much as to recruit a few new members - while a few leave as they realise opportunism holds nothing for them. It is this type of arrogant pessimism which leads to some black, Irish and female comrades to view the radical left with something less than equanimity. Let us now look more deeply at the lowest common denominator approach.

## LABOUR PARTY ENTRISM

The tactic of entering the Labour Party (you Labour, they Party) is an old favourite of the British radical left(3) and is still going strong today under the auspices of "Militant" and "Socialist Organiser".(4) By entering the L.P. and the L.P.Y.S. these groups hope to get rich quick by avoiding the long arduous task of fighting for Marxist politics in the working class in favour of a milieu which is, supposedly, more receptive than the working class to the radical politics these groups promote. The essentially manipulative approach of the radical left is illustrated by their entrism work. Particularly in the case of "Militant" the main approach is not so much to convince rank and file workers as to gain 'control' of the L.P.Y.S. G.M.C.'s, particular Labour bureaucrats/ MP's etc in order to 'win' resolutions: resolutions which in fact mean nothing as no one acts on them. This manipulative technique is in fact inherent in the opportunist approach and will occur again and again throughout this article. Let us now look at this more deeply. Whilst one should not ignore the evidence which destroys the radical lefts organisational analysis of the L.P. as a "mass working class party"(5), I want to look at the political implications of 'entrism'. I have already noted that the main implication of entrism is the rejection of the possibility of building a revolutionary vanguard in the working class in favour of finding a cosy home in the company of what can only be presumed to be more politically advanced elements. These can be 'won over' more easily. The fact that these workers (and as Hindess notes, the L.P. is being heavily infiltrated by the ambitious middle class) are by definition more integrated, both organisationally and politically into social democracy, is a factor which is ignored. The possibility that by struggling within the L.P. is a./ legitimising its struct-

ures and existenceb./ sowing illusions of making the L.P. into a vehicle for social transformation and c./ implying a parliamentary road to socialism - is glossed over. The painful truth is that entrism groups do not and cannot change the L.P., it is the L.P. which changes them. "Militant", for example, is so deeply entrenched within the L.P. that it could not exist as a separate entity. Similarly, "Workers Action" have now given up their own independent paper - which was the best radical left paper (6), in favour of "Socialist Organiser" where all the issues revolve around a Labour Party context. Inevitably in entering the L.P. a group is dragged down into the mire of petty bureaucracy and political compromise. The lowest common denominator approach of substituting L.P. members for the working class can only result in ignominious failure. The compromise that the entrism groups make with social democracy is obvious. Is it the case however, that other radical left groups such as S.W.P., I.M.G., have broken with social democracy? No, it is not the case. Although the pages of "Socialist Worker", and "Socialist Challenge" may carry attacks on the Labour Party for four years, at election time these papers invariably, in one variant or another of 'critical support', call for a vote for Labour. Readers who have previously been informed that Labour is a load of shit are now called on to vote for it. The lowest common denominator philosophy is wheeled out to justify this: if we do not call for a labour vote we will "isolate ourselves from the masses" goes the argument.

In reality the only way for Marxists to gain credibility amongst the masses is not by short term tactical manipulation but by argument and practise in building a revolutionary vanguard within the working class. It is a case of winning people to a Marxist perspective, not of

watering down that perspective to fit the present consciousness of the masses. The radical lefts' subservience to the L.P. only serves to show how incomplete has been its ideological rupture with social democracy.

### THE BROAD FRONT

Another "get rich quick" tactic of the radical left is the Broad Front organisation where a person only has to agree with a lowest common denominator set of "demands" in order to be joined up and have taken the initial step towards membership of a radical left group. It is not surprising that the group most prominent and most successful by its own standards in this field is the degenerate Socialist Workers Party. It is not surprising that a group which has rejected Lenin's theory of imperialism(7) has a radical Keynesian analysis of the post-war boom(8), and the Soviet Union(9) reflected in a paper little more than a "left" populist "Sun" is mesmerised by the mass movement.

One could spend literally hours exposing the political opportunism inherent in three of the S.W.P.'s own front organisations (Rank and File Anti-Nazi League, Charter 80) but this is outside my present interest. What should be noted however, is the lowest common denominator perspective of Broad Front politics, whether it be the "Right to Work", "Smash the Nazi Front" or "Don't Let the Irish Prisoners Die". In all cases the impetus of Broad Front campaigning is to move the universe of discourse away from the capitalist state and onto any issue where a false 'unity' can be obtained. The lowest common denominator approach simply sidesteps the facts of the capitalist crisis, state racism and imperialism. In this way the S.W.P. is able to build up sporadic campaigns only for them to collapse when the initial impetus of

enthusiasm is lost. The task of politically educating the masses via theory and practise is rejected in favour of short term numerical gain. Again the manipulateness of the radical left is exposed. It is not a matter of enabling the working class with the aid of Marxist theory and practise. No, the workers are too stupid for this. Instead the S.W.P. and bedmates will present one idea at a time in order to con the working class into socialism. Despite its formal pretensions, the political practise of the radical left ends up by being profoundly undemocratic.

### "REVOLUTIONARY" HOTCHPOTCH

In contrast to the Broad Frontism of S.W.P., the International Marxist Group has, over the last few years, conceived of an incredible mish-mash of ideas to provide an audience for their politics.

Sceptical of building a Broad Front R&F campaign in the unions, the I.M.G. decided an embryonic replacement already existed; they identified a milieu of militants, 'left' bureaucrats and individuals as a "class struggle left wing". Here again the radical left is absolved of the burning necessity to build a revolutionary leadership in the class. After all a "milieu" already exists. The numbers game is also apparent in IMG. Perhaps if the radical left all joined hands, it would, like Alice in Wonderland, at least appear to be bigger. This was the impetus behind the IMG's drive for revolutionary regroupment and the change from "Red Weekly" to the allegedly broader paper "Socialist Challenge". This concept has now degenerated to fusion with the SWP and a 'new look' paper which is suspiciously like S.W. In line with this broad approach the IMG with the help of Big Flame, created a whole new electoral party "Socialist Unity". However, it was not to stand in any c-

onstituency where a possibility existed that Labour could lose because of a split vote. Needless to say "Socialist Unity" exists now only as a badge logo.

Now while one can criticise all three of these concepts, the point I want to make is that the IMG, in tune with the radical left in general, will do anything rather than fight in the working class for Marxist politics. The 'discovery' of a milieu, the launching of a new paper, the creation of a new Broad Front campaign, publicity stunts for the media, all these are favoured in place of attempting to build independent working class struggle.

#### FEMINISM

Another lowest common denominator approach is to latch onto the autonomous struggles of sections of the working class. Firstly the IMG but now largely Big Flame identify radical varieties of Feminism as potential (and in the case of B.F. actual) areas of recruitment. In some instances the influx of feminists may be beneficial to a group - women's caucuses, creches etc are often forgotten by the workers movement and yet are essential to enable women, who are in a minority anyway, to participate. However, in order to recruit, which is the *raison d'être* for the radical left's existence, the ideology of feminism is left unchallenged lest it spoils "unity". In Big Flame's case this has reached crisis proportions. It is not a case of women working as a collective within a radical left group, it is rather "a place where we can work out ideas together, make links between different struggles, understand the relationship between sex and class and generalise our politics" (10). Now formally there is nothing incorrect with this. In fact it is all to the good if women can 'generalise' their politics. On the other hand, however, it illustrates a general

concept prevalent amongst the radical left, which reaches chronic proportions in B.F., that it is not in practice necessary to build a revolutionary party both within and across the working class, but that this can be achieved by collecting together various oppositional factions within the working class. The party is then posed as a talking shop where homosexuals, women the unemployed etc can air their grievances. The 'get rich quick' approach of the radical left poses collecting up what already exists against building a political leadership which doesn't. Again this approach is essentially manipulative. Even if B.F.'s politics are modified to accommodate Feminist ideology, it is still implicit that feminists are seen as useful cannon fodder to build the group.

#### CONCLUSION

The lack of a Marxist theory and practice means the British radical left must rely on empiricist analysis for guidance. Only this can explain why the same mistakes are continuously repeated. The lowest common denominator approach the aptly named "get rich quick" syndrome despite, in the case of the SWP, an ability to achieve seemingly spectacular short term numerical gains, in the long run contributes less than nothing to the task of promoting the liberation of the working class from bourgeois ideology as a precondition for socialist revolution.

#### FOOTNOTES

- (1) Rise and Fall of the Far Left. The Leveller No18, p.16, Aug/Sept 1978.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) See the eight page supplement to "Workers Action" 148 July 28th 1979 entitled "Labour's Misspent Youth" which charts the progress of

Labours youth wing (the primary area of concern for the entrists) from 1924 to 1979.

- (4) Formerly "Workers Action".
- (5) See Barry Hindess - "The decline of working class politics", especially pages 57,92-3. Also see Westergaard & Rester "Class in a Capitalist Society". On page 407 there is both a discussion of working class abstention from voting and of the changing social composition of Labour Cabinets. The main factor keeping the L.P. alive at base level is the frenetic activity of the entrists, who by frantically imparting the kiss of life are able to create an illusion of movement.
- (6) For example 148, mentioned in note three carries articles exposing the SWP's position on Ireland, "How Socialist Worker dropped Troops Out Now" and "From Kautsky to Eurocommunism" pages 6&7.
- (7) See I.S. Journal 61.
- (8) I.S. 61
- (9) Cliff - "Russia - a Marxist Analysis".
- (10) "Walking a Tightrope" - Big Flame Womens Pamphlet, page 1.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Protest and Survive?

PROTEST AND SURVIVE. Edited by E.P.Thompson and D.Smith. Penguin. 1980.

This revised version of the editors "Protest & Survive" essay, together with a variety of contributions by other prominent peace researchers has been acclaimed as the handbook of the revived disarmament movement. While all the essays are worth reading and contain up-to-date information, taken as a whole, the style of the book is markedly liberal and anti-Leninist.

Two of the most interesting essays are by Alva Myrdal (The Superpowers Game over Europe) and Dan Smith (The European Nuclear Theatre). Myrdal points out that the United States notion of a 'European nuclear war' is far from being new; in fact it arose as far back as the Eisenhower administration when large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons began to be shipped to Europe in 1954. The United States has now developed a double scenario for any future confrontation with the Soviet Union - one based on traditional deterrence for avoiding a superpower war, the other based on the possible use of tactical nuclear weapons as a counter-measure against a conventional attack by the Soviet Union, but which does not allow that war to escalate to inter-continental warfare involving the territories of the superpowers themselves. On the other hand, Myrdal emphasises that the Soviet Union does not regard a nuclear war as being able to be limited to Europe, and she herself considers that the entire doctrine of what is meant by a limited war in Europe remains hazy, while ideas of what might trigger such a war are "equally hazy, if not actually erron-

eous".

Dan Smith's essay begins by analysing in some detail the weapons available to NATO and the Warsaw Pact forces. After demonstrating that NATO has over twice as many theatre nuclear weapons in Europe as the Warsaw Pact, he then goes on to show that the Western view of a Warsaw Pact numerical superiority in long-range TNW's is false too. NATO's emphasis on relatively short-range weapons is due to its own preferences and decisions, for at any time since the mid-1950's it has had the technology to deploy long-range missiles for theatre nuclear war if it had chosen to do so. NATO's decision to go in for long-range TNW's as a result of the December 1979 decision was a result of NATO coming to different views about how it wants to prepare for nuclear war in Europe. However, Smith fails to elaborate on the extent of the change in military thinking within NATO, and leaves unclear the implications of the decision to base new weapons in Europe. After some more discussion of the 'numbers game', in which he concludes that NATO has a present superiority in delivery systems with ranges over 1000 miles and a slight disadvantage in delivery systems below this range, Smith goes on to discuss two objections which are likely to be raised against the idea of European Nuclear Disarmament. These are, firstly, the objection that because of the Warsaw Pact's superior conventional forces, nuclear disarmament will leave NATO worse off, and secondly, the objection that the implementation of the idea would weaken the unity of NATO at exactly the time when it should be standing more closely together than ever. To the first objection, Smith uses U.S. Department of Defence analyses and work done by the International Institute for Strategic Studies which show that the build-up of the Warsaw Pact forces during the 1970's was at least matched by NATO. To the second argument, Smith correctly

points out that NATO's 'unity' is spurious anyway, since it amounts to U.S. hegemony in NATO and their strategy for a limited nuclear war, but he fails to develop his desire for "a challenge to NATO's unity" into an explicit demand for British withdrawal from NATO and an end to all U.S. bases in Britain.

This characteristic unwillingness to challenge the consistent opportunism of the Labour Party on the question of unilateral British nuclear disarmament is also present in the discussion of British Military expenditure in the 1980's by Dan and Ron Smith. While they begin by exposing the myth that it is the Tories that are responsible for the commitment to increase defence spending in real terms (the level of 3% being no more than the Labour government agreed to in 1977 as part of an all-round NATO programme), they conclude that it is the Conservative government which is responsible for contributing to the possibility of a nuclear holocaust, and they urge active opposition to Conservative policies.

However the real weaknesses of the book become apparent when the contributors try to explain the reasons for the rivalry between the super-powers and to suggest possible strategies for disarmament. The chapter by Holloway on 'War, Militarism and the Soviet State' is highly derivative of the Trotskyist 'degenerated workers state' thesis. In so far as he gives any explanation for the marked build up of Soviet military forces in the period since the downfall of Khrushchev, Holloway ascribes it to the changes that have occurred in the international system, "for example the emergence of Japan and the EEC as major centres of economic power". In order to qualify this reliance on external conditions for his explanation of the present state of the Soviet Union, Holloway also places considerable emphasis on the continuity of policy among the Soviet leadership throughout the his-



tory of the Soviet state, even though he acknowledges that important changes have taken place since Stalin's death, notably the considerable slowing in the rate of economic growth. However Holloway does not attribute this slowdown to the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, since in his discussion of whether a 'military-industrial complex' exists in Russia, he finds this an unsuitable term because of the implication that the driving force of arms policies is the pursuit of profit by capitalist enterprises. Without having grasped that state capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union and that this has inevitably resulted in the transformation of the USSR into an imperialist superpower Holloway can provide no explanation for the increasing interventions by the Soviet Union in the 'socialist' countries of Eastern Europe and third world countries such as Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

A similar anti-Leninist view of the causes of war is displayed in Mary Kaldors 'Disarmament: the Armament Process in Reverse'. For her, it is ideas and institutions which foster the arms race, not the necessity for imperialist powers to wage war in order to redivide the world. Her suggestion for reversing the arms race by developing workers plans for socially useful products amongst workers in the defense industries may be a useful way of building up support amongst these workers, but she is deceiving herself and misleading her readers if she seriously thinks that any ruling class are going to stand by and see their tanks converted into tractors.

The final section of the book is notable for its failure to discuss any strategy for achieving the aim of European Nuclear Disarmament. In terms of Britain in particular, there is a conspicuous absence of any discussion of the CND campaign of the early 1960's and the reasons for its failure, which contrasts markedly with

the detailed treatment which Coates gives to the several previous attempts to set up nuclear free zones in Europe. Of course, this omission is an intentional one, because such a discussion would bring into the open the real reason for the failure of the first CND campaign -- namely the failure of its leaders to challenge the Labour party -- and would therefore seriously weaken the position of those people seeking to use the revived disarmament campaign to boost the lagging fortunes of the Labour party.

If we are serious about unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, then definite means must be found of influencing and changing the war policy of the British state. One possible way of beginning to do this would be for local disarmament groups to publicly challenge candidates from the main political parties on their position regarding Cruise missiles, British withdrawal from NATO and unilateral nuclear disarmament. If candidates fail to uphold any of these three demands, then local disarmament groups should consider putting forward their own candidates in opposition to candidates from the main political parties. Only by adopting tactics such as this, as part of an overall campaign, will the disarmament movement be able to present a serious challenge to the main political parties at the point where they are most vulnerable -- the ballot box.

## BOOK ADVERTISEMENT

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