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More on the Slogan of
Unity in Action

THE FIGHT AGAINST REVISIONISM IS, HOWEVER, NOT confined to only an ideological polemic, however hard-hitting it might be and whatever self-satisfaction it may cause to certain people. It is a serious struggle to rescue the masses who may be under its influence. (We hope our critics do not think that the revisionists are already repudiated by the masses in each country.) To carry this fight from the vanguard to the mass, different tactics and methods are required. Here the question is how to make the masses feel the harmful and reactionary character of revisionism or reformism through their direct experience. Here it is necessary to take the masses into action, bring them face to face with all anti-Marxist views and lines and enable them to see for themselves what is what. The harmful reactionary ideologies represented by the revisionists cannot be seen in their true colours unless the struggle against imperialism, against capital, is heightened, intensified and widespread. Only in the crucible of class struggle will revisionism be inevitably routed.

But for this the primary condition is that Marxist-Leninists must be in a position to unleash class struggles and cannot content themselves with verbal pyrotechnics directed against the revisionists. And for this it is essential that the masses under the influence of the revisionists are rescued, that a united action of the people against imperialism is supported and organized. It is here that the call for united action plays an important role. It keys up the class struggle, brings the masses face to face with the revisionists and enables them to direct their blows against imperialism while repudiating revisionism. It is a fatuous idea to fight revisionism in isolation from the struggle against imperialism and capitalism, without taking concrete steps to intensify that struggle by drawing all the followers of the reformists and revisionists in it.

Some of our critics sometimes take a sober stand when facing internal issues. With all their passion for Marxist purity and no cooperation with those who reject class struggle, they did not oppose, in fact, they enthusiastically supported, electoral agreements with the revisionists in India. Why was it so? How is that when an agreement for action is demanded to defend bleeding Viet Nam, they shout treachery, betrayal?

Lenin, that incomparable fighter against revisionism, has given the correct guiding line to carry on the fight. Having defeated the Second International ideologically, Lenin said that the victory means that the vanguard has been won over. We must turn towards winning over the mass. While he warned against opportunist elements joining the new International and objected to admitting certain parties to membership of the Third International because they had not repudiated their reformist past in action, he also demanded a fight against 'Left-dogmatism' which was hampering mass work, and carrying on the fight for revolution to the masses. Lenin regarded the fight against revisionism and the fight against imperialism, the fight for revolution as a single inseparable whole and directed the vanguard that broke away from opportunism to adopt methods of leading the masses. "As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning over the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of Communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work; even propaganda circles with all their parochial limitations are useful under these conditions and produced good results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses, of the disposition, if one may so put it, of the vast armies, of the alignment of all the class forces in a given society, for the final and decisive battle, then propagandist methods alone, the mere repetition of the truths of 'pure' Communism are of no avail..." "It is necessary to link the strictest devotion to the ideas of Communism with the ability to effect all the necessary practical compromises, tactics, conciliatory manoeuvres, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to speed up the achievement and then loss of political power by the Hendersons (the heroes of the Second International)...; to accelerate their inevitable bankruptcy in practice, which will enlighten the masses in the spirit of our ideas, in the direction of Commu-

nism..." (*Left-Wing Communism, Collected Works*, vol. 31, pp. 94-95). Here is a demand for irreconcilable struggle in relation to principles, in relation to the Party, combined with compromises and zigzags to intensify the struggle against the main enemy and, during the course of it, expose the bankruptcy of the opportunists.

In the context of the present situation anyone who talks of fighting revisionism, but confines himself only to pure propaganda without taking concrete steps to unleash the common struggle against imperialism, without struggling to defend the unity of the socialist camp against imperialism, without adopting measures and tactics to draw all the people of the socialist camp in the common struggle, who is afraid of asking the leaders of all socialist countries to come together on the basis of common action for Viet Nam, is separating the fight against revisionism from the anti-imperialist struggle. His struggle becomes a verbal struggle in which positions are taken according to the factional convenience of the contending parties and not according to needs of the revolutionary struggle.

It should be clear, therefore, that an irreconcilable struggle for the purity of the Marxist doctrine has to be combined with practical proposals for united action. The first is intended to create a genuine Marxist Party which will admit of no opportunism in its ranks and which is bound to unmask and expose the revisionists as betrayers of Marxism. This is to draw the hard core, the advanced elements, who are prepared to follow the Marxist doctrine, though some of them might be misled by the revisionists. As a matter of fact, there are thousands who belong to this category. But at the same time, the fight against the main enemy has to be conducted among the masses who have not yet accepted Marxism and of whom large sections follow the reformists and revisionists. Here, mere propaganda is no good. Flexible tactics have to be adopted to unleash the struggle and secure for the masses direct experience about revisionists in action.

The opposition to a struggle for united action is utter repudiation of the Marxist-Leninist tactics of united front, of temporary agreements to push forward the revolutionary struggle. It is a substitution of verbal propaganda for the patient task of building

a revolutionary movement of the common people of all lands through which the revisionists can be isolated growingly and the way made clear for the final struggle. And in connection with the issue we are discussing—united action for Viet Nam between the Soviet Union and People's China—it is a refusal to muster all strength in support of this vital struggle, it is abandonment of the Soviet people and working class to the revisionist leadership, refusal to carry them the message of common struggle and the earnestness of others to work for it, a refusal to fight for forging the unity of the socialist camp which is becoming the decisive factor in the development of society. This extra-Left stand supports revisionist practice and nothing else.

In defence of Lenin, whose great struggle for ideological purity and a Marxist Party has been distorted by our critics, it must be stated that Lenin stood for temporary agreements, unity of action, united front with organizations led by leaders of the Second International, when such agreements were necessary for unleashing mass action. The same Lenin who declared that the Second International had collapsed, who founded the Third International, also advocated temporary agreements with it when the situation so demanded, when such understanding and agreements did not hinder the development of revolutionary process. Our critics are just distorting Lenin's teachings.

Criticizing certain comrades who made unwarranted concessions to the opportunists of the Second International in 1922, Lenin said: "Perhaps the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and Syndicalists who were opposed to united front tactics, will infer from the above argument that united front tactics were wrong. But such an inference will be obviously wrong. If the Communist representatives have paid too much for admission to premises in which they have some, even if small, opportunity of addressing workers up to now in the exclusive 'possession' of reformists, such a mistake must be rectified next time. But it would be an incomparably greater mistake to reject all terms, or all payment for admission to these fairly well-guarded and barred premises... The great mistake the Italian Communists and a section of the French Communists and Syndicalists make is in being content with the knowledge they a ready possess. They are content with knowing well enough

that the representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals...are very shrewd agents of the bourgeoisie and vehicles of their influence. But people, workers, who really know this, and who really understand its significance are undoubtedly in the minority in Italy, Britain, the USA and France. Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises when the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers... The Communists who refuse to understand this and who do not want to learn how to do it cannot hope to win over the majority of the workers; at all events, they are hindering and retarding the work of this majority. For Communists and all genuine "adherents of the workers' revolution, this is absolutely unparadonable" (*Collected Works*, vol. 33, p. 333).

This is Lenin's verdict on the line advocated by our critics. Have they any right to speak in the name of Lenin? The utterly reactionary character of this line stands unmasked when it is realized that it obstructs and hinders the united action of the socialist camp for Viet Nam under the banner of a principled fight against revisionism.

In connection with the fight waged by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party against opportunism and for temporary agreements, Lenin writes, in answer to the 'Lefts': "During the Duma elections of 1907, the Bolsheviks entered briefly into a formal political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912, there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Social-Democratic Party, but we *never stopped* our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat. During the war, we concluded certain compromises with the Kautskyites (Are our critics horrified?) with the Left Mensheviks (Martov) and with a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (Chernov and Natausan); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and Kienthal and issued joint manifestoes. However, we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological struggle and political struggle against the Kautskyites, etc." (*'Left-Wing' Communism, Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 72). If our critics only take the trouble of reading

Lenin again, they will realize the rank absurdity of their opposition to united action.

Thus the opposition to the proposal for united action for one of the most vital issues of our time betrays the sectarian and disruptive outlook. It is besides based on the rejection of the tactics of united front without which proletarian parties cannot grow.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, faced with the rise of fascism, applied these teachings of Lenin on all fronts and gave guidance to the working class to build an all-powerful united front. While not relaxing its ideological struggle against opportunism, while laying down a correct programme of immediate action directed against fascism, the Congress sought to rally the entire working class and for that purpose was prepared for joint actions with the Second International also. And it stated that through such actions not only the workers following the two Internationals could be roused but they could also bring into action the vast mass of Catholic and unorganized workers. These steps were proposed to intensify the class resistance of the working class at the same time the ideological struggle continued. The conception that joint action means ideological truce is a reformist conception, and it is surprising our critics share it.

"It is said that the united front tactics contradict the 'class against class' tactics. But as Comrade Dimitrov has quite rightly said, the class against class tactics are not the tactics of the struggle of one section of the working class against another, but the tactics of mobilizing the forces of the proletariat as a class against another class, the bourgeoisie, on the basis of the united front'... Only hopeless idiots can think that by helping the Social-Democratic workers to come over to the position of the class struggle by means of the united front tactics we are facilitating the capitulation of Communism to Social-Democracy" (Manuilsky, Seventh Congress).

But here are people who do not want any proposal to draw even the workers and peoples of the socialist camp to fight the common enemy—all in the name of fighting the revisionist leadership. It is obvious that they identify the Soviet Union and Soviet people and the entire Soviet Party with the leadership.

This is where departure from Leninism leads.

The Leninist tactics of agreements, compromises with different classes and parties, of united front, were successfully applied by the Communist Party of China under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung during the great revolutionary struggle. On each and every occasion, the main enemy was isolated and a telling blow was delivered against it. On the basis of the independence of the Party and its revolutionary action, the masses under the leadership of the vacillating classes were successfully won over through the united front. But our critics say that today to attempt to do any such thing, to try to gather together the people of the socialist camp for united action for Viet Nam, is all revisionism. They want to carry on the struggle against revisionism in isolation from American imperialism. In fact some of them do not regard American imperialism as the main enemy. It is argued that the revisionists cannot be compared to the revisionists of Lenin's days. They control certain countries in the socialist camp, etc. What follows from this? That the situation is more serious and it is all the more necessary to enlighten the masses in socialist countries through action and their direct experience. It shows that because of the past, because of socialism, the traditional hold of these leaders must be much deeper, illusions widespread, and mere verbal propaganda will find difficult to penetrate the curtain of prejudice. In the meantime, American imperialism continues its offensive and it is immediately necessary for the entire socialist camp to act. Only those who are not serious about effectively challenging American imperialism can afford to take a cynical attitude to the question of united action. Our document does not say that the task is easy, that it can be easily accomplished. But at the same time, it realizes that revolutionaries must move in that direction to check their main enemy. But here are people who are prepared to freeze the present situation, keep the socialist camp divided, refuse to rouse masses for common struggle through offer of united action to maintain the purity of their ideological struggle.

Sometimes the arguments of our critics become curiouser and curiouser. They think that any analogy to the call for a front against fascism is wrong, because the call today comes

from a revisionist leadership. We have already said that the call for a common party cannot be entertained. But what prevents the Marxist-Leninists from giving a call for united action against American imperialism in connection with Viet Nam? It is true that the minimum condition of the anti-fascist front was action against fascism. But who prevents the revolutionaries from raising action against American imperialism as the basis of joint action? Why should there be a tendency to run away when the call, for whatever reasons, comes from the other quarters?

It is also wrong to think that such a call can be given only after revisionism is already routed and there is complete demarcation between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists in the eyes of the people. Lenin and Leninists did not wait till the rise of fascism to give a call for united front and action. On the other hand, as early as 1922, Lenin recognized that with the propaganda based on Marxian principles, only the vanguard was won; to win over the masses from the influence of the reformists and revisionists, other methods—united front tactics—were necessary. It may be that in the present circumstances, with the propaganda methods hitherto followed, large chunks of the rank-and-file of the Communist Parties still remain to be won over. That is so because now propaganda alone, even for this section, is not enough. Even they require to be shown in practice that the correct line is the only revolutionary line—a line of action against American imperialism, for the unity of the socialist camp, unleashing of revolutionary struggles. They as well as the masses today require an actual demonstration in practice of the two lines—on the question of Viet Nam above all. So far as the basic point of ideological differences are concerned, the lines have been drawn, the demarcation has taken place, parties have been formed and they have expressed themselves on the various issues. One may not be satisfied with the immediate response to this principled fight; one may be disappointed to note that huge masses of members of Communist Parties still continue to remain with the revisionist leaders in the socialist and other countries and the masses of these countries still continue under their influence.

And that is precisely why it is necessary to adopt the tactics of the united front, besides carrying direct ideological struggle

against revisionism. The former will give concrete foundations to the latter and enable the Marxist-Leninists to emerge as the unifiers of the common struggle. But those who think that the world reality consists only of revisionist leaders, those who do not take into consideration the vast number of masses and countries involved, say all this will lead to confusing the people—it will blur the line between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism. This is the traditional argument of all sectarians for whom ideological struggle is an opiate and not a part of the class struggle. This attitude amounts to dubbing the masses as well as the entire rank-and-file of all the Parties as revisionists. This is the real meaning of this outlook. They are supposed to be apiece with the leadership and have no place in the common struggle. As against a serious effort to bring about common front, they argue that unity can only be brought about by principled ideological struggle. The ideological struggle does not stop while pursuing the tactics of united front. The tactics of united front only strengthens the foundations of the ideological struggle. Without them the masses can never understand the correctness of the revolutionary line, and those who profess it will only remain propaganda groups. Only by pursuing principled ideological struggle combined with willingness for joint action can the fight for unity be carried on among the mass of workers. In the course of it, the conscious elements will see the revisionists in their true colours and lay the foundation for the unity of the proletarian movement.

Some of our critics forget that it is a necessary part of that task to take an initiative in offering joint action or joint front to the reformist or revisionist leaders, the organizations headed by them, so that the initiative for intensifying the class struggle is seized. The leadership has to be approached because its followers and the masses in general, even in a rapidly revolutionary situation, abandon old loyalties slowly and as they get the direct experience of the struggle. But our critics want to exclude any such approach beforehand, before the masses have repudiated them in action; they declare they are revisionists, they are not serious about fighting imperialism, hence no offer can be made to them. The Communist movement has always waged a fight against such puerile logic.

In his report to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Dimitrov, while asking the Communists not for a moment to abandon their independent work of Communist education, organization and mobilization of the masses, said: "However, for the purpose of ensuring that the workers find the road to unity of action, it is necessary to strive at the same time both for short-term and long-term agreements providing for joint action with Social-Democratic parties, reformist trade unions and other organizations of the toilers against the class enemies of the proletariat." And again: "The leading role of the Communist Party in the struggles of the working class must be won. For this purpose it is necessary not to rant about the leading role of the Communists, but to merit and win the confidence of the working masses... Patiently, step by step, we must make it easier for the broad masses to come over to the position of Communism. We ought to never forget these warning words of Lenin so forcefully expressed: 'this is the whole point—we must not regard that which is obsolete for us as obsolete for *the class*, as obsolete for *the masses*'."

Besides, these critics are totally impervious to two things, the necessity to do everything, the necessity of initiative on the part of the Marxist-Leninists, to activate the broad masses in defence of Viet Nam, to activate the masses in socialist countries to demand decisive intervention against American imperialism in Viet Nam. They seem to be thoroughly satisfied with what is happening today—since they are out only to show that revisionists are treacherous. They do not see the need of checkmating American imperialism immediately on this vital question. Perhaps they are afraid that if the masses in the socialist camp overcome the revisionist policies and compel the leaders to throw the full might of the socialist countries behind Viet Nam, it will create confusion and blur the line between revolutionaries and revisionists.

The second point they totally ignore is that, despite the split in the Communist movement engineered by the revisionists, there is profound desire among the honest ranks of all Parties and among the people of the socialist camp and the masses in all countries for the unity of the Communist movement and above all for direct unified help to Viet Nam. The desire for unity

among the honest ranks is not a manifestation of revisionism but of a correct revolutionary instinct. It is this desire that the revisionists exploit to misdirect it and carry the split further. It is an act of utter irresponsibility if Marxist-Leninists do not respond to it to guide it in proper channels on the basis of assertion of basic principles and exposure of revisionist manoeuvres. Mere ranting about no truck with revisionism does not serve the purpose. The ranks and the masses have to be seriously educated as to how exactly unity could be achieved. And for this, demand for united action on Viet Nam, which is necessary and which the people are raising, has to be championed; concrete points for such action must be put before them so that they know who wants to go ahead against American imperialism and who is only manoeuvring; so that Marxist-Leninists throw their weight to give expression to the mass demand for effective action against American imperialism and unleash the revolutionary process. But those whose world picture consists only of revisionists, who behave as if the masses do not exist, as if there is no dire need to draw the masses into action, think that their duty is done by describing the revisionists as allies of imperialism and therefore having no place in the united front. □

V

The National Liberation Movement

OUR CRITICS MAKE AN ERRONEOUS AND ILL-INFORMED criticism of the C.C. Draft on this point, commit mistakes in formulations and understanding, and adopt a wrong attitude toward the role of the socialist camp in relation to the national liberation movement and in effect adopt a bourgeois-nationalist standpoint on this question. They think they are talking high revolutionary stuff, but in reality they wander into