

## III

## The Slogan of United Action

SOME OF OUR CRITICS STRONGLY OBJECT TO OUR advocacy of the slogan of united action in connection with the great struggle of the people of Viet Nam. A medley of confused arguments are advanced which showed that they mix different types of struggles, confuse the methods of rearing the vanguard and the Party with the methods of attracting the masses, rousing them to action and isolating the reformists and revisionists from them in the course of the struggle. They confuse the proposal for united action of the socialist camp on a specific issue—the most important immediate issue—with a compromise on principles with revisionism. Having equated the two, they go on reciting quotations from Lenin or Marx and Engels which call for irreconcilable fight against dilution of Marxian principles, and which demand that there could be no unity inside the Party with any trend that repudiates Marxism.

It is of course thoroughly non-Marxian to suggest that either the founders of Marxism-Leninism or any one entitled to be considered a Marxist-Leninist can ever advocate that there can be no truck with non-Party organizations, the masses and other political parties unless they accept Marxism-Leninism. This will mean that only the Communist Party and its immediate followers must organize the revolution and that the entire conception of the united front of different classes and political parties must collapse.

The argument against the proposal for united action ignores in the first place what is stated in the document. The document sees the difficulties in the way of implementing the slogan; it assesses the role of the Soviet revisionist leaders in relation to Viet Nam in the beginning of the struggle. "An examination of the entire course of developments leading to the present escalation of the war against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by the U.S. cannot but compel one to conclude that the Soviet

Government is guided by the thesis of 'local wars in danger of growing into a world war' and consequently takes hesitant, halting and compromising steps, and makes repeated attempts at restoring some kind of peace in Viet Nam in compliance with the U.S. aggressors—all of which has gone only to abet and encourage the American expansionists rather than restoring real peace in Viet Nam." It is therefore not because of any illusions about the revisionist leaders that the slogan of united action is being advanced. The document also recognizes that there are immense practical difficulties in the way. Since the unity in action proposed is nothing short of military action with its own serious consequences, it demands a minimum confidence between states and parties participating in it. Because of revisionist policies and intrigues there is no such confidence today, and if the Soviet leadership is serious about action against U.S. imperialism they will have to resort to bilateral talks with the Chinese leaders.

Thus once again the document calls a spade a spade and fixes the responsibility for the present state of affairs on the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union.

In spite of this, the Central Committee still advocates the proposal because "We do cherish this concept and eagerly work for its materialization, so that the bleeding Vietnamese people might, in their just war of national liberation together with the states of the socialist camp, rout the armies of imperialist intervention." Is this an unprincipled desire? Is it wrong to think of united action of the socialist camp and work for it in connection with a historic struggle which may well be the turning point in world history? To work for the consummation of this objective, over the heads of the revisionists, despite them, is the minimum duty of all who call themselves proletarian revolutionaries. Anyone who opposes it, under whatever pretext, only aids the game of imperialism as the revisionist policies do.

After all, this titanic struggle between American imperialism and the people of Viet Nam, a struggle in which American imperialism is openly attacking a member of the socialist camp, the North Vietnamese Socialist Revolution—is it opportunism to demand that the entire might of the socialist camp be thrown in defence of the people of South Viet Nam, whatever may be

the sins of this or that leadership of a particular country? The socialist camp is not the private property of a few highplaced leaders. The socialist camp is the outcome of the struggles of the international proletariat and the working people. It belongs to the international proletariat and working people as well as to the people of the socialist countries. It is its duty to strengthen its unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and support other socialist countries, help the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples. If the leadership of any country strays from this path, betrays this trust, is it not the minimum duty of all Marxist-Leninist Parties to demand that the duty be fulfilled and betrayal be stopped?

Here is united action demanded on a concrete and specific issue—struggle against American aggression and direct help to the fighting people of Viet Nam. Not unity in general, no forgetfulness of basic principles, but action on the basic task of defeating the common enemy of all peoples is demanded and this is objected to as opportunist. Only people who, under the guise of fighting revisionism, have decided that a socialist camp does not exist, only people totally impervious to the need to inflict an immediate defeat on American imperialism can object to the very mention of the proposal.

This is how a fake fight against revisionism works and coincides in action with it. Our entire charge against the revisionist leadership has been that it does not throw the might of the socialist camp on the side of Viet Nam; that its policies actually abet the aggressor. But here are people who want to condemn the revisionists but think it opportunist to demand that the Soviet Union, its people should intervene in the struggle against American imperialism. They demand the luxury of condemning the revisionists at the expense of the Vietnamese but are not prepared to indicate by a word that they want the participation of the Soviet state and people in the common struggle. Extremes support each other.

This opposition to the very proposal of united action in relation to Viet Nam is disruptive of international unity. Is it correct for us to appeal to the non-Communist parties in all the countries to forge a common front for Viet Nam? Can you call on the reformist parties also to join in this? Of course, it is

correct and necessary to do so in order to draw the masses behind them in the common struggle. But our critics think you can call on everybody but not the leaders of the Soviet Party even in order to approach the masses behind them. And above all, you cannot demand that the socialist Soviet Union throw its weight in the anti-American struggle. This logic leads to nothing but the disintegration of the common front that must be developed against American imperialism.

It is strange that the opponents of the slogan at the same time accept the formulation that this is an epoch "when the international socialist system is becoming the decisive factor determining the course of world development..." Do they really accept this formulation? Do they really believe that a world socialist system exists? If they do, they cannot object to a demand for a united action of the socialist countries, whatever be the crimes of the leadership of any country. The fact is that, describing the revisionist leaders of the Soviet Union as allies of American imperialism, they indirectly reach the conclusion that the Soviet Union is an ally of imperialism and therefore furiously oppose any proposal for a united action. Thus, though they dare not say openly, they really do not recognize the existence of a socialist camp—a counter-revolutionary conclusion.

What are the reasons adduced to oppose the slogan? They argue: The call for unity in action and unity given by the Soviet leadership is a camouflage for greater disunity since it is they who are responsible for the split in the Communist movement; while giving it the Soviet leadership pursues its line of cooperating with American imperialism and lashes out against People's China; the role of the Soviet leadership in Viet Nam has been one of sabotage; and finally the unity that is required is one between revolutionaries and not between revolutionaries and revisionists; the line that divides the Soviet revisionist leaders and Marxist-Leninists is the line between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism. "On the question of handling our relations with the enemies and friends, whether to oppose or unite with U.S. imperialism"; and "there are things that divide us and nothing that unites us, things that are antagonistic and nothing that is common", and as such "the contradiction between the two is an antagonistic contradiction, and hence unity in action

with them is ruled out".

In the first place, our critics deliberately ignore the fact that the call for united action advocated by our document has nothing to do with the general call for 'unity' of the Communist movement, bypassing the main ideological issues, that was at one time given by the Soviet leaders. To confuse the call for united action in the document with a general call for unity of all the differing parties is impermissible and is intended only to bypass the immediate issues. It shows that the opponents are not able to meet the argument squarely; therefore, they are raising a quite different issue to sidetrack the discussion and be able to hold forth on how impossible it is to achieve ideological unity with revisionism—an issue which no one is raising here.

The proposal concerns the specific question of united action of the socialist camp in relation to Viet Nam. True, the role of the Soviet leaders has been disgraceful in the beginning, and our document has assessed it correctly. But what makes our critics think that a demand for decisive intervention of the Soviet Union will betray the struggle or jeopardize it? From where do they get this fear? Our critics argue that after receiving a strong rebuff from the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam regarding its proposal to accept Johnson's conditions for peace, the Soviet leaders have changed their tactics. They are not interested in a decisive defeat of American imperialism even while giving military aid to Viet Nam.

It is remarkable that such arguments should be made by those who consider themselves as unalloyed Marxist-Leninists without any cross of revisionism. Since when have Marxist-Leninists made their line and tactics dependent on the intentions of the revisionists or reformist leaders? The correctness of a particular proposal, a particular tactic or line arises from the objective situation, from a given class situation, and it cannot be made dependent on the good or evil intentions of a few leaders. This is the A B C of Marxism which our critics choose to forget in their blind opposition to the Party line. The question is—is it objectively correct or not to demand united action of the socialist camp for Viet Nam, to demand decisive intervention of the Soviet Union and tell the Soviet leaders that this is the demand of the international working class? This does not mean

giving a certificate of revolutionary fervour to revisionist leaders. No united action with anti-imperialist masses in many parts of the world will be possible if the precondition is that their present-day leaders must have honest revolutionary intentions.

Granting that all that is said about the Soviet leadership is true, the critics are unable to explain how the struggle of the Vietnamese people will be either betrayed or hampered if common action is demanded and fructifies. It is childishly suggested that common action will facilitate the revisionist task of forcing a compromise on the Vietnamese people. Will common action enhance revisionist illusions or unleash revolutionary action and bring about the triumph of revolutionary ideology? Will it not be one of the biggest defeats for revisionism which does not want to use the strength of the socialist camp to support revolutionary struggles? The demand is a demand for defeating the revisionist line of splitting the socialist camp and dispersing the revolutionary forces represented by it. But our 'revolutionary' critics will not have it.

Besides, it is slanderous to suggest that the leaders of North Viet Nam and South Viet Nam will be fooled or pressurized by anybody into signing a compromise—whatever the help rendered. Those who insinuate this do not show the least respect for the revolutionary struggle of the people of Viet Nam, and the great revolutionaries leading them. But when one takes a wrong line, one has to end in slandering the biggest revolutionary struggle of our time.

It should also be noted that our critics' estimate of the role which the Soviet Union is playing in Viet Nam at present in distinction from the past, does not tally with the estimate of the leaders of Viet Nam. President Ho Chi Minh in his article on the 50th Anniversary of October Revolution says: "The Vietnamese people always bear in mind that their successes are inseparable from the great assistance of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other fraternal socialist countries, from the active support of the whole of mankind..." He further says: "I express our profound gratitude to fraternal Soviet people for their wholehearted assistance to our people's anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation."

In a message to the Soviet Party and Government on the occasion, President Ho Chi Minh and other leaders of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam said: "In the process of their protracted and difficult struggle in the past as well as in the present resistance war against U.S. aggression, to save their Fatherland, defend the North, liberate the South and achieve peaceful national re-unification, the Vietnamese people have constantly received wholehearted support and assistance from the Soviet people. We take the opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the USSR Supreme Soviet, the Government and the people of the Soviet Union for this great and valuable support and assistance."

Our critics will see that the fighting leaders of the revolutionary struggle do think that Soviet assistance is not betraying them but facilitating their struggle; they clearly indicate that a united action of the entire socialist camp will be of tremendous help to them. Under these circumstances, how can they go on referring to the intentions of the revisionist leaders and demand that there should be no proposal for united action and that such a proposal only helps the revisionists to betray Viet Nam.

The argument that revisionists are only changing their tactics in relation to Viet Nam and therefore there can be no proposal for a united action with them, is only worthy of those who make it. What do they expect? A change of heart on the part of the revisionists? They forget the basic Marxian understanding that when revisionists or reformists are forced to move from open hostility to mass action or revolution—that is a sign that they cannot continue their old line as it is, that under popular pressure they are forced to manoeuvre. This means their line on the particular issue is becoming unpopular. As such, it is a sign of their retreat. If on the question of Viet Nam the revisionists are compelled to abandon their open hostility and resort to tactical support, that also shows that they are being compelled to retreat. If because of this they have to give more and more support and help in arms to Viet Nam, all that is for the good. While exercising proper vigilance on their manoeuvres the revolutionaries must learn to rouse the people of the socialist

camp still further towards united action so that revisionist sabotage is completely defeated. These critics see in the manoeuvres of the revisionists, in the help of arms and material given to Viet Nam only tactics of the revisionists and not popular pressure and successes.

In this connection, the following words from Kim Il Sung, the leader of the people of Korea, are significant: "It has become an international trend today to condemn the aggressive war of U.S. imperialism in Viet Nam and give support to the Vietnamese people. Even those who once took to revisionism have found it hardly possible to hold out before the world public opinion without supporting the Vietnamese people. This is a good thing, by no means bad.

"Of course, there can be various categories of people among those who come out against U.S. imperialism in support of the Vietnamese people. There may be some who condemn the U.S. imperialist aggression and support the Vietnamese people in order to make up for their past mistakes which they repent; others may join in the anti-imperialist struggle, though reluctantly, under pressure from their own people and the peoples throughout the world, although their fundamental position remains unchanged.

"But whatever their motives, it is necessary to enlist all these forces in the joint anti-imperialist struggle. If there is one who would like to rectify his past mistakes, at least on the Viet Nam question, this is undoubtedly a good, welcome thing. And if anyone opposes U.S. imperialism and supports the Vietnamese people, though reluctantly, under pressure from the peoples, that will be likewise conducive, and not inimical, to the anti-imperialist struggle" (Kim Il Sung, "The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party").

We hope our critics will not ascribe to the Korean leader a lack of desire to resist American imperialism, or think that he has fallen victim to the cunning change of tactics of the revisionists.

It is permissible for an ordinary man to regard a proposal for united action as a proposal to bring certain leaders together, and it is permissible for him then to argue about the intentions and motives of this or that leader. But when those who pride

themselves on their Marxism-Leninism commit the same mistake, forget the people and begin to talk about the intentions and tactics of certain leaders, it has to be said that their Marxism has not demarcated itself from the prejudices of a common man.

The last, and according to these people the most principled, objection is that there can be no unity—by which they mean united action also—between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists, for the contradiction between the two is antagonistic. Note that this argument is advanced when our document advocates united action only—and that too for Viet Nam.

In support of their argument they dare quote from Lenin and attempt to review the entire international fight in the past between Marxism and revisionism and show how on each and every occasion Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin waged an irreconcilable struggle against the revisionists for the purity of the doctrine and refused to have any truck with them. Only one thing they carefully conceal from their reader—unless it is to be presumed that they themselves are mightily ignorant and do not know what the quotations mean, and have never gone to their source but lifted them from somewhere—the fact that they have no relevance to the question of united front or united action; that they have relevance only when you are talking of a united party with the revisionists. One of the quotations from Lenin that is flaunted repeatedly in opposition to the demand for united action is: “Unity is a great cause and a great slogan but the workers’ cause requires the unity of the Marxists and not the unity of the Marxists with the opponents and distorters of Marxism.” In the first place, in reply to the proposal for united action, they give a quotation about unity. Or, have we to explain to them the Marxist-Leninist difference between unity and united action?

The above quotation from Lenin (*Collected Works*, vol. 20, p. 232) refers to the attempts of liquidators to unite with the Party in the form of a federation—the same liquidators who were rejected by the Party for their liquidationist policies and who now wanted to steal back into the Party. It was a question of unity with these anti-Marxists in a single party. Here by unity is meant the unity of the Party and Lenin correctly stated

that there could be no question of unity with them in a common party. This has nothing to do with the question of united action with organizations led by the revisionists or reformist parties.

Besides, it is necessary to remember that in taking an irreconcilable position Lenin argues not only on the basis of Marxist principles and line, but also on the basis of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the workers have already refuted the liquidationists and accepted the revolutionary line. Lenin argues: “The will of the workers has been clearly and definitely expressed. Anyone who has not taken leave of his senses can say exactly which tactics the overwhelming majority of the workers sympathize with. But along comes the liquidator Larin and says: Let this majority get out of the way and agree that the will of a group of liquidators is equal to the will of the majority of the class-conscious workers” (p. 231). The quotation deals with the question of unity with the opportunists in a common party; at the same time before taking an irreconcilable stand, Lenin has the backing of the overwhelming majority. We hope these facts would teach our critics how to carry on the fight in accordance with Leninist principles—not to mix up unity inside a common party with united action between several parties.

Another quotation that is flaunted is one from Marx and Engels which says: “it is...impossible for us to cooperate with people who wish to expunge the class struggle from the movement.” It is a quotation from Marx and Engels to Babel etc. Once more it has reference to the Party and the purity of the ideology of the Party. The letter writes: “In such a...country as Germany these ideas certainly have their justification. But only *outside* the Social Democratic Workers’ Party... But if even the leadership of the Party should fall more or less into the hands of such people, the Party would simply be castrated and there would be an end of proletarian snap...If the new Party organ adopts a line that corresponds to the views of these gentlemen... then nothing remains for us...but publicly to declare our opposition to it, and to dissolve the bonds of the solidarity with which we have hitherto represented the German Party abroad” (*Selected Correspondence*, pp. 326-27).

It should be clear that this is part of the struggle for rearing a Marxist Party and should not be confused with the struggle

for united action, for united front which has to be forged even with the elements who do not accept Marxism.

In 1875 Marx strongly attacked the Unity Programme which united the Social Democratic Workers' Party with the Lassalleans, saying that he and Engels had nothing to do with it. While attacking the opportunist concessions, Marx held that it would have been proper to conclude an agreement for action against the common enemy, but it was impermissible to unite with them in a single party on the basis of sacrifice of principles. "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes. If, therefore, it was not possible—and the conditions of the time did not permit it—to go *beyond* the Eisenach programme, one should simply have concluded an agreement for action against the common enemy" (*Ibid*, p. 297). Opportunist concessions to bring about a united party are denounced; but at the same time agreement for common action with the same people is advocated. This is how Marxism fights for the purity of the Party, while taking every step forward to push the actual movement.

The trouble with our critics is that they confuse the method of winning the vanguard, of rearing the Marxist-Leninist Party, with the methods of rousing and uniting the masses that may be under the leadership of the revisionists and reformists. It is perfectly correct to say that there can be no unity inside one party between revisionists and Marxist-Leninists; our own experience has proved the same when the revisionists split the Party. Any proposal to unite the Party, or bring together international Parties without liquidating the heritage of revisionism will be a gross betrayal of Marxism-Leninism. There must be an irreconcilable fight against revisionist opportunism and complete ideological and organizational demarcation from it. Our document, therefore, does not demand unprincipled unity of all the Communist Parties and inside each Party. □