

Peaceful Coexistence— Burning Issue of our Time

"The problem of war and peace is the most burning issue of our time" (Eighty-One Communist Parties' Statement, November, 1960)

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THE epoch in which we live is one of profound social change; on the time-scale of history one of rapid tempestuous change. When men and women in the future look back on these years of struggle they will marvel at the speed with which capitalism was defeated, ended, and socialist, then communist society, established in the world.

The present epoch began with the October 1917 Revolution, when imperialism ceased to be the single world system, and it will end when capitalism has ceased to exist as a system, and the whole world has taken the socialist road. It began with a weak, young inexperienced socialist country surrounded by hostile capitalism. Step by step the socialist forces have grown, the balance of class forces on a world scale has changed. It is now the socialist system in the world that is becoming the decisive factor in the development of history.

We live in a period of most rapid development of scientific knowledge, of technology, of the means of production, which deepens the contradictions of capitalism, and demonstrates more and more clearly the need for a new socialist organisation of society. This scientific knowledge that could, under socialism, so rapidly end poverty and hunger for the total population of the world, threatens, in the hands of imperialism, unprecedented destruction.

It is not surprising that in this epoch, in which two social systems—one dying, one developing—confront one another, deep problems should arise for the Marxists, the working class, the progressive and anti-imperialist movement.

The New Epoch

Nor is it strange that, in this situation of rapid changes, some differences should arise between Communist Parties in different stages of the struggle, facing different immediate problems in their own countries.

In each country Marxists work out their general line, their strategy, by applying the general prin-

ciples of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions in their country and the world. From the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and all the leading Marxists of the world, from the experiences of all the different Parties, general principles can be culled, defined. But a strategy of struggle for a particular country or for the world can only be elaborated by applying these principles to specific conditions—*never in the abstract*.

It was by a concrete analysis of the world and of Britain at the beginning of the fifties that our British Communist Party was able to work out our long-term programme, the *British Road to Socialism*. It was on the basis of an analysis of the new epoch and the new relation of class forces in the world, that the twelve Communist and Workers' Parties elaborated the Statement of 1957 and the Eighty-One Parties the Statement of 1960.

A Marxist strategy, programme, perspective, demands not only a deep understanding of Marxist ideas but their application to a specific situation in time and in space. If we are to answer the burning questions of the time we must do so in the context of *the new epoch*.

Our epoch, which began with the October Revolution, is essentially one of transition from capitalism to socialism. As the Statement of the Eighty-One Communist Parties defined it, it is:

"A time of struggle between two opposing systems, a time of socialist revolutions and national liberation revolutions, a time of the breakdown of imperialism, of the abolition of the colonial system, a time of transition of more peoples to the socialist path, of the triumph of socialism and communism on a world wide scale."¹

As the epoch proceeded the area of socialism extended with the advances in Eastern Europe and the Far East, with the victory of the great Chinese Revolution, with the advance in Cuba. The anti-imperialist struggle began to sweep away colonial-

¹ 36 Million Communists Say . . . pp. 3-4.

ism in great areas of the world and the working class and peace movements extended in the imperialist countries themselves. The forces of socialism and progress began to become stronger than the forces of imperialism. As the Eighty-One Parties' Statement put it:

"Today it is the world socialist system and the forces fighting against imperialism, for a socialist transformation of society, that determine the main content, main trend and main features of the historical development of society."²

Contradictions

If we are properly to understand the new epoch, we have to see *all* the forces of socialism and progress in their relations with one another and *all* the contradictions within world society.

We have to see the *combined* strength of the socialist countries, the newly independent countries and the national liberation movement, and the socialist, democratic and peace movement in the imperialist countries themselves. Moreover, the divisions between the imperialists are an indirect source of progressive strength.

It is here, already, that, studying many of the documents published in recent months by the Chinese Communist Party, we begin to find ourselves in deep disagreement with them. We find again and again that they are belittling the role of the socialist countries and of the working class and broad progressive movement in the imperialist countries and seeing in an isolated one-sided way the anti-imperialist, national liberation movement.

Lenin in his *Imperialism*, showed how, in the epoch of imperialism, in which a small group of great imperialist powers dominated, economically and politically, the whole world, there were three fundamental contradictions—capital versus labour—imperialism versus the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, imperialism versus imperialism. With the new epoch and the victorious October Revolution, a new fourth contradiction emerged—socialism versus imperialism (the socialist state—later states—versus the imperialist states). All the three previous contradictions remained, indeed were deepened, *but the contradiction of socialism versus capitalism became the main contradiction of the new epoch*, and the "world socialist system" became, in the words of the Eighty-One Parties' Statement, "the decisive factor in the development of society".³

In the Letter of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party of June 14th, 1963, we find a quite different appreciation:

"The various types of contradiction in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm centres of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism. . . . In a sense, therefore, the whole course of the international proletarian revolution hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the people of these areas, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world's population."⁴

The Chinese press, as reviewed in the daily *Hsinhua News Agency* or in the *Peking Review*, has published little information in recent months of the successful building of socialism and communism in the U.S.S.R. and the socialist countries of Europe. Indeed, insofar as the U.S.S.R. is concerned it has concentrated on reproducing certain self-critical articles from the Soviet press exposing this or that particular weakness. There has been very little about struggle of the working class movement, the Communist Parties, the peace movement in countries like France, Italy, the U.S.A., Great Britain; very much more on the criticism of different Communist Parties in the capitalist countries.

The magnificent struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples against imperialism has been one of the outstanding factors of our epoch, it has been one *major factor* in bringing about the new relation of class forces in the world. But it does not, in any way, belittle the national liberation movement, to show it in its relationship to the world socialist system and the working class and democratic movement in the imperialist countries. It does not belittle it to show the immense help that it has received from the socialist countries and the working class and democratic movement in the capitalist countries.

It is the *totality* of progressive forces which makes up the superiority of the progressive forces over the forces of reaction in the world today, it is their *combined inter-related* strength. To see them in segregation, isolation, not only is an incorrect picture, but can lead in practice to their division.

It can lead, too, to an underestimation of the possibilities, the potentialities, that are opened for the international working class movement in the new epoch.

Socialism Through Peace

Of all the issues that arise in the present epoch the most urgent is that of world peace; in the words of the Statement of the Eighty-One Com-

² *ibid.* p. 4.

³ *ibid.* p. 4.

⁴ Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of China, June 14th, 1963, pp. 12-13.

unist Parties "the problem of war and peace is the most burning problem of our time".⁵ Can the transition from capitalism to socialism, the essential content of our epoch, be achieved without a third world war?

To this question already in 1951, in the original draft of the *British Road to Socialism*, our own Party answered clearly in the affirmative. We declared "that a third world war is neither necessary nor inevitable", we rejected "the 'theory' of the inevitable war between the socialist and capitalist camps". "On the contrary," we stated, "peaceful coexistence of socialism and capitalism is possible." The twelve Parties of the socialist countries in 1957 and the eighty-one Communist Parties meeting in November 1960, all gave the same reply.

It is an old-time capitalist slander that Communists wanted to establish socialism through war, that they thought that social revolution can only arise from war between states. Communists have always striven to advance to socialism through world peace. What is new in the present epoch is that, on the one hand the forces of socialism and peace have reached a stage which makes the perspective possible, and, on the other, that the destructive power of modern weapons makes it imperative to exert every conceivable effort to avoid world war.

Marxists pride themselves on examining *real* conditions, in facing the truth, objective reality. It does not help to gloss over the fact that the destructive power of nuclear weapons is something, in the Marxist sense, *qualitatively* new. A world war fought with nuclear weapons could well mean the death of hundreds and hundreds of millions, suffering of such a kind for hundreds of millions more that would make them wish for death, the elimination of whole states. "For Britain," our Executive Committee Statement said in January of this year, "nuclear war could well mean our national extinction. Who would be left to build socialism in the heap of radio-active ruins which would remain?"⁶

We cannot accept the approach of the Chinese comrades to this question of nuclear weapons.

Chinese Views

In 1946 Comrade Mao Tse-tung stated in a talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong:

"The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the

⁵ 36 Million Communists Say . . . p. 14.

⁶ *Restore the Unity of the International Communist Movement*, Statement of E.C. of C.P.G.B., January 12th, 1963.

U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible but in fact it isn't."⁷

On November 18th, 1957, speaking at the Moscow meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Comrade Mao said:

"Let us imagine, how many people will die if war should break out? Out of the world's population of 2,700 million, one-third—or, if more, half—may be lost. It is they and not we who want to fight; when a fight starts, atomic and hydrogen bombs may be dropped. I debated this question with a foreign statesman. He believed that if an atomic war was fought, the whole of mankind would be annihilated. I said if the worst came to the worst and half of mankind died, the other half would remain while imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist; in a number of years there would be again 2,700 million people and definitely more."⁸

The article in the *Reg Flag* of April 16th, 1960, later republished in the collection *Long Live Leninism*, stated that should the U.S. or other imperialists dare to fly in the face of the will of all the peoples by launching a war using atomic and nuclear weapons

"the result will only be the very speedy destruction of the monsters themselves encircled by the peoples of the world, and certainly not the so-called annihilation of mankind. . . .

". . . On the debris of imperialism, the victorious people would create very swiftly a civilisation thousands of times higher than the capitalist system and a truly beautiful future for themselves."⁹

No Paper Tiger

The *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government* of September 1st, 1963, attacking an alleged view of "the Soviet leaders" that the whole of mankind would be annihilated in a nuclear war (a view for which no source was given) declares:

"We do not agree with this pessimistic and despairing view of theirs. We say that if imperialism should unleash a nuclear war and the worst came to the worst, half of the world's population would be killed. We are optimistic about the future of mankind."¹⁰

How is it possible to describe as a "paper tiger" weapons that might destroy half of mankind?

⁷ Quoted in *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government* of September 1st, 1963 (*Hsinhua News Agency*).

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *Long Live Leninism*, 1960, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰ *Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government*, September 1st, 1963 (*Hsinhua News Agency*).

Explanation of the facts, far from having the effect of numbing the people, of making them shrink or capitulate in the face of nuclear blackmail by the imperialists, can only help to rally the great mass of the people and their organisations for the struggle for peace.

It is not helpful to paint a "rosy" picture of the speedy erection of the new civilisation on the ruins of the old one. Nor is it cowardly to face the disastrous consequences of nuclear warfare and mobilise the mass of the people to avoid it.

The essential lesson must be—the need and the possibility for peaceful coexistence.

Peaceful Coexistence

In statement after statement the Chinese comrades have distorted the conception of peaceful coexistence put forward by the great majority of Parties within the international communist movement. They have painted some "unholy alliance" between capitalist and socialist states.¹¹ They have accused Party after Party of "prettifying" imperialism, rejecting the class struggle, damping down or even betraying the national liberation struggle, "freezing" the existing relations between socialism and capitalism in the interests of peaceful coexistence. Such attitudes have, without quotation of source, been attributed anonymously to "modern revisionists", "certain people", or more openly in recent months, to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and other Communist Parties.

The Chinese comrades again and again erect some "Aunt Sally" from their own imagination in order to knock her down again. It becomes essential, therefore, to repeat again and again what is the conception of peaceful coexistence held by our Party and by the great majority of Parties, and also *what it is not*.

Our Party has not at any stage made any attempt at "embellishing" imperialism, international, American, or British, or to disguise its unchanged aggressive character. We have exposed and combated NATO, CENTO, SEATO, imperialist activities in Berlin, Taiwan, Laos, the Congo, etc. We have constantly pointed to American imperialism as the most reactionary force in the world, and exposed in detail the role of British imperialism. Imperialism has not, of a sudden, become peaceful; it is still "the soil for aggressive war".

What has changed is the strength of the forces of socialism and peace. It is those forces—the

combination of the countries of the socialist world, the national liberation movement at its various stages, the world peace movement, the international working class movement, and, above all, the Communist Parties—which if united, active and vigilant, can impose the will for peace of the peoples of the world on the imperialist forces driving to war. And the strength of the forces of peace in the world is assisted by the divisions between and within the imperialist powers.

The essence of the conception of peaceful coexistence is the imposition of peace on those that drive to war by the combined forces of peace in the world.

Class Struggle

"Peaceful coexistence designates," write the Chinese comrades in their *Letter of June 14th, 1963*, "a relationship between countries with different social systems and must not be interpreted as one pleases. It should not be extended to apply to the relations between oppressed and oppressor countries or between oppressed and oppressor nations."¹² "Peaceful coexistence," they continue later, "cannot replace the revolutionary struggles of the peoples."¹³

But against which Communist Party is this argument directed? Neither the British Communist Party nor any other has ever argued in this way. Let us be clear what we stand for, what has been put forward in successive Statements of our Party, which is embodied in the recent Communist Party syllabus *Communism and the World Today*.

Peaceful coexistence between states of different social formation does *not* mean peaceful coexistence of classes within the capitalist countries, i.e. an end to class struggle. On the contrary the stronger the all-round class struggle within the capitalist countries, the greater the possibility of peaceful coexistence. The coexistence of states with different social systems is itself a form of the class struggle between capitalism and socialism.

Peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems does *not* mean the rejection of the national liberation struggle. On the contrary, the more powerful the national liberation struggle against imperialism and the stronger the world solidarity with the national liberation forces, the greater the possibility of peaceful coexistence. It is completely wrong to oppose the two aspects of struggle as the Chinese comrades so continuously do. Nor does the fight for peaceful coexistence exclude national liberation wars.

¹¹ *The New "Holy Alliance" will Come to no Better End than the Old.* Article of Red Flag, Commentator, published in Hsinhua News Agency, September 10th, 1963.

¹² *Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of China*, June 14th, 1963, p. 34.

¹³ *ibid.* p. 35.

In this connection Comrade Khrushchov made the position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union abundantly clear:

"There will be wars of liberation as long as imperialism exists. These are revolutionary wars; such wars are not only permissible but even unavoidable since the colonialists do not grant independence to people voluntarily. Therefore it is only through struggle, including armed struggle, that the people can win their freedom and independence."¹⁴

The Chinese comrades in recent months are making wild accusations that "certain people" (meaning the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of other socialist countries, and the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries) are

"taking a passive or scornful or negative attitude towards the struggles of the oppressed nations for liberation. They are in fact protecting the interests of monopoly capital, betraying those of the proletariat, and degenerating into social democrats."¹⁵

Nothing could be more in contradiction with the facts. As part of the general fight for peaceful coexistence the Communist Parties, and, above all, that of the Soviet Union, have continuously supported the national liberation struggles. Nor is this support unrecognised. Speaking in May of this year at Moscow, Fidel Castro affirmed:

"The might of the socialist camp stays the hand of the lovers of military gambles, guarantees peace, and creates the most favourable conditions for the people's struggle against colonial and imperialist aggression."¹⁶

The struggle for peaceful coexistence is strengthened by the national liberation struggle, and vice versa.

Transition to Socialism as a Background to Peace

The Chinese comrades argue as if the struggle for peaceful coexistence is being used as a cover to keep things as they are, to make dirty deals with American imperialism, to "freeze" the status quo and, therefore, to stem, hinder, the onward march to socialism. They write as if negotiation with capitalist states soiled the hands of Communists.

But it has never been the aim of Communists

¹⁴ *Open Letter of Central Committee of Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, July 14th, 1963, Soviet Booklet, p. 15.

¹⁵ *Letter of Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party*, June 14th, 1963, p. 15.

¹⁶ Fidel Castro—Speech at Moscow on May 23rd, 1963.

to "export" socialism by force, to spread socialism through the world against the will of the peoples of different countries. Communists have always taught that socialism cannot be imposed from above or without, that it must be established by the working class and its allies in each country, that each people will establish socialism at their own time and in their own way.

The conception of peaceful coexistence does *not* imply belief in the perpetuation of capitalism. On the contrary! Communists are confident that, step by step, in country after country, the working people led by the working class will carry through a socialist revolution, win political power, begin to construct socialism, and that socialism that first was established in one-sixth of the world, and now established in one-third, will spread to two-thirds and then the totality of the globe.

Lenin was very clear that you could not speed up the revolution by "jogging" it from outside. He wrote in 1918:

"Maybe the authors [of a resolution expressing lack of confidence in the Central Committee] believe that the world revolution needs *jogging*, and that it can be jogged only by war—and in no case by peace, which might give the masses the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, which has always been opposed to 'jogging' revolutions, which develop as the acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions ripen. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is indispensable under all conditions."¹⁷

The burning question is can, in the present world relations of class forces, this world transition to socialism be accomplished without a third world war?

That it can and should so be accomplished is an *essential strategic aim* of the international communist movement endorsed at the Eighty-One-Parties' Conference in 1960.

The Chinese comrades argue that peaceful coexistence should

"never be described as the main content of the transition from capitalism to socialism, still less should it be asserted that peaceful coexistence is mankind's road to socialism."¹⁸

But such a formulation can only confuse. No Marxist has ever said that peaceful coexistence is an *alternative* to social revolution, to establishing

¹⁷ V. I. Lenin, *Strange and Monstrous*, February 28th and March 1st, 1918, in Selected Works in 2 Vols., Vol. II, p. 280.

¹⁸ *Letter of Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party*, June 14th, 1963, p. 34.

the rule of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat, to building socialism. The point is that we must exert every conceivable effort to see that peaceful coexistence is the background on which the transition to socialism takes place.

This is not some tactical question, some manoeuvre to expose capitalism, but *an essential strategy of the whole socialist movement of the world*. And every Marxist and every Marxist Party should fight to see that "mankind's road to socialism" does take place in conditions of peaceful coexistence.

Lenin on Peaceful Coexistence

When reading the most recent statements of the Communist Party of China, of the *Red Flag*, the *People's Daily*, etc., we see ever more open attacks on the policy of the leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government. It is made to look as if the present leaders of the Soviet Union were, in their foreign policy, for instance, deserting Leninism.

One gets the impression that the Chinese comrades are saying that for a socialist country to negotiate with a capitalist country is capitulation, that it is revisionist to see one section of the bourgeoisie of a capitalist country playing a more progressive role than another section, that it is wrong to insist that an essential method by which a socialist country exerts its influence on the people of the non-socialist countries is by the example it gives in organising production and society in a way superior to capitalism.

No one more than Lenin would have insisted that with the changing world, with the changing relation of class forces, new possibilities would arise for the working class, but, already in the few all too short years between the October Revolution and his death, Lenin began to put forward the essence of the policy of peaceful coexistence.

He stood consistently for relations of peace between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, even the most reactionary imperialist ones. "The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic", he wrote in December 1919,

"wishes to live in peace with all peoples and devote all its efforts to internal development in order to put production, transport and government affairs in order on the basis of the Soviet system. . ."¹⁹

He vigorously opposed those who, immediately after the revolution, wanted to put forward peace

terms in the form of an *ultimatum*. "An ultimatum," he wrote, may prove fatal to our whole cause:

"The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people."²⁰

He was absolutely clear that there would be divisions within the capitalists which could be of assistance to the struggle for socialism, and that some sections of the bourgeoisie would, in a given situation, play a role that was more favourable to the international socialist movement. "Some American manufacturers," he said, in a talk with Lincoln Eyre, Correspondent of *The World* in February 1920,

"appear to have begun to realise that making money in Russia is wiser than making war against Russia, which is a good sign. . . ."

"All the world knows that we are prepared to make peace on terms the fairness of which even the most imperialistic capitalists could not dispute. . . ."

"I know of no reason why a socialist state like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalist countries. . ."²¹

Or again, writing of the Soviet preparation for participation at the Genoa Conference in March 1922:

". . . it matters a lot to us whether we shall deal with those representatives of the bourgeois camp who are inclined to solve the problem by war, or with those who favour pacifism, even the worst kind of pacifism that from the Communist point of view will not stand the slightest criticism. . ."²²

When Spargo, an American reformist, attacked the Soviet Union for making deals with capitalist powers, Lenin declared that Spargo

"blamed us for our talk about making deals with the capitalist powers, and adduced it as evidence of the complete collapse of communism. . . ."

"It seems to me that those who think about it will say the opposite. No better proof of the material and moral victory of the Russian Soviet Republic over the capitalists of the whole world

¹⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Report on Peace*, delivered at Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, October 26th (November 8th), 1917.

²⁰ V. I. Lenin, *Talk with Lincoln Eyre*, published in the American *The World*, February 21st, 1920, and republished in *Lenin on Peaceful Coexistence*, Moscow, 1963.

²¹ V. I. Lenin, *Political Report of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to the Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B)*, March 27th, 1922.

¹⁹ V. I. Lenin in *Draft Resolution Presented to Eighth All-Russian Conference of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the Question of Foreign Policy*, written December 2nd, 1919.

could be found than the fact that the powers who made war on us . . . have been compelled, against their own wishes, to enter upon the path of commercial relations. . . ." ²³

Lenin always insisted that after the revolution, socialist countries, above all, exert an influence by their example in building a socialist system superior in every way to preceding capitalist society.

Speaking in December 1920 to a meeting of Moscow active Party workers he dealt with the problem of building socialism as the "power of example". This is not easy, he said, "in this case victory is not to be achieved by enthusiasm, assault, or self-sacrifice, but in dull, petty, day-to-day work. This is something indubitably harder," and he continued:

"Socialism has the power of example. Force is a power against the one who wants to restore his domination. But there the significance of force ends and after that it is influence and example that is powerful. We have to show in practice, by way of example, the significance of communism." ²⁴

On an international scale, too, it is this that will be decisive, he added elsewhere:

"We exert our main influence on the international revolution by our economic policy. . . . In this field the struggle is transferred on a world-wide scale. If we accomplish this task, we shall win on an international scale for certain and forever." ²⁵

Lenin was writing at the very beginning of the new epoch of transition to socialism, but he already laid down the essential principles of the strategy of peaceful coexistence. Far from "deserting Leninism", a study of Lenin's writing shows us that Comrade Khrushchev and the Soviet leaders in the new situation of the world today are applying Lenin's conceptions of peaceful coexistence.

Strength and Reason

For a socialist country to carry out in practice a policy of peaceful coexistence demands a combination of firmness on questions of principle with readiness to negotiate, a combination of strength and reason.

The fight for negotiations is not based on any

²³ V. I. Lenin, Speech delivered at the Moscow Guberna Conference of the R.C.P.(B), November 21st, 1920.

²⁴ V. I. Lenin, Speech delivered at a Meeting of the Active Party Workers of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B), December 6th, 1960.

²⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian fourth edition, Vol. 32, p. 413.

illusions that imperialism has "changed", or that the contradictions between the two systems can be solved by diplomacy. The basis for the possibility of such negotiations and partial agreements is not a change in the nature of imperialism but in the balance of world forces, which compels the imperialist leaders (or sections of them) to take account of the new strength of the forces of socialism and peace.

Yet, whilst proclaiming support for the aim of peaceful coexistence as set out in the 1960 Statement of the Eighty-One Parties, the Chinese comrades attack as capitulation or betrayal every negotiation conducted by the Soviet Union with the imperialist countries in the recent period. This was most clearly seen in the tense Cuban crisis last autumn or the signature of the partial Test Ban Treaty at the end of July this year.

Cuba

In the January Statement of our Executive Committee we put forward our views on the Cuban crisis:

"The Cuban crisis was the most dangerous world crisis since 1945. The world was on the brink of thermo-nuclear catastrophe. The aim of Soviet policy on Cuba, an aim endorsed by progressive opinion all over the world, was to prevent nuclear war and to prevent the invasion of Cuba. Nuclear war was prevented. Cuba was not invaded. For this world humanity must above all thank the Soviet Union." ²⁶

At the tensest moment of the crisis the Chinese comrades issued statements implying that a "Munich" was in process.

It is not in any way to belittle the magnificent struggle of the Cuban people, to see the all-important aid in preserving Cuban independence afforded by the Soviet Union and the socialist camp as a whole. It is precisely the combination of all the forces of peace—the strength of the socialist countries, above all the U.S.S.R.; the national liberation movement (in this case above all the struggle of the Cuban people); the working class and peace movement in the countries of capitalism (in this case the British peace movement played no dishonourable role); the indirect assistance of the divisions between the imperialists (including within the circles of American imperialism)—that together preserved peace and Cuban independence. To separate one of these forces from another, is divisive and dangerous.

²⁶ *Restore the Unity of the International Communist Movement*, Statement of the E.C. of the Communist Party of Great Britain, January 12th, 1963.

Fidel Castro himself, in the strongest language, paid tribute to the peace role of the U.S.S.R.:

"It will always be a great country which, for the sake of the defence of a small people, living thousands of miles away, risked the well-being achieved in forty-five years of creative work, and at the price of tremendous sacrifices, in a thermo-nuclear war!

"The Soviet Union, which lost more lives in the Great Patriotic War against the fascists than the entire population of Cuba, so as to defend its right to existence and to develop its tremendous riches, did not hesitate to take the risk of a big war in defence of our small country!"

"History has never known such an example of solidarity . . ."²⁷

The Test Ban Treaty

The Political Committee of the British Communist Party welcomed the signing of the partial Test Ban Treaty in its Statement of July 31st, 1963. It emphasised three positive aspects: (1) that it meant a halt to the poisoning of the atmosphere by the main nuclear powers; (2) that it opened the way to further negotiations on nuclear disarmament; (3) that it opened the way to further negotiations on all key issues with a view to making a break in the cold war and reaching agreement on specific questions.

The Statement did not, however, in any way exaggerate the significance of the Treaty. It clearly showed its limitations. The Treaty did not in any sense end the danger of war, the arms race or manufacture of nuclear weapons, nor did it ban underground testing. Like all *partial* agreements won in the struggle of socialism against capitalism, or the working class against the capitalist class, *it emerged from struggle and demanded further struggle*. In terms of Britain that means the fight for the removal of American nuclear bases, the fight for the renunciation by Britain of nuclear weapons, and the defeat of the NATO multilateral nuclear force.

The comrades of the Chinese Communist Party immediately launched a major political offensive against the Treaty, branded it as "capitulationism",²⁸ as marking "the surrender of the Soviet leaders to U.S. imperialism",²⁹ as a "big fraud"³⁰ and a "dirty fraud".³¹ By the Treaty, a Chinese Government Statement declared:

²⁷ Fidel Castro, *Speech in Moscow on May 23rd, 1963*, in Soviet Booklet *The U.S.S.R. and Cuba*, p. 30.

²⁸ Statement by Spokesman of the Chinese Government, September 1st, 1963.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Statement of the Chinese Government of July 31st, 1963 (*Peking Review*, No. 31).

"The interests of the Soviet people have been sold out, the interests of the people of the countries in the socialist camp, including the people of China, have been sold out, and the interests of all the peace-loving people of the world have been sold out."³²

Whilst the vast majority of states in the world, socialist, newly independent and capitalist, and the overwhelming majority of progressive organisations, trade unions, socialist and Communist Parties welcomed the Treaty as a *partial step in the right direction*, the Chinese comrades could not find language strong enough to condemn it.

They advanced the argument that the Treaty represented a "nuclear monopoly"³³ binding "the hands of all the peace-loving countries subject to the nuclear threat".³⁴ But this is to equate socialism and imperialism, the strength of socialism and the strength of imperialism. To equate U.S. imperialism and the U.S.S.R. is to equate the central force of imperialism and reaction with the central force of socialism and peace.

The Chinese Government claim that the greater number of socialist countries possessing nuclear weapons the better. But they isolate the issue from the real objective world. They refuse, on the one hand, to consider how damaging it would be for the economy of the other socialist countries if they had to use their resources for manufacturing nuclear weapons, how much, in this connection, they owe to the Soviet Union whose weapons defend the *whole* socialist world. On the other hand, they refuse to consider how the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the different countries of the socialist system would inevitably mean parallel proliferation to countries like Western Germany and Japan, countries, incidentally, with strong industrial economies in whose hands nuclear weapons would add greatly to the danger of war.

The nuclear weapons in the possession of the Soviet Union will continue in the future, as in the past, to defend the whole socialist camp, including the People's Republic of China, from U.S. imperialist nuclear aggression. The Soviet Government has, again and again, made that clear.

The Peace Movement

The struggle for peace develops on many different issues; around disarmament, complete ending of nuclear tests, the ending of military bases on British soil, the fight for international agreement on Berlin, the conclusion of a peace

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

treaty with Germany, the ending of the U.S. occupation of Taiwan and U.S. intervention in South Vietnam, for the entry of the People's Republic of China into the U.N. etc. New issues of peace constantly arise.

There are all sorts of peace organisations in Britain today; the British Peace Committee, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Committee of 100, national and local organisations of every sort.

The Communist Party will support every organisation that genuinely fights for peace, will strive especially to secure effective working class activity within the peace movement, will work for the broadest unity in action of all sections of the peace movement in Britain and the world.

Communists will, at one and the same time, work collectively and individually in the broad movement for peace, whilst they carry out their own *independent* work in the fight for peace. Many of those who first came to the peace movement and are ready to fight against one or other aspect of the threat of war, will not yet understand the imperialist roots of war, will not yet be prepared to fight against imperialism, still more for socialism.

Communists, therefore, whilst working loyally in the broad movement for peace, will carry out their own peace activities on higher political levels, with those ready on these levels to co-operate with them, fighting directly against imperialism, explaining the fundamental relation of imperialism and war, socialism and peace.

It is quite wrong to recognise as fighters for peace only those who are ready to accept a full Marxist analysis on the nature of war, to confuse the different levels of struggle, to try to "begin at the end", to demand that those just entering the struggle for peace on one or another immediate issue, shall as a condition for co-operation, accept a full Marxist programme.

It is just as if Communists fighting on economic issues should reject as useless, "palliating capitalism", ineffective, all the immediate trade union struggles on such issues as wages, hours, nationalisation, etc. and be ready to co-operate only with those who see the full socialist solution of the economic problems.

The Chinese comrades again and again have demanded that the international peace movement or other international movements should accept such advanced attitudes and forms of action. The only effect would be to divide these movements, to limit them to a vanguard, to reject from co-operation with them tens of thousands of honest people who are making first steps in a progressive direction.

Levels of Struggle

All our British experience points to the fact that a broad movement for peace strengthens, and does not weaken, the fight against imperialism, against capitalism.

Many of those who fought against war, during or immediately after the First World War, who started their struggles as pacifists or with limited approaches came, through their struggles, to understand and oppose imperialism, and then to join the Communist Party. Thousands of those who in the 1930's came first into a general struggle against war and fascism, not yet understanding the imperialist roots of war or the monopoly capitalist basis of fascism, came in the course of their struggles and through the work of Marxists, to deepen their understanding and to fight for socialism.

Many thousands of those who, in the fifties and sixties, started their struggles on such limited issues as against the bomb, have come to understand the need to fight against foreign military bases on British soil, to show solidarity with the national liberation movement, to fight for socialism.

It is quite wrong to counterpose the broad movement for peace, the movement against imperialism, the movement for socialism. The national liberation struggle and the widest possible support for it, is vital for the fight for peace. But the fight for peace cannot be made identical with the fight for national liberation in the sense of making support for the national liberation movement obligatory for the peace movement as a whole.

Communists in their own independent activities will always strive to rally the widest support, to develop the broadest solidarity, for the struggles of national liberation. They will also in their press, at their meetings, continuously explain the relations between imperialism and war, but they will not try to make this a condition for participation in the movement for peace. Indeed, as we have seen, it is precisely this broadest activity for peace that is often the first step, especially of young people, towards an understanding of and the fight against imperialism.

Socialism and Peace

The struggle for peace and the struggle for socialism are closely intertwined, inter-related.

It would be a horrible irony of history if, just at the moment when tempestuous advances of scientific knowledge open the prospect of a *rapid* solution of the problems of hunger and poverty and hardship that have haunted the world since

the beginning of man, this same scientific knowledge was used by imperialism to destroy a great part of mankind and man's culture. It is only in the lands of socialism that modern technology can solve the needs of men and permit the transi-

tion to a communist society of abundance.

Only socialism will give the final guarantee of peace in the world, but the world needs peace as the most favourable background from which to advance to socialism.

Party building Prospects

Betty Matthews

“ENDLESS Struggle with Communism” was *The Times* headline to a debate in the House of Lords in November 1961. The title truly reflected the note of fear and hopelessness which characterised that debate. The not so noble Lords were sensing the winds of change from capitalism to communism on a world scale. Two years later, commenting on our recent National Congress last Easter, *The Times* thought that the Party might “soon become a force to be reckoned with”. Here, too, was recognition of what is new and changing in our political scene.

That Congress was able to record an increase in membership of the Communist Party of nearly 10,000 in five years (38 per cent), and of 3,000 in the League (over 200 per cent). This growth is very significant, not because it yet represents a large numerical advance, but because it marks an important turn in the development of our Party. It reflects growth in understanding of the role of a Marxist Party and has been accompanied by greater consciousness of the necessity to participate in the electoral struggle, as the extension of contests in the local elections demonstrates.

Great Changes

What are the prospects for continued advance so that the Communist Party reaches a position where it combines mass support in industry and the organised labour movement with an electoral base in the councils and Parliament?

In what political and economic background are we battling for the development of the Communist Party? What conclusions can we draw from experience over the past years?

Before considering these questions, look for a moment on the past.

The struggle to give expression to the class interests of the workers through a political party and in Parliament has been long and tortuous.

The working class began to take shape in organisational forms more than seventy years before the Labour Party emerged at the turn of the century, born under conditions of stress in imperialism and out of the revival of socialist ideas in the movement and the militant struggles of “new unionism”. Its limited aim of securing working-class representation and an alternative government took decades to realise and it was not until 1945 that there was the first Labour majority in Parliament.

If the achievement of a mass electoral base and support has been difficult for the Labour Party, how much more of a battle is it for a revolutionary party with the aim of working-class power and socialism. Ideologically, we have to overcome the weight of capitalist ideas resisting social change. In practice, we have to contend with the problem of gaining a foothold in Parliament in competition with a party which is at present regarded as the main electoral expression of the labour movement. And this has to be fought for in an electoral system which is weighted in favour of the two major parties.

But great changes have been and are taking place, changes which objectively assist the struggle in Britain and create increased opportunities to win people for our aims and to advance communist support.

In contrast with the early part of this century, socialism is not only established in a number of countries, but is now rapidly overtaking capitalism economically. The more it proves its capacity to solve the problems of industry, science, housing, education, health, to raise living standards and to develop democracy, the greater the impact it will make on the minds of workers and of other sections in our country.

With the new relationship of class forces on a world scale, the possibilities exist for winning the struggle for peaceful coexistence and of advancing