

Notes of the Month

FIFTY YEARS OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

'Communism has travelled a hard road: of ascent followed by periods of sharp decline; successes, but also severe defeats. In spite of all, the development in essence has gone the way forecast by the Manifesto of the Communist Party. The epoch of the last decisive battle came later than the apostles of the social revolution expected and wished. But it has come. . . .

Socialist criticism has sufficiently stigmatised the bourgeois world order. The task of the International Communist Party is now to overthrow this order and to erect in its place the structure of the socialist world order.'

Manifesto of the Foundation Congress of the Communist International, March, 1919

February 17, 1969

Fifty years ago this month the Communist International was born. In stirring words the Manifesto of the First Congress (drafted incidentally by Trotsky, that master of the spoken and written word, though not of political judgement, and signed by Lenin and the other leaders of delegations of parties and groups participating in the Congress), which came to be known as the New Communist Manifesto triumphantly following up the original Manifesto of the Communist Party of Marx and Engels seven decades earlier, proclaimed the character of the world epoch which had opened in fulfilment of the predictions of the original Communist Manifesto:

The new era has begun! The era of the downfall of capitalism—its internal disintegration. The epoch of the proletarian communist revolution. In some countries, victorious proletarian revolution; increasing revolutionary ferment in other lands; uprisings in the colonies; utter incapacity of the ruling classes to control the fate of peoples any longer—that is the picture of world conditions today.

Today half a century has passed since that proclamation of the new epoch which had opened. What is the outcome of this experience of half a century? What of the position of world capitalism? What of the position of world communism and socialism? How much has been achieved? How much remains to be achieved? What new problems clamour for solution?

Illusion of Disillusion

These questions are no idle historical questions of a commemoration. They are urgent present questions. For the very success of the advance of the world socialist revolution during this half century: the advance of socialism from a single state over one sixth of the world to fourteen states over one third of the world; the advance of national liberation and downfall of the old empires; the change of the world balance and weakening of imperialism: all this has compelled the rulers of the dying old order to change their tune nowadays, and to seek by every means at their command to conceal and disguise this success from the understanding of the younger generation who have not lived through it. Therefore they seek to proclaim through a thousand trumpets of their megaphone press, radio and television that it has all been an illusion and a colossal failure, ending in a bitter harvest of universal disillusion. Fleet Street and the snug studios of television swarm nowadays with self-announced 'ex-revolutionaries' who preach, at highly lucrative rates, the modern gospel of disillusion. With gloomy gusto they explain how in their youthful days they were misled by visions of a utopia on earth, or worshipped the false idol of the Soviet Union, until now their knowledge of the hideous reality has left them no consolation save to retreat into the fleshpots of Mammon, in order from this vantage point to warn the present-day young never to be trapped by those illusions of which they had been the victims in the thirties or the twenties or whenever. Quite a flourishing profession nowadays, the 'ex-revolutionaries' in the modern capitalist world.

New Tunes for Old Hymns of Hate

Previously the rulers and prophets of the then self-assured capitalist world used to refer with a contemptuous sneer to the Soviet aim of building socialism in war-ravaged Russia as an 'experiment' of fanatical amateurs ignorant of the laws of economics, and bound to end in hopeless economic chaos and collapse. Now they describe the Soviet Union as a 'super-power' whose might is a menace to the world. Previously they used to describe the Marxist theory of world revolution as an empty 'pipe-dream' which could never be realised. Now they are busy building military alliances in every region of the world, on the basis of whatever reactionary rulers and satellite states they can knock together with the aid of financial subsidies and arms supplies, to stem the advance of the peoples everywhere advancing to end national and class oppression. Previously they used to dismiss the teachings of Lenin as a doctrinaire attempt to

apply the obsolete and long exploded nineteenth century theories of Marx to the modern twentieth century world. Now they pooh-poo Marxism-Leninism as an obsolete doctrine based on the vanished conditions of the early twentieth century, and eagerly try to resurrect instead as the latest most modern up-to-date idea an imaginary 'Marxism', provided it is kept clear of all connection with Lenin or the world revolution or the organised communist movement. Indeed—for they are aware that the majority of young people today are critical of their social order and seeking for an alternative—they are ready to provide the most lavish high-powered publicity for any and every 'left' theory, even the most fantastic really obsolete anarchist confusions long ago fought off the battlefield by Marxism, so long as it is anti-communist and critical of the Soviet Union.

The World Revolution—A Historical Epoch

All the bogus 'historians' and 'experts' of the capitalist world, who nowadays in ever increasing numbers specialise in the dissection of Marxism and in 'Kremlinology', love to expose the alleged fond illusions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks who are supposed to have expected that the victory of the October revolution in 1917 would be immediately followed by the extension of the socialist revolution to the other leading capitalist countries within the next few years. Equally the pundits who make this assertion are only revealing their ignorance of the facts and of the teachings of Marx and Lenin. Ignorance of the facts: for it was precisely Lenin who chastised most mercilessly leftist assumptions of the speedy victory of the world revolution and described such assumptions as 'a blind gamble':

Yes, we will see the international world revolution; but for the time being it is a very good fairy tale—I quite understand children liking beautiful fairy tales. But I ask, is it becoming for a serious revolutionary to believe fairy tales?

(Lenin, *Report on War and Peace to the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party*, March 7, 1918)

Similarly in his letter to the American workers on August 20, 1918, Lenin wrote:

We place our stakes on the inevitability of the international revolution; but that does not mean that we are fools enough to place our stakes on the revolution coming on some *definite* and early date.

Thus on the elementary facts the pundits proclaim the exact opposite of the truth. But even more important is their complete ignorance of

the basic teachings of Marx and Lenin on this very question. For it was the consistent teaching of Marx and Lenin that the world socialist revolution could be no sudden dramatic coup transforming the world from capitalism to socialism in the twinkling of an eye, but that on the contrary the painful path of the transition from capitalism to socialism (itself the necessary precursor of the subsequent advance to communism) would constitute a prolonged historical epoch. This is the epoch in which we live.

Prolonged Path to Revolution

Marx as long ago as 1851 wrote that the workers must be prepared to go through 'fifty years of civil wars and international wars' before they would reach the fitness to win and exercise political power:

We say to the workers: 'You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international wars, not only in order to change existing conditions, but also in order to change yourselves and fit yourselves for the exercise of political power.'

(Marx, *Revelations on the Communist Trial at Cologne*, 1851)

In contrast to the impatience of anarchism Marx and Engels taught that in the conditions of dominant capitalism the advance of the working class to ripeness for revolution is necessarily slow. Lenin emphasised the appropriateness of this teaching for the period of the Second International:

In those days, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history made slow organisational and educational work the task of the day. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong, not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The anarchists misjudged the character of the times, for they failed to understand the world situation.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they understood that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be *slow*.

(Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, April, 1917)

The fault of the Second International did not lie in this peaceful educational role, but in the fact that, when history moved into the new era of the general crisis of capitalism, of wars and revolutions, with the war of 1914, its leadership abandoned all their pledges and basis of international socialism, and joined instead with their rival imperialist masters to hound on the workers to mutual slaughter. Therefore it became necessary to rally and unite all the living forces of the international socialist movement in the new International or

Third International, which replaced the bankruptcy of the Second and drew inspiration from the First, and which was, as Engels had anticipated, 'directly Communist':

I believe that the next International, after Marx's writings have exercised their influence for some years, will be directly Communist, and will proclaim precisely our principles.

(Engels, *letter to Sorge*, September 12-17, 1874)

As so often with the predictions of Marxism, the principle was correct, and has been proved by the practical outcome, but took longer than anticipated. It was not 'the next International', but the Third which fulfilled Engels's anticipation of the Communist International.

Complex Process of Revolution

After the victory of the October revolution Lenin repeatedly insisted, against the over-sanguine anticipation of those who expected the speedy victory of the socialist revolution in Western Europe, or who even, like Trotsky, regarded the survival of the Soviet state as dependent on the victory of the working class and socialist revolution in Western Europe, that in the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe it would be far more difficult for the working class to begin the revolution and win political power than in Russia, but once political power had been won, far easier to carry through the tasks of reconstruction:

A backward country can get off to an easy start, because the opponent is rotten and the bourgeoisie unorganised. But to continue, it will have to be a hundred thousand times more prudent, careful and persistent.

In Western Europe it will be different, there it will be incalculably harder to begin, but incalculably easier to continue.

Therefore the world socialist revolution began, not in the most advanced capitalist countries, as originally anticipated by Marx in his earlier writings, but at the weakest link among the imperialist powers, in Russia where at the same time the working class on the basis of Marxism had reached the highest level of political consciousness and revolutionary organisation. From there the advance extended, not at once to the capitalist countries in the West, but again first to the further weakest points in the imperialist world network, through the upsurge of the revolt of the peoples in the colonial countries, inspired to new heights by the victory of the October revolution and the stirring example of the fulfilment of liberation of the Asiatic peoples previously subject to Tsarism.

Creative Contribution of the Communist International

This was the conception which Lenin outlined in his famous last article (*Better Fewer, But Better*, in March, 1923), when, in answer to the question of the future prospect of socialism, he pointed out that 'in the last analysis the upshot of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe', and since the mass of the colonial peoples oppressed by imperialism was now 'definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement' opened by 1917, thus also undermining the basis of the entanglement with imperialism which had delayed the advance of the Western working class, this gathering of the world majority on the side of the revolution meant that 'in this respect there cannot be the slightest shadow of doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be', and 'in this sense the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured'. This unique and concrete analysis of the path and stages of advance of the world socialist revolution (foreshadowed in a preliminary form by Marx in his writings on India and China, and his recognition during his later years of Russia as having become the 'vanguard' of the revolution), leaving far behind the narrow European horizons of the theorists of the Second International, was one of the signal contributions of Lenin's creative development of Marxism in the conditions of the modern epoch. Similarly the active and tireless championship of the theory and practice of the alliance of the working class in the imperialist countries and the national liberation movement in the countries oppressed by imperialism was an outstanding and imperishable constructive achievement of the Communist International, reaching out to ground never touched by the Second International. Lenin showed how it was precisely through this variety of forms and phases that 'the transition from capitalism to socialism occupies an entire historical epoch':

The socialist revolution cannot take place in any other form than that of an epoch, uniting the civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the leading countries with a whole series of democratic, revolutionary and national emancipatory movements in the undeveloped backward and oppressed countries. Why is this? Because capitalism develops unequally.

(Lenin, *On a Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism*, 1916)

The events of the past fifty years have abundantly confirmed this prediction of the character of the modern epoch.

First World Revolutionary Wave

March, 1919, the date of the founding of the Communist International, was a high point of the first world revolutionary wave which followed 1917. In that month the working class in Hungary set up their Hungarian Soviet Republic, the pioneer forerunner of the future extension of the socialist revolution beyond the borders of the Soviet Republic, which was only to receive its subsequent fulfilment after the vanquishing of fascism at the end of the second world war. The Hungarian Soviet Republic held power for over three months, until it was overthrown by the invasion of the Czechoslovak armies of Masaryk and the Romanian armies acting jointly under the orders of French imperialism to crush the socialist revolution, thereby clearing the way for fascism to hold Hungary in its grip for a quarter of a century. Immediately after there was established the Bavarian Soviet Republic in the heart of Central Europe, which was destroyed by the forces of German militarism under the auspices of right-wing Social-Democracy. All over Germany there were clashes approaching civil war. In April the revolt of the sailors of the French Navy in the Black Sea expressed the solidarity of the Western workers with the Soviet Republic; and unrest spread among the British soldiers dispatched to Archangel. In Britain the soldiers' strikes compelled speedy demobilisation; the strike movement reached to great heights alongside the Hands off Russia campaign, which presaged the Councils of Action in the following year. Mass struggles at every level dominated the world scene from Cairo to Tokyo, from Winnipeg to Dublin. Premier Lloyd George presented a memorandum to the Paris Peace Conference on March 25 declaring: 'The whole of Europe is in a revolutionary mood.'

Initial Conception of the International General Staff

It was in these conditions of the world-wide struggle of revolution and counter-revolution that the Communist International was founded. Therefore its original constitution, fully elaborated at its Second Congress in 1920, was initially formed to combine strong centralised international leadership with its democratic basis of equality of parties and election of the Executive. This character of the constitution was not only planned in order to replace the fatal looseness of the old Second International, the laxity of whose parties in carrying out international decisions had led to its being described in derision as the 'post-box International', and which had finally led to its collapse and death. The purpose was also seen as a practical

response to the conditions of the then existing phase of the world situation. The centralised international leadership was devised in order to fulfil the indispensable function of an international general staff of the revolution, capable of uniting the struggle against its counterpart, the Paris Supreme Council of the Western powers, which functioned as the centralised leadership of counter-revolution, dispatched Czech and Romanian troops to crush the Socialist revolution in Hungary, financed and armed the White generals in Russia, or organised the wars of intervention of fourteen states against the Soviet Republic.

Transition to the Role of World Guide, Teacher and Organiser

By 1923 the world revolutionary wave had ebbed and gave place to the temporary stabilisation of capitalism which opened with the Dawes Plan in 1924. Therefore the function of the Communist International changed correspondingly to meet the new conditions. Already by December, 1921, the Executive adopted the theses on 'The United Working Class Front', (which were first published in English in the issue of this journal for February, 1922). At the Fourth Congress in November, 1922, Lenin made his last speech to the international movement, and gave the advice that in this period of temporary respite from the phase of war, 'we must take advantage of every moment of respite from fighting, from war, to study, and to study from scratch'; 'the most important thing in the period we are now entering is to study'; and that, while the Russian comrades needed to study to fulfil the most elementary tasks of overcoming illiteracy and backwardness, the literate and 'enlightened' foreign comrades needed to 'study in the special sense, in order that they may really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work.' For those Western comrades who considered themselves too advanced to need to learn from Russia, and who dismissed the organisational conceptions of Bolshevism as appropriate only to Russian conditions, Lenin conceded in a passage of scorching irony that the correct organisational resolution of the Third Congress had proved a dead-letter since it was 'too Russian' to be understood by any foreigner ('In the first place, it is too long, containing fifty or more paragraphs; foreigners are not usually able to read such things'); nevertheless, 'the resolution must be carried out', and the way must be found to help the non-Russian comrades to understand it and 'assimilate part of the Russian experience'. Then with a characteristic penetrating foresight into the whole character of the coming period he suggested that fascism (Mussolini had just

come to power only a few weeks before in Italy) might prove the instrument which would teach the Western working class the necessary lesson:

The fascisti in Italy may render us a great service by showing the Italians that they are not yet sufficiently enlightened and that their country is not yet ensured against the Black Hundreds. Perhaps this will be very useful.

The Communist International performed a historic task in the nineteen-twenties in helping, through joint international experience and contact, to mould and train the very heterogeneous array of revolutionary forces derived from the old social-democratic movement into developing as unified and experienced revolutionary parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and organised to conduct effective mass activity. At the same time in the field of action the aim was set towards the united working class front.

Tactical Shortcomings

Nevertheless, in the complex conditions of the next phase of the international situation, when the breakdown of the temporary stabilisation of capitalism developed into the world economic crisis of 1929-32 and the onset of the offensive of fascism, serious tactical shortcomings were revealed in the response of the International to the urgent needs of the new situation. The Sixth Congress in 1928 had correctly predicted the approaching breakdown of the temporary stabilisation and its replacement by a world economic crisis opening a new 'third period' in international development; and the Tenth Plenum in July, 1929, elaborated this economic analysis—so much so that, when the crash came in October, 1929, US Senators, recalling these predictions, complained that the International must have had a hand in the world economic crisis. But the tactical conclusions drawn pointed in the wrong direction. Lenin's final warning in his last speech to the international movement on the significances of the offensive of fascism for future development in Europe was overlooked. Instead, the main blow was directed against social-democracy as the principal enemy and twin partner of fascism. This found expression in the slogan 'Class Against Class' and the presentation of the aim of the united front from below as in opposition to the united front from above. Certainly the appalling record of the Social-Democratic governments in suppressing and shooting down the militant workers, opposing every form of united action, establishing emergency regimes, and even in some countries entering into direct treaties of alliance with fascism made under-

standable the bitterness of this fight, which found extreme expression in the use of the disastrous term 'social fascism', intended only to describe the policy of the top leadership, but inevitably tending in practice to be applied also to the lower officials. Walter Ulbricht, who was Secretary of the Berlin Communist Party organisation at the time has since made clear (in his report on the *Outline History of the German Working Class Movement 1863-1963*) that this term and the line associated with it did not originate from the German Communist Party, but reflected 'Stalin's dogmatic and schematic ideas on the role of social-democracy'. This line hindered the main task to devote every effort to promote a united front with the Social-Democratic Party in order to prevent fascism coming to power. Hitler came to power—a heavy blow for the working class and the peoples of the world.

Leadership in the Fight Against Fascism and the Fascist War Offensive

Once Hitler had come to power the communists everywhere responded to the urgent fight which had now opened, and during those critical years of the thirties were in the forefront of all the efforts to promote the broadest co-operation in the common fight against fascism and against the war offensive of fascism. Dimitrov in the dock defying Goering inspired the peoples of the whole world. By the following year in 1934 practical results were already being achieved with the united working class front holding fascism at bay in France, and agreement between the Communist and Socialist Parties preparing the way for the People's Front. The Seventh Congress in 1935 sounded the clarion call which won response in every country for unity against fascism and war. As the extending fascist aggression which was the prelude of the second world war crept forward, of Japanese fascism to conquer Manchuria, of Italian fascism against Ethiopia, of German and Italian fascism to overthrow Spanish democracy, the communists were in the forefront of the fight. The corrupt and reactionary rulers of Britain and France connived at the extending fascist aggression, financed and rearmed Hitler, and tore up all their previous treaties banning German rearmament, in the hope that they were thus building a powerful military machine to smash the Soviet Union and communism. This policy reached its climax with the Four Power Pact of Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier at Munich to carve up and hand over Czechoslovakia to Hitler and thereby open his path to the East. But the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact smashed Munich. The British and French Governments, who had refused the alliance

with the Soviet Union which their peoples had demanded, and which could have checked Hitler's aggression and prevented the second world war, had to learn the hard way. Within eleven days of the signing of the Pact the British and French Munichite Governments declared war on Hitler, not for the sake of Danzig (they had connived at much more), nor for the defence of Poland (no finger was stirred for the defence of Poland), but because, as the official booklet *The British Case*, with the preface by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, explained, Hitler had committed the supreme 'apostasy' of making peace with the Soviet Union.

Communists in the Second World War

Communists fought in the forefront in each successive phase of the extending fascist aggression which ushered in the second world war, notably in the International Brigade, at a time when many also on the left were still supporting what was falsely called 'appeasement'. The hypocritical declaration of a phony war by the British and French Munichite Governments against Germany presented the British and French parties with a special temporary problem. They sought initially to solve it by a twofold strategy of combining the military war against Hitler with the political struggle against their reactionary governments at home. But the events of September soon showed that this line was untenable, since there was no military war against Hitler (Generals Keitel and Jodl subsequently testified at the Nuremburg trial that at the moment when all their main forces were concentrated in Poland, with only five divisions in the West, the generals had warned Hitler that if the Anglo-French command, with overwhelming military superiority, should attack, they would have no alternative save to surrender, whereupon Hitler had assured the generals that they need not worry, since the British and French would not attack). Instead, the Anglo-French military moves were all directed towards action against the Soviet Union, as over Finland, and the ardent anti-fascist feelings of the people were being exploited for very different purposes. Hence it became necessary to expose without mercy this reactionary imperialist strategy. But after the Anglo-French passivity had opened the way to Hitler's extending aggression and conquest in Western Europe in 1940, the communists were in the forefront in organising the resistance movements in country after country. In June, 1940, the French party presented its memorandum to the French Government outlining a plan for the defence of Paris, and declaring that surrender of Paris would be betrayal of France, and in July, 1940, issued the call to the French

people for the resistance fight for the independence of France. In Britain the fall of the Munichites from the leadership of the Government, and their replacement by Churchill, opened a new stage.

Fulfilment of the Great Alliance

Thus by the time that Hitler, having established his domination over all Western Europe except Britain, launched his attack on the Soviet Union, the conditions had become ripe for the alliance with the Soviet Union, which had before been refused, to be welcomed by the British Government and ruling class, as well as by the entire British people and all the peoples struggling against fascism. The great alliance of the peoples for the defeat of the fascist aggressors had at last been fulfilled. In this war of liberation, drawing in the peoples in all parts of the world, which ended in the destruction of the military power of fascism and in which the Soviet armies and people bore the main burden and delivered the main blows at the enemy, the communists and their parties in all countries played an active part. The parties grew in popularity and numbers to such an extent and over so wide a range that the old forms of international organisation became outgrown. In 1943 the formal organisation of the Communist International, by consultation and agreement of all the main constituent parties, was dissolved. A new era had opened of unparalleled advance of the world revolution and the world communist movement.

Extending Range of the World Revolution

On the eve of the second world war Stalin, in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March, 1939, warned the British and French Governments of the 'fiasco' to which their Munichite policy would lead:

The big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them.

And already at the Seventeenth Congress in 1934 he had given a prediction of the prospective outcome of the planned anti-Soviet war:

Let not Messieurs the bourgeoisie blame us if some of the governments so near and dear to them, which today rule happily 'by the grace of God', are missing on the morrow after such a war. . . . It can hardly be doubted that a second war against the USSR will lead to the complete defeat of the aggressors, to revolution in a number of countries in Europe and Asia, and to the destruction of the bourgeois-landlord governments in these countries.

This prediction of Marxism-Leninism has been fulfilled in the post-

1945 era with notable accuracy. The military power of the Nazi aggressors was smashed. The fascist bourgeois-landlord regimes in the countries of Eastern Europe gave place to people's democracies, which advanced to the achievement of peaceful socialist revolutions. The Western colonial empires in Asia collapsed, despite all the frantic efforts of British, French, Dutch and American imperialism to rebuild their colonial regime after the departure of the Japanese invaders, with endless military expeditions and prolonged colonial wars to crush the local liberation movements. India won independence after the revolt of the armed forces. The Chinese people won their liberation battle by 1949 against the US-armed and financed forces of Chiang Kai-shek. By the sixties the advance of independence was extending also to smaller territories in Africa, which could never have won it by their own strength alone in face of the colossal coercive might of imperialism, but were now able to win recognition of their independence (even though considerably limited by the methods of neo-colonialism), thanks to the weakening of imperialism and increased strength of the socialist sector of the world. There are still heavy liberation battles to be fought and won: in South East Asia, in the Middle East and in Southern Africa (not to mention the horrors let loose by British imperialist policy on Biafra), as well as against the whole strategy of neo-colonialism.

Problems of Growth

The world communist movement has leaped forward in the number of parties and membership during this era. The ten parties of 1918 have become some ninety today. The membership of 1,680,000 in 1928, which had risen to 4,202,000 by 1939, reached 44,700,000 by 1964. If from this total we separate those in the socialist countries, aggregate communist membership in the non-socialist countries has risen from 443,000 in 1928 to 1,750,000 by 1939 and 5,600,000 by 1964. In face of this advance the enemies of communism try to console themselves today by pointing to the divisions which exist in the communist world. A host of new socialist states has come into existence, with various previous backgrounds and national histories. Tens of millions have come into the communist movement, from various social and political and non-political backgrounds. It would be idle to imagine that all the problems arising in the new situation can be solved automatically at once, or do not give rise to strains. In the case of China it is evident that the inheritance of the peasant and national background

of the Chinese revolution prior to the victory of liberation under the leadership of the Communist Party has still left its impact on the present phase. In Europe the new situation of the parallel existence of a series of socialist states, in place of the single socialist state, has given rise to new problems of combining the principle of national sovereignty with the defence of common interests against imperialism or for mutual economic existence. These problems have grown out of the current historical stage. There can be every confidence that, whatever the difficult phases which may still have to be passed through, these temporary difficulties can and will be eventually overcome on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, with further experience in the struggle and common endeavours to reach a path of solution.

Internationalism Lives

To help overcome these differences and promote the unity of the world communist movement is necessarily the urgent concern of every communist. The ending of the particular form of organisation of the Communist International a quarter of a century ago, as no longer appropriate to new conditions, did not mean the ending of the principle of internationalism. When Marx and Engels dissolved the First International (initially in the form of transferring its headquarters to the United States), it was to prevent the formal organisation being rent by anarchist factionalism and to ensure that the true principle of working class internationalism should be carried forward, without depending on the existence of a specific form of organisation. The resolution on the dissolution of the Communist International in 1943 declared:

Communists have never been supporters of the conservation of organisational forms that have outlived themselves. They have always subordinated forms of organisation of the working class movement and the methods of working of such organisations to the fundamental political interest of the working class movement as a whole, to the peculiarities of the concrete historical situation and to the problems immediately resulting from this situation.

This is all the more important today when the principle of internationalism needs to find its appropriate expression, not in the previous type of fixed forms of organisation, but in effective co-operation in the common struggle in such a way as to serve 'the fundamental political interest of the working class as a whole' at the same time as taking account of 'the peculiarities of the concrete historical situation' and the varying conditions in the different countries.

Co-operation Against Imperialism

The principle of internationalism is all the more imperative and urgent today, precisely because it does not depend on any automatic organisational expression, but lives and needs to live in the heart and conscience and understanding of every communist and every party. The class struggle is international. In the modern world situation the interlinking of the struggle is more than ever manifest. The cause of Vietnam has lit up the struggle in every country and among every people in the world. The forces of imperialism confront on a world scale the socialist camp, the international working class and the world of national liberation. The words of Marx in his speech at Amsterdam at the conclusion of The Hague Congress of the First International in 1872 ring as true as ever today:

Let us recall the first principle of the International: solidarity. We shall achieve the great goal for which we are striving provided we firmly consolidate this life-giving principle among all workers in all countries.

Therefore it is a welcome first step in the present circumstances that the plan has gone forward, with the support of the large majority of communist parties, for an international conference of communist and workers' parties to promote solidarity and co-operation in the common struggle against imperialism.

Drawing the Balance

When the enemies of communism, in the face of its sweeping advance over these fifty years, seek to draw comfort from the divisions and problems which still remain to be solved, it is well to see in perspective the record of world capitalism over these fifty years. Lenin in that last speech of his to the international movement in 1922 made this contrast of the mistakes of communism and of capitalism:

If the Bolsheviks do foolish things, the Bolshevik says: 'Twice two are five.' But when their enemies, the capitalists and the heroes of the Second International, do foolish things, they get: 'Twice two make a tallow candle.'

Where today are the grand wars of intervention which in the Churchillian phrase were to have strangled the Bolshevik chicken at birth? Where today is the Versailles design of Europe which was to have held Germany disarmed for ever and to have maintained the Eastern European states as a 'cordon sanitaire' against communism? Where today is the British Empire of which Lord Curzon boasted exactly fifty years ago?

The British flag has never flown over a more powerful or a more united Empire. . . . Never did our voice count for more in the Councils of the

Nations, or in determining the future destinies of mankind (Hear! Hear!).
 'The world's great age begins anew; the golden years return.'

(Lord Curzon in the House of Lords, November 18, 1918)

Where is President Hoover's final conquest of poverty and unemployment, which ended in the world economic crisis? Where is the 'Thousand Year Third Reich' which was built up with such lavish finance and arms by the Anglo-French-American millionaires as the invincible instrument against communism? Where is the boasted atom bomb monopoly or supremacy which was to have dictated terms to the Soviet Union? No need to continue the catalogue. The international situation is still dangerous. The madmen of reaction return to their vomit. Once again, in face of every lesson, they have rearmed German militarism. Once again they preach the old lie that parallel soaring armaments and sectional military treaties can guarantee peace. Once again their crazy economic system lurches into new dislocations, for which the workers have to pay. There was never such need for the active fight, vigilance, unity and strength of the working class and all democratic forces within each country and internationally. But at the same time the recognition of the bankruptcy of the old order and the need for basic change is extending among the widest sections. From Pakistan to Spain the earth is shaking. The stirring among young people is a sign of change, and a pointer to the great future which opens if political consciousness and clarity and class understanding is added to the desire for change.

'It Moves'

Dimitrov in the dock in 1933 confronted his Third Reich judge and Nazi prosecutor with the words of Galileo: 'And still it—the earth—moves.' In face of the attempts of the President of the Court to silence him he proclaimed the aims of the world communist revolution and declared:

We Communists can now, no less resolutely than old Galileo, say: 'And still it moves! The wheel of history turns, moves forward.'

How much more we can say that today!

R.P.D.

Correction (February issue, p. 57): The date of the Treasury Agreement between the Government and the trade unions suspending the right to strike and all trade union restrictions was in March, not February, 1915.