

THE COMMUNIST

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

"A communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against



all incorrect ideas and actions so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist."
Mao Tsetung

VOL. IV no. 6

WORKERS CONGRESS (MARXIST-LENINIST)

POB 1297 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690

JAN. 16, 1978

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US-JAPAN TRADE CONFLICT SHARPENS

PROTECTIONIST CAMPAIGN IN STEEL

The US government has recently announced its plan to aid the "struggling steel industry." The main part of the plan is a "reference or trigger price" system that is designed to halt the alleged "dumping" of steel by Japanese and other foreign producers on the US market. The overall effect of the reference price system will be to reduce the competition of foreign steel in the domestic market and thus help to prop up the monopoly position of the US steel industry.

The elaborate reference price system established by the US Treasury Department, is based on the cost of production of the most efficient producers of steel, which at this point are the Japanese. Any foreign corporation exporting steel to the US at below this reference price will be penalized with fines. The Treasury Department stated "it could impose the countervailing duty retroactively, and without having notified the importer of that possibility when the merchandise cleared through customs." This will have the

effect of reducing domestic steel consumer's willingness to buy cheaper foreign steel that can have extra duties imposed upon it months after a shipment arrives.

Put more frankly, as the president of the American Institute for Imported Steel stated, "The reference prices are actually a disguised embargo against foreign steel." A clear example of the truth of this statement occurred last year when anti-dumping duties were assessed against the Japanese for dumping steel plates on the West Coast. The result was that Japanese activity in the steel plate market virtually dried up.

The government's proposal comes as a response to the steel industry's massive propaganda campaign aimed at blaming the crisis in steel on "foreign steel imports". Other parts of the government's plan to aid the US steel industry include: 1) giving them further tax breaks, 2) increasing the loan guarantees to steel companies, 3) expediting

the clearances of mergers and joint ventures of steel companies and 4) modifying environmental regulations.

These actions by the government serve to prepare the conditions for a higher level of state monopoly capital as the state plays a more open role in bailing the industry out.

The industry has also rallied the class collaborationist leadership of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) behind its bankrupt line on foreign steel imports. In general the trade union bureaucrats have been pressuring rank and file steelworkers around the country to support the growing protectionist tendencies of the steel industry and government represented by the reference price system. And in particular, the Sadlowski-Balinoff wing of the USWA has said that it will support the tax breaks, tax incentives, modified environmental regulations, and the changing of the anti-trust laws to allow for mergers of the steel companies if these measures will be tied to job guarantees for workers. McBride makes the basis of his activity pressure on the government to give money to the steel monopoly capitalists.

Here we see the treacherous role played by these class collaborationists as they openly assist in the concentration of state monopoly capital in the steel industry by capitulation to monopoly capital's line of what it needs to survive.

JAPAN'S RESPONSE

Japan has voiced discontent, along with the capitalist countries of Western Europe, over the increasing tendencies toward protectionism by the US. As a superpower, the US is using its greater overall economic, military, and political strength to bully Japan, through the reference price system, to reduce its trade surplus by exporting less and importing more.

One way in which the depth of the trade crisis with Japan can be measured is by the fact that Japan's trade surplus with the US alone is \$8 billion. In contrast the US is facing a total trade deficit of \$30 billion this year (as compared to \$6.3 billion

in 1976) with almost \$8 billion of this deficit being to Japan. In response to US bullying, aimed at eliminating Japan's trade surplus, Japan has agreed to "cooperate" with the US protectionist moves by providing the US government with the information necessary to establish the trigger prices. Already prices have been calculated for 17 types of steel mill products based on Japanese cost data supplied through the Tokyo government.

STEEL INDUSTRY REVEALS PRICE INCREASES

The hypocrisy of the steel industry's ranting and raving over "unfair foreign competition" is exposed by the fact that since the reference price system has been announced, the industry has already revealed price increases of its steel products. Thus it is clear that the real aim of the US steel owners is to increase their prices and that, as even the government's Council on Wage and Price Stability has said, "the reduction of imports won't benefit the US industry as much as the higher prices that the industry would be able to charge if it weren't for import competition."

By eliminating competition the industry can create even higher monopoly prices without lifting a finger to modernize outdated plants, introduce technological innovations, and in short, keep pace with advances in steel production. It is this tendency toward decay inherent in monopoly which is the real source of the industry's stagnation and inability to remain competitive with Japan and other foreign steel producers. The monopoly position that US steel has held over the years has led to its present crisis, and not "dumping" by foreign steel producers. (See Steel Imports Hoax, THE COMMUNIST, Vol. IV, No. 2)

TRADE CONFLICT SHARPENS

In our earlier article, Steel Imports Hoax, we stated that the Carter administration had thus far resisted pressure by the steel industry to restrict steel imports unilaterally. But with the implementation of the reference price system it is obvious that this policy has begun to shift.

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SUPERPOWERS CONTINUE WAR PREPARATIONS

SALT TALKS MASK ARMS RACE

Recently the Soviet Union and the United States came out with a joint statement in the press to the effect that the current SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) II negotiations would soon result in an agreement that developed "further measures aimed at the effective prevention of nuclear war and the limitation of armaments, thereby contributing to progress towards all real disarmament."

Actually the SALT II talks are not succeeding in the least in curtailing nuclear arms expansion or in any way contributing to "progress towards all real disarmament." What the talks have really been is a mask for even more sophisticated nuclear arms development by the superpowers. The truth of this is recorded in the history and concrete results of the "SALT talks" which first began in 1969.

For the US the motivation behind entering into negotiations to "limit" strategic arms was that until the late 1960's it had possessed a clear-cut strategic military superiority over its Soviet superpower rival. The foundation of this superiority was the US's three to one advantage in numbers of long range ballistic missiles. Under the existing technology long range missiles had become a decisive component for any superpower's strategic arsenal.

However, taking advantage of the US's involvement in Vietnam the Soviet social imperialists had by 1969 significantly reduced this missile advantage. The goal of the US imperialists in entering into the SALT talks was to use the world wide opposition to nuclear arms expansion and concern for the growing danger of war to put a check on this growing Soviet missile strength.

The US, which in terms of numbers already had all the long range missiles it needed to wage a world war, did not want to engage in a costly arms race to

keep "ahead of the Soviets" in endless numbers of missiles. The strategic military concern of US imperialism was not so much to increase the number of its long range missiles as to improve their quality and further deepen its overall superiority over the social imperialists in its entire arsenal of strategic arms (long range ballistic missiles, long range bombers, air-launched missiles, missile launching submarines, etc.).

However, by the time the talks led to an agreement, the SALT I treaty in 1972, the Soviets had overcome the US advantage in numbers of missiles. For the USSR, like the US, the real concern had become not further increasing the number of missiles, but improving their quality and its overall strategic military capabilities.

Thus all the ballyhoo about furthering the cause of disarmament that followed the SALT I agreement was meaningless. For one thing it set "limits" on the number of long range missiles

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ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT

CAPITALISM SOURCE OF FARMERS' RUIN

The development of agriculture lags behind that of industry in all capitalist countries, and this is one of the characteristics of capitalism. Most of the wealth produced in agriculture goes to parasites for rent and the price of land. This tribute, payment for the "right" of the farmer to work the land, is demanded on the claim of ownership of the land by the non-laboring landlord. This money is not re-invested in improvements in the land, or spent on machinery and equipment. The drain of capital from agriculture in the form of rent and the price of land is the main factor in the backwardness of agriculture under capitalism. Thus, backwardness in agriculture is the result of private ownership.

Farm crises are typically marked by a speculative boom in the price of land. On the basis of the inflated land value, farmers can borrow more from the banks and insurance companies. The result is that farm mortgage debt increases by staggering proportions (for example, by two and one-half billion dollars from 1920 to 1923.) As the farm crisis worsens and agricultural prices continue to decline, farmers are crushed under the heavy burden of debt.

Today farm assets have risen, but this is primarily due to a boom in the price of land. As a result, in 1976, land value represented 73% of the farmers' assets. At the same time, farm debt has increased, soaring four-

fold since 1960 with half that increase in the last five years. Since the drop in farm goods prices in 1973 and increased year-end losses, the pressured farmers are increasing their debt by refinancing their loans. Of course the poor and small farmers in particular are in an increasingly disadvantageous position to the larger farmers who have more capital to invest and can get lower loan rates.

FARMER MILITANCY IN THE 1930'S

In the 1930's, in response to the severe attacks on their livelihood which drove over one million farmers to bankruptcy, the small and middle farmers took to struggle in a militant and power-

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US-JAPAN TRADE CONFLICT

What the reference price system in fact indicates is at this time a sharpening of protectionist tendencies that could ultimately lead to trade war between the US and Japan and the European Economic Community (the Common Market). In general protectionist moves are an inevitable response to the increasingly sharp international crisis of capitalism as each capitalist country attempts to protect its own industry from encroachments by foreign capital. Their ability to carry off these moves is dependent on their relative strength. Thus the US, because it is a superpower, has been able to bully Japan into accepting the reference price system.

In particular these protectionist moves are happening now because the US, along with the countries of Western Europe, and Japan and Canada, has been unable to fully recover from the world wide crisis in 1974. High unemployment continues, combined with an overall attack on the standard of living of the masses of people, particularly the working class and oppressed nationalities. In addition some industry, especially steel,

was already heading for crisis due to its inability to remain competitive with other more modern foreign steel producers.

The steel industry has used foreign steel imports as a scapegoat for its own inability to solve the inevitable contradictions of capitalist production and has generated tremendous pressure to solve these domestic problems by way of trade import restrictions. Yet the bourgeoisie of every capitalist country recognizes the dangerous effect trade import restrictions and an escalating trade war have on the imperialist system itself. This is the reason the Carter administration initially resisted pressure from the steel industry to restrict steel imports.

A clear example of how a trade war could adversely effect US imperialism is shown by the fact that today one third of total US foreign investment is in Europe and it is projected that this proportion will grow significantly in the years remaining in the '70's. Profits realized on these investments amount to 30% of the total profits taken by the US imperialists on their foreign investments. These profits are an absolute necessity for the very survival of US imp-

erialism. A trade war could seriously cut into this profit margin and spell catastrophe for US monopoly capital. This would serve to compromise the US struggle for hegemony in Europe, the focus of contention between the two superpowers.

The current trade crisis also underscores the increasing contradiction between the US and the countries of Western Europe and Japan. These countries emerged after World War II as economic and political dependencies of US imperialism. But because of the inherent laws of uneven development operating

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SALT TALKS

slightly above what both superpowers already had or needed. For another, SALT I implicitly permitted superpower modernization of their strategic nuclear arsenals which was the real military concern for both of them.

Thus we can see that neither superpower entered into the SALT talks to further the cause of disarmament. The US's goal was to attempt to maintain its qualitative strategic military superiority over the USSR and to slow down the rapid speed at which its rival was catching up, and for the Soviet Union the goal in the arms limitation negotiations was the exact opposite.

It is now clear that it was the social imperialists who were better able to utilize SALT I and the interim period since that agreement to improve their military position vis-a-vis the US. The Soviets have used the respite from having to engage in a "numbers" arms race to develop missiles which carry more weight, missiles that are more mobile, a submarine launched missile, and a better long range bomber (the Backfire). And, in particular the social imperialists made a significant breakthrough in their development and deployment of MIRV's (multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles) or missiles which contain a number of warheads that separate after flight and go toward different targets.

This development of MIRV's is an excellent example of how the SALT talks produce "breakthrough" after "breakthrough" and one impressive agreement after another on limiting nuclear arms and yet the nuclear warfare capability of both superpowers keeps increasing. In late 1974 as part of the SALT talks the US and Soviet Union made an agreement to limit long range missiles to 2,400 for each side (approximately the number each already had) and the number of MIRV's to 1,320. While the superpowers made a great fanfare about how this agreement limited long range missiles, its essence was to legitimize another round in the nuclear arms race because both sides under this agreement could considerably expand their number of MIRV's. Thus the number of nuclear warheads that could be placed on the "limited" number of missiles was increased.

The US although it has lost ground vis-a-vis the USSR has also improved the quality of its strategic weapons and in particular its MIRV's. In general both superpowers are objectively better prepared to wage a nuclear war today than they were before SALT I. The situation is such that on the eve of a SALT II treaty President Carter has had to publicly admit that the USSR and the US had accumulated thousands of strategic nuclear weapons in the recent period and that the nuclear warheads in the possession of the countries was almost five times the amount eight years ago when the SALT talks began!

The approaching SALT II agreement promises nothing but more of the same. For example, it has been learned that it will set a "limit" of 800-850 Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's) -- the most powerful category of missile. Under the limitations established by SALT I the present widely deployed Soviet SS-11 ICBM system numbers about a 1,000. However, the Soviets have used the period since SALT I to develop two other more powerful and sophisticated ICBM's, the SS-18 and the SS-19, to re-

under capitalism, these countries have now developed into serious economic rivals of the US. This is true not only in steel, but other industries as well, such as auto and electronics.

Thus what we see is the US being driven into a position of protectionism in a desperate attempt to solve the domestic problems generated by the deepening crisis of capitalism. At the same time it wants to avoid trade war at all costs, because of the dangerous ramifications that it would have to its economic and political interests in Western Europe and Japan

place the SS-11. The SS-19 has three to four times the payload-carrying capacity ("throw-weight") of the SS-11 and carries six MIRV's. This nuclear arms expansion, under the veil of a nuclear arms limitation agreement, is in turn fueling a demand among US imperialists to deploy the more "survivable" (capable of withstanding a nuclear attack) and more powerful (capable of carrying more MIRV's) MX ICBM to replace the present Minuteman ICBM system.

History has taught us that it is the imperialists, who are themselves the source of war, who will be speaking the loudest about disarmament and world peace. The history and actual results of the SALT talks fully confirms this. The "dog-eat-dog" struggle among imperialists for world domination that is inevitable under imperialism, is in the present period characterized by the contention for world hegemony between the two superpowers. The SALT talks are but one of the forms by which each superpower attempts to move this struggle forward in its own favor. Each side uses the negotiations to attempt to restrain the other's expansion and strengthen its own ability to strive for world domination.

However, neither superpower would abide by any agreement that gives an advantage to the other's striving for world hegemony. The military gains recorded by the social imperialists in the negotiations are but a reflection of their position as imperialist "latecomers" who will by nature be more aggressive, adventurous, and even reckless in their attempts to overcome the US imperialists who still maintain economic and political dominance over their superpower rival.

Ultimately, this rivalry must lead to war. Therefore the SALT talks, as their actual results prove conclusively, are nothing but an attempt to maneuver into a better position to wage this war. All claims to "progress" in the talks must be exposed for what they are -- attempts to blind the people of the world to the growing danger of war and its source in the contention for world hegemony between the two superpowers.

The real deterrence to war will not be found in any sham agreement between the superpowers. It is only the unity forged by the people of all countries that can be the main force in the struggle against the superpower striving for world hegemony and the growing danger of war. As long as the imperialist system exists world war between the superpowers is inevitable, but it can be postponed if the people of all countries form the broadest international united front against superpower hegemonism. It is only such a united front which refuses to be duped, defies intimidation, and steps up preparations militarily and organizationally against wars of aggression that will be able to upset the war plans of the superpowers. The longer the war is postponed the stronger the position of the world's peoples when war does come. Today, world-wide we can see that it is the peoples and countries of the third world who are the main force in pushing forward this situation through their struggle against superpower hegemonism.

For the proletariat inside the imperialist superpowers the longer this war is postponed the more heightened will be the conditions for turning imperialist war into civil war. All communists must fight aggressively to assume a leading role in building the united front against superpower hegemonism.

PROFITS FIRST - HEALTH AND SAFETY LAST

The following article on unsafe conditions in a large electronics plant was contributed by a worker correspondent. Periodically THE COMMUNIST will be running a column on factory exposures from around the country. We encourage all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers to send in articles concerning local grievances, health and safety issues and other forms of factory abuse.

A clear example of how monopoly capital pursues profits, maximum profits, at the expense of anything and everything else -- including the welfare of the workers -- is seen in the operation of the paint shop for one of the largest electronic companies in this area. In its single-minded pursuit of profit this company has refused to invest in the machinery, equipment, tools, etc. needed to make the working conditions safe and healthy for the workers. They can get away with this because the high and continuous unemployment rate that is characteristic of imperialism insures a steady supply of workers who will be financially unable to refuse work no matter how dangerous or unhealthy the working conditions.

The list of hazards in this particular paint shop is long. To begin with over a dozen poisonous chemicals are used liberally. The effects of some of those used in abundance are as follows:

Methylethylketone (MEK) -- causes drowsiness and dizziness; exposure may also lead to alteration of the tissues of the liver, kidneys, and sometimes the brain; excessive exposure may result in coma, depression of respiratory functions, followed in severe cases by death.

Trichloroethylene -- marked effects on the central nervous system, can cause a sudden heart irregularity or stoppage, resulting in death; also has serious effects on the lungs.

Xylene -- can cause a decrease in the number of red and white blood cells; repeated exposure may lead to heart problems.

Naptha -- irritates skin and eyes, affects the blood and causes anemia, can also lead to liver, kidney, and optic nerve damage.

All chemicals such as these should be used (if at all) in well ventilated areas. There is no ventilation, however, in this paint shop. The fact that it's illegal to have MEK, for instance, in an open container is violated daily. Regular practice is to have an open container for continuous use one foot away from each of the painting stencilers. Three months ago one of the supervisors said he would check into adequate containers, but nothing was ever done. Exposure to poisonous chemicals such as these is, unfortunately, not something unique to this particular paint shop. Every year about 3,000 new chemicals are introduced into industry without ever being tested for their effects on those who will have to work with them.

Besides the dangerous chemicals, the paints that are used in the shop -- polyurethane and epoxy -- are extremely toxic. Both produce a resin that builds in the lungs and which the body never expels. Kaiser hospital has stated that respirators should be used with these types of paints. The company has no respirators for use in the paint shop.

All these conditions in addition to poor lighting, excessive noise from the adjacent machine shop, and concrete floors, make the paint shop a serious health hazard. However, when complaints are made about these conditions the head foreman will claim that the air monitoring device indicates that toxic levels are below the dangerous level. Or, the worker will bluntly be told to "seek other work". This has been the response to the fact that over half of the workers have suffered chronic headaches and respiratory problems over the past four months.

This, of course, is no answer at all. Even if workers were free "to pick and choose" among jobs what we would find is that the overwhelming majority of workers must put up with unnecessarily dangerous and unhealthy working conditions. And, for many workers, such as those in the mines and shipyards, the conditions can be even worse than in this particular paint shop. As usual it is the workers who must pay for the problems which are really those of the capitalist system itself.

Obviously, the company's interest in securing profits is in direct contradiction to providing for the health and safety of the workers. So, too, are the interests of those trade union "leaders" who reap direct and indirect material benefits in payment for convincing the workers that conditions can be improved within the capitalist system. Over and over, this type of class collaborationist has been shown to be the agent of the ruling class whose job it is to divert workers demands down a reformist path. One of the main jobs of all genuine working class leaders is to expose these traitors and their opportunism in the process of raising the class consciousness of the workers to an understanding that capitalism can never really improve working conditions for the majority of workers.

STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE

This article continues our study of the polemic which appeared in PEKING REVIEW #45, CHAIRMAN MAO'S THEORY OF THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THREE WORLDS IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO MARXISM-LENINISM.

To develop a strategy for international class struggle requires that we identify the chief enemy, the main force carrying the struggle forward, the middle forces and the direction of the main blow against the chief enemy. Theory studies the objective conditions of class struggle, and all these features of strategy must be based on the data of theory. In the present historical period, Chairman Mao's theory differentiating world political forces into three parts or worlds is the foundation for strategy in international class struggle.

MAIN ENEMY

Objective conditions in the world today make clear that US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism are the two biggest international exploiters, oppressors and aggressors of the world's people. From this, the strategic conclusion follows that together they constitute the chief common enemy in international class struggle. According to Chairman Mao, they constitute the first world.

On what basis did Chairman Mao conclude that only these two superpowers are the main enemy of the world's people and not all imperialism and all reaction?

Lenin defined imperialism as "the progressively mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers...." This definition shows that the main instigators of the imperialist scramble for hegemony are the greatest world powers. Lesser or second rate powers are typically able to preserve their positions only because of friction among the great powers. For example, at the time Lenin wrote *IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM*, Belgium and Portugal were two examples of such lesser imperialist powers.

Today the handful of great imperialist powers has been reduced to only two superpowers which alone are capable of contending for world hegemony. The article in PEKING REVIEW defines a superpower as follows:

"Its state apparatus is controlled by monopoly capital in its most concentrated form, and it relies on its economic and military power, which is far greater than that of other countries, to carry on economic exploitation and political oppression and to strive for military control on a global scale; each superpower sets exclusive world hegemony as its goal and to this end makes frantic preparations for a new world war."

Together the US and the USSR account for 40% of the gross national product of the entire world. In military expenditures both far exceed the total expenditures of the countries of Western Europe, Japan and Canada combined.

For these reasons only these two powers, of all the imperialist powers, are capable of striving for global hegemony, and only these two powers each are capable of setting exclusive world hegemony as its aim.

While the US is the most powerful country in terms of economic strength, Mao concluded that the USSR is the most dangerous superpower. How can this be?

The article emphasized that this conclusion is not due to any assessment of the needs of China's security. According to specific conditions in each region of the world, one or another imperialism may pose a more immediate threat. But whether Soviet social imperialism has become dangerous overall is a "general question concerning the world situation as a whole rather

than a particular question concerning a particular region."

First of all, the Soviet Union is more dangerous because it is a latecomer to the imperialist banquet -- that is, it is a younger imperialism which can attain world supremacy only by grabbing areas under US control. In other words, it is the Soviet Union that is interested in a new division of spheres of influence.

Secondly, the USSR is more dangerous because it is inferior to the US in economic strength and must rely on military strength and recourse to force in order to achieve a new redivision of the world. Soviet armed forces are double those of the US and its military expenditures are 24% more than the US (\$127 billion against \$102.7 billion) even though its gross national product totals hardly more than half that of the US.

Thirdly, the USSR is a centralized state owned capitalist economy and a fascist dictatorship. It is therefore easier to put the entire economy and people on a war footing.

Finally, the USSR came into being as a social imperialist state as a result of the degeneration of the first socialist country in the world. As a result it can hide behind the mask of socialism and conceal its aggressive features behind the prestige of the international working class movement.



For all these reasons Mao concluded that the Soviet Union would inevitably adopt an offensive strategy and resort chiefly to force in its contention with the US for world hegemony. The US on the other hand must go over to the defensive in an effort to protect its vested interests. While the US struggle to expand most certainly continues, as well as its striving for absolute world domination, the key to its strategic situation is that it is overextended. The key to the strategic situation of the USSR, on the other hand, is that it must rely on military strength to enforce a new division of the world.

MAIN FORCE

The oppressed nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere are the worst exploited and oppressed of the peoples of the world. While they have been drawn into the mainstream of international economic and political life, their development is blocked by the imperialist oppression of nations. Together with the socialist countries, who stand at the forefront of the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism, they constitute the third world and the main force in international class struggle.

In 1966 Chairman Mao said "The revolutionary storm in Asia, Africa and Latin America will certainly deal the whole of the old world a decisive and crushing blow."

From the liberation of China in 1949 to Korea, the Suez, Algeria, Cuba and Latin America,

Indochina, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, to the struggles raging today in Africa and the Middle East, the countries and peoples of these regions are undeniably the cutting edge of international struggle. As the article in PEKING REVIEW points out, "it is no longer the countries and people of the third world that are afraid of imperialism and hegemonism, but imperialism and hegemonism that are afraid of the countries and people of the third world."

This new and unprecedented situation reflects a fundamental change in the balance of international class forces.

First, the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the third world have shaken off or are freeing themselves from the fetters of colonialism. Absolute domination over colonial possessions which left imperialist powers free to grab the raw materials essential to their expanding industrial economies no longer exists. Now they must deal with independent countries.

Does this historic change, however, mean that these countries can no longer be considered the main force in struggle since many of them have already achieved political independence?

To think so is to adopt the hollow jurists reasoning of the Second International and to prettify imperialism. Political independence has not brought an end to superpower striving for exploitation and control. Economically, politically and militarily the superpowers resort to subversion and interference in a thousand and one ways in order to subjugate third world countries and to continue their policies of superexploitation and oppression. The PEKING REVIEW article emphasizes:

"In order to be independent, to survive and to develop, the countries and people of the third world have no choice but to wage a sustained and fierce, life-and-death struggle against the aggressive and expansionist activities of imperialism, and above all of the superpowers. It is the inevitable and objective contradictions between the third world on the one hand and imperialism and the superpowers on the other that determine the long-term role of the third world as the main force in the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism."

The balance of international class forces has also been changed by the growing political awareness of the third world countries and peoples and by their growing unity. Unity in struggle has made it possible to broaden mutual support, to broaden the arenas of struggle (e.g. regional and international organizations), and to take the offensive in many areas against imperialism and superpower hegemonism. The struggle waged by the oil exporting countries of the third world and by other raw material producers are notable examples.

Very often today the superpowers find that they cannot grab at one country without losing hold of another. In addition, the bulk of their strength is pinned down in Europe which is the focus of contention between

them. For this reason, the countries of the third world today can take advantage of weaknesses and contradictions among imperialists and this also has changed the world political balance.

In putting forth a division of world political forces into three, Chairman Mao did not ignore differences among third world countries with respect to their social and political conditions. He did not forget that authorities in power in these countries adopt different attitudes towards the superpowers and their own people. Different class forces exist, including agents of imperialism and social imperialism, and the strength of the movement to carry the national democratic revolution through the end is uneven. The article points out that "such phenomena are inevitable so long as there are classes." But taken as a whole, the article emphasizes the majority of these countries are for the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism. Objectively, they have a common interest in this struggle. The article concludes on this point:

"When we look at a question, we must first grasp its essence and its main aspect and see the actual results as shown by the general balance sheet... Judging from their deeds and general orientation in international political struggles over the last 30 years or so, the oppressed nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America are revolutionary and progressive as far as their essence and main aspect are concerned."

This truth is not altered by disputes which arise between these nations, and even armed conflicts. Invariably these are due to the legacy of imperialism and colonialism (border disputes, for example) and to discontent sown by the superpowers today. Such disputes will certainly be overcome in the course of the common struggle against hegemonism.

The fact that the third world is the main force in international class struggle does not in the least lessen the role and responsibility of the international proletariat in the struggle against imperialism. In the first place, by common experience, common tasks and common interests in the struggle against imperialism and superpower hegemonism, the socialist countries are part of the third world and play a leading role. In addition the advance of the workers movement in the first and second world countries advances the struggle against superpower hegemonism. At the present time a revolutionary situation for the immediate seizure of state power does not exist in these countries and the task of the proletariat is to accumulate revolutionary strength. "Such being the case," the article points out "the more actively the third world countries and people play their role as the main force in the struggle against imperialism and hegemonism, the more important will be the support and impetus they give to the workers' movement in the developed countries."

Next time: MIDDLE FORCES and THE DIRECTION OF THE MAIN BLOW.



The plan of the Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) is to fight for a newspaper modeled on Lenin's ISKRA as the main link in the fight to prepare the conditions for a new Communist party. While we discuss questions from our own definite point of view, we call on all Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary workers to send in topical exposures, polemics and reports on their work.

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FARMERS MOVEMENT

ful social movement. Farmers focused their outcry and actions against evictions and foreclosures and for relief. Slogans for a moratorium of debts on mortgages and taxes became popular, as well as the demand for complete cancellation of all debts. At foreclosures, "penny sales" took place where organized farmers would prevent anyone from bidding over a penny for land offered for sale. Large scale strikes were organized, and in states such as Iowa and Wisconsin the state declared martial law and used tear gas bombs and airplanes against the toilers of the land.

All this shows the potential for revolutionary consciousness among the broad masses of farmers. H. Puro, in a speech at the Extraordinary Conference of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), July 7-10, 1933, reported that:

"The degree of militancy of the farmers is illustrated by the story that they, not knowing much about the Communist Party, came to our comrades and said, 'What will you do to help us when martial law is declared. Can you help us with rifles or machine guns?'"

Puro continued,

"I think that the degree of militancy of these farmers shows the revolutionary possibilities that Comrade Stalin spoke of. We must not misunderstand it and think that these farmers' struggles already have revolutionary aims. They are not yet class conscious, they are potentially so. This militancy can be given class consciousness and a revolutionary aim only by the revolutionary proletariat and by our party. This, comrades, is the task before us." THE COMMUNIST, V.XII, no. 9, Sept., 1933)

FARMERS' MOVEMENT TODAY

While today the number of farms and the extent of the farm population has been reduced, with many small farms replaced by fewer large farms, this in no way means that the US proletariat no longer has a significant ally in the working farmer. For this reason it is important to begin an analysis of the American Agriculture Movement (AAM), which has as-

sumed leadership of the present farmers' struggle.

The AAM was established in the early part of 1977 operating out of a small office in Springfield, Colorado. Since then its base has expanded rapidly, and the AAM now claims over 600 strike offices nationwide and support from over 1 million farmers.

Because working farmers are sellers of commodities, they have a strong tendency to harbor the ideas and sentiments of private property and to place their hopes in capitalist development. In the case of the AAM, these petty bourgeois prejudices are present in their political outlook and in various aspects of their program.

For example, the AAM characterizes itself in the following way: "The American Agriculture movement is not another farm organization. There are no memberships, dues, secretaries or president." A member contributed further, "With an organization you get presidents making \$125,000 a year and they tell you what to do."

On one hand, this attitude is a response to the failure of present farm organizations to improve the conditions of life for the majority of farmers. Many farm groups such as the Farm Bureau (which opposes the strike and the demand for 100% parity) and larger cooperatives are dominated by the large rich farmers and monopoly capitalists. On the other hand, this outlook also reveals the disdain for organization which goes hand in hand with the isolated conditions of labor of the individual farmer. But lack of organization and spontaneity will only weaken the struggle of the farmers against their well-organized opposition.

This points to the need for the leadership of the proletariat whose strong respect for discipline and organization can provide an example to guide the farmers' struggle. Farmers get no example however, under the present regime of the trade union bureaucrats. Already these traitors have failed to honor the farmers' picketing on the grounds

that it is technically "illegal." This slavish cringing before bourgeois legality must be ended if a strong alliance between the workers and working farmers is to be built.

The American Agriculture movement cultivates the illusion that with such a loose organization it can preserve the family farm and displace the influence of monopoly middlemen. In righteous anger against the parasites who strangle the working farmer, they plan to eliminate "speculation, boom and bust from the market, and excessive profits from some middlemen." In reference to market speculators, an American Agriculture member stated, "They have never even seen corn or wheat and don't know anything about farming, but they control our destiny." Basically, the stated aim of the AAM is for farmers to take increased control of the marketing of the goods they produce, though no set organization of this process has been presented. In this way they hope to bypass the speculators and the 5 or 6 largest grain dealers that monopolize the market and buy cheap from the farmers and sell higher to the millers or foreign purchasers.

One proposal calls for a board of elected farmers to establish and approve policies affecting agriculture (most likely to function in conjunction with the US Department of Agriculture). Another proposal calls for an advance notice (possibly a 6 month period) to all farmers concerning any changes in the market conditions or agricultural producing cycles, so that farmers could plan ahead and plant their crops accordingly, avoiding the pattern of shortage and overproduction, boom and bust, which has led to instability in farm product prices. In addition, American Agriculture has already contacted foreign governments to investigate the possibility of direct contractual agreements.

But all these proposals show the hopelessly reformist character of the movement's program which completely ignores the real power of the "speculators," "big money entities" and monopoly middlemen they pretend to attack.

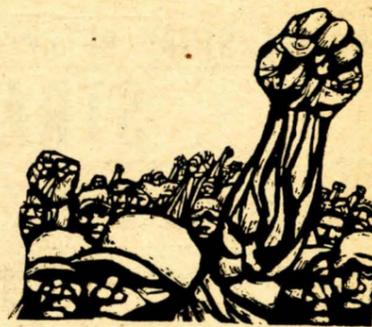
DIFFERENCES AMONG FARMERS CANNOT BE IGNORED

We can defend the AAM's demand for 100% parity and an equitable price for farm products. But this support does not mean silence before petty-bourgeois illusions concerning a "new kingdom of prosperity" for working farmers under capitalism, or dismissing the differences that distinguish the small, poor farmers and middle farmers from the large rich farmers. The AAM identifies itself as "a group of individual farmers, ranchers and agribusinessmen." But the contradiction reflected in the fact that 1.7 million farm families produce only 5% of the goods sold on the market, and that 70% of farmland is concentrated in 20% of the largest farms, cannot be disregarded as the AAM does.

In fact, the AAM glosses over the differences between different strata of farmers. A spokesman for the movement, for example, was describing how many farmers are planning to plow under 50 to 70% of their wheat. The point was made that larger farmers would be better able to get by doing this than small farmers who had no reserves and less equity in land. His reply was that the little farmers would have to get by as best they could. He emphasized that 40% of the wheat farmers produce 30% of the wheat, and since most of these farmers were getting behind the movement, they didn't "really need a lot of numbers"--meaning that the masses of smaller farmers could be disregarded.

CAPITALISM AT ROOT OF FARMERS' RUIN

The main demand of the AAM for parity arises from the backward position of agriculture under capitalism. The widening gap between agricultural prices and the prices of industrial goods reflects the dominance of highly developed



AGRARIAN QUESTION AND THE AFRO-AMERICAN NATION

In the Black Belt region of the South, the struggle of Afro-American farmers for land has special significance. The land question is still fundamental to the national question of the Black masses and rests at the heart of the right to self-determination of the Afro-American Nation. The forced expropriation of the Black toilers from their land continues today--in 1960, Blacks made up 16% of the farm population, by 1975 that had fallen to 7%. The farm population in the South declined between 1970 and 1975 by 16.4%, while in the north-central region the overall decline in farm population was 5.2%. Large corporate landlords have moved in to exploit the land.

For example, in Hyde County, North Carolina, half the land is owned by First Colony Farms, Weyerhaeuser Company, American Cyanamid and John Hancock Insurance. Together they operate a 35,000 acre farm called Matamuskeet. The population of the county is 10,000--smaller than it was in 1870--and the county budget is less than \$1 million. There is one doctor and no dentist; 40% of the residents have no car and no telephone; 37% are without plumbing; median education is ninth grade and 29% of the residents have an income of less than \$3,000 dollars a year. 40% of the population in this county is Black, and most of these are subsistence farmers. For years conditions of backwardness, poverty and exploitation have driven these farmers off their land.

large scale monopolization in industry over the less developed, smaller scale capitalist development in agriculture. Parity will soften the adverse consequences to agriculture resulting from this domination, but will not remove this basic contradiction which arises out of private ownership of land. The burden of billions of dollars in tribute paid to the landlords and finance capitalists in rent and the price of land will continue to rise and weigh heavily on agricultural development; the competitive advantage of the larger farmers will continue to bring hardship and ruin to the small and middle farmers; the planlessness and anarchy of capitalist production in agriculture will continue to exhaust the soil, necessitating increased capital investment to produce from the impoverished land; the monopolies and trusts will continue to force higher the prices of their industrial products; under present conditions the shift of wealth under parity would be at the expense of the laboring masses in the cities and concentrated in the hands of the larger farmers, and find its way into the pockets of the landlords and finance capitalists.

As the present bad conditions faced by the majority of agricultural producers worsens in the future, the limitations in the demands, program and form of organization presently offered by the AAM will be exposed. What is most important now is that the crisis has mobilized the masses of working farmers into struggle which has already met the opposition of the monopoly capitalists and the state. As the farmers' struggle grows in size and militancy, many small and middle farmers will be revolutionized and open to closer unity with the revolutionary proletariat. On this basis an alliance of workers and farmers--aimed against the alliance of rich farmers, landlords and monopoly capitalists and the state--can be realized.

COMMUNIST POLICY ON AGRARIAN QUESTION

Concrete demands need to be formulated for US agriculture on the basis of the actual conditions facing US farmers and on the basis of a communist program on the Agrarian Question. The principles which distinguish a revolutionary position from a reformist position were put forward in the "Resolution on the Farmers' Movement" adopted at the Extraordinary Conference of the CPUSA, 1933:

"What is the fundamental peculiarity of the position of the Communist Party on the farmers question as distinguished from all other parties? There are four of them:

1. The Communist Party is unswervingly convinced that the way out of the present industrial and agrarian crisis which will bring real liberty to the workers and toiling farmers is the revolutionary way out, that is the proletarian revolution carried out under the leadership of the proletariat in an alliance of the workers and the toiling farmers. All other parties struggle against the revolutionary way out of the present crisis and seek to resolve the crisis inside the capitalist system itself at the expense of the toilers.

2. The Communists have a differentiated approach to the various strata of the farmers according to how their interests are to the interests of the proletariat. Communists struggle for a direct revolutionary alliance of the proletariat with the poor and small farmers, drawing the middle farmers into this alliance, while carrying out a struggle against the big farmers who are allied to finance capital. All other parties try to gloss over the difference between the var-

ious sections of the farmers, speak about the community of interests of all farmers, and carry on a policy which in practice is directed against the interests of the poor, small and middle farmers for the benefit of the rich farmers, for the benefit of finance capital.

3. The Communists are the only Party, which while defending the real interests of the vast majority of the farmers (poor, small and middle farmers) and trying to liberate them completely from the oppression of capitalism, at the same time does not make concessions in principle to the petty-bourgeois prejudices of the farmers and carries on patient and insistent work to explain how illusory and utopian it is to hope for the possibility of a painless way out of the crisis by restoring healthy capitalism, by curing capitalism of its sickness. However, all the other parties support such illusions among the farmers, and on the basis of such illusions, try to restrain the farmers from mass activity, pointing to them the parliamentary method of struggle as the only path of salvation.

4. The Communists are the only Party who calls on the farmers for revolutionary forms of struggle irrespective of whether it is for the final aims of the movement or the immediate demands which are directed towards improving the position of the farmers immediately within the existing order...However, all the other parties are definitely against revolutionary forms of struggle, against the alliance of the proletariat with the farmers in the struggle not only for the final aims of the movement, but for the demands of the present day, against the hegemony of the proletariat."